

Responsible business has garnered the attention of many, slowly moving towards becoming the high priority for most organizations and businesses. More often now we hear people talking about creating change, driven by ideas and innovations as key to decipher present day issues, whether it is economic, social or environmental concerns. Even more with the advancement of technology and digitalization, we see many of the impossible made possible; continuously improving lives and creating new opportunities.

Whilst developed countries are transforming at a higher pace, developing nations particularly the ASEAN landscape is struggling to catch up. Most if not all are imprisoned in the comfort of present days, co-existed with stubborn norms and inflexible mindset consequently inhibiting long term evolution success. We see the plague of corruptions, modern-day slavery and inequality spreading – in a blink of an eye.

Making a living as a CSR practitioner in an oil and gas sector – a controversial industry who is no stranger to social and environmental infestations in the realm of responsible business; stumbling upon the ASEAN CSR Network (ACN) fellowship program on the internet was a true calling. Subsequently accepted to the program alongside high-potential personals from 9 ASEAN member states, it was a privilege to be taken on a journey to experience an up-close and personal moments with the sustainability issues in ASEAN through a series of learning modules and study tours lined up by ACN in selected ASEAN countries.

One, that I had great connection with which I also believe is close to most CSR practitioners at heart is a topic dwelled by distinguished panel members in the Kuala Lumpur leg of ACN fellowship – the business case of CSR and responsible business in ASEAN region; it remains a struggle to push the agenda forward, to convince and to have it accepted especially within private entities as it is often seen as a burden rather than an accountability (*also evident in the organization I am working with*) – one of many reasons why most organizations resorted in charity and donations.

It wouldn't make sense to expect that change will happen instantly as norms are obstinate. Drawing a conclusion from 2018 ACN fellowship excursion thus far, enforcement-inculcation-attitude 'EIA' (*not Energy Information Administration nor Environmental Impact Assessment*) is the key to unlock the potential in the CSR sphere. It is no longer the responsibility of NGOs or CSR practitioners alone but a collective effort of each members of the planet. Putting more thoughts into actions and making small decisions will eventually pave its way into realizing the CSR EIA.

ACN is the perfect representation of *inculcation* providing the ideal platform for CSR top leaders (*now*) and CSR ambassadors (*future*) to interact and exchange knowledge. The '*now*' and '*future*' change agents in cooperation with the mediator are crucial towards responsible business development – playing an enormous role in shaping the mindset of other surrounding players. Humans are prone to interference and it is their nature to steer away from their existing path without something solid holding on to it. Top management in an organization for instance have to be at the top of their game on the subject of CSR to be able to inspire others. Regularly and continuously speaking up about CSR content – issues, challenges and initiatives in addressing the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 would be a catalyst to the inculcation process.

The by-product of inculcation would be the right *attitude* or in other words, mindset to perform tasks responsibly without compromising the people and environment in achieving profit. Employees, citizens and individuals need to be trained to see beyond present day comfort and satisfaction but more on long term longevity and sustainability of which requires consecutive practice before it develops into a habit where burden will no longer be a constraint and accountability will be visible on its own.

*Inculcation of attitude* would be incomplete without *enforcement* which is the third component of CSR *EIA*. Over the years, governance and laws have contributed to molding patterns of human behavior driven by the effectiveness of policies and frameworks. Government is the driving force to ensure that all laws are inclusive and unbiased; protecting the rights of every individual without leaving anyone behind due to their status, religion, race, gender, nationality, orientation or skin color. The same process of *inculcation* in the private sector must take place in the public sector as well which is a clear indication that the responsible business agenda is complex as it involves a huge integrated network where collaboration is critical to maneuver everyone to the same course of actions.

ACN undeniably have done an exceptional work with the fellowship program since 2017 and having participated in the 2018 series – I believe I am able to say with conviction that I have grown so much towards my own quest in the field of responsible business and I couldn't be more grateful for the opportunity, trust and full scholarship awarded by ACN. For more information on the ACN Fellowship Program, kindly visit their website at <http://www.asean-csr-network.org/c/>