

BRIDGING PROGRAM BETWEEN SMES AND NGOS IN AMMAN AND ZARQA

CASE STUDY ON A SUCCESSFUL PRIVATE SECTOR-CIVIL SOCIETY PARTNERSHIP

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INTRODUCTION

The Bridging Program between civil society organizations and private sector companies has been designed to create communication channels and common languages between those two vital sectors. The program mainly assists participants in building strategic partnerships that would create shared value for all stakeholders. The partnerships capitalize on the private companies' Corporate Responsibility (CR) efforts and endeavors, and the civil society organization's focus on serving communities and meeting certain societal needs.

More than 40 NGOs and 14 private companies participated in this unique initiative that was designed and implemented by Schema in partnership with FHI360, a USAID funded organization. Through multiple learning and capacity building opportunities, NGOs gained a better understanding of the concepts of CR, sustainable development, and strategic partnerships, and were trained on how to best communicate with the private sector in order to establish a partnership for a specific social cause. Schema also worked with SMEs to set a common ground of expectation from civil society and to emphasize the importance of partnering and working closely with NGOs as part of the SMEs' Corporate Responsibility activities.

The added value of the Bridging Program is the effort put to change the common perception that CR is mainly about companies donating money or even giving in-kind contributions as part of their social responsibility. This practice has unfortunately become an expectation and somehow an earned right as perceived by many NGOs in Jordan. The Bridging Program aimed at changing this perception and equipping a number of both NGOs and private companies on how to create sustainable partnerships that could last and grow in cooperation scenarios and impact. This theme of the program was found very appealing to participating SMEs who have the will and conviction to take a responsible role towards the society, yet lack the financial means to take a role of a donor. As such, the preposition of the Bridging Program and how it seeks to help partners create projects that build on the capacities and expertise of all partners towards creating shared value for all was the selling edge to attract SMEs to participate.

More information on the Bridging Program can be found on <http://schemaadvisory.com/schema-pioneers-1st-of-its-kind-corporate-responsibility-bridging-between-ngos-the-smes-in-jordan/>

THE 'GAMES FOR HUMAN RIGHTS' PROJECT BY ANHUR AND TWO PRIVATE COMPANIES

This case study sheds the light on one of the most successful partnerships that resulted from this program. The partnership was created between **the Arab Network for Civil Education (Anhur)** and two private companies whom the NGO successfully attracted their interest and engagement:

- **D1G** (Regional online portal community for forums, social media, and advertisement)
- **Masmou3 for Audio Knowledge** (producers and publishers of audio publications in Arabic)



The Anhur project focuses on raising children's awareness on their human rights; through specially designed workshops, Anhur equips and trains school teachers on how to conduct games that are especially designed to raise awareness on human rights – "**Games for Human Rights**".

The project emphasises the important connection between communication and human rights, and peaceful reconciliation between schools staff and children aged between 6 to 12 years living in difficult conditions, to ultimately enjoy a safe school environment. The project also aims at building the capacities of 20 school employees and teachers in the Ministry of Education and in five of its schools in Eastern Amman to be able to conduct human rights educational programs and raise awareness of discriminatory situations and practices between children.

While the main mandate of the Anhur project is raising awareness, the NGO sought partnerships with the private companies participating in the Bridging Program who can extend support to the NGO as part of their CR efforts, while at the same time create value for their business. This is the approach in seeking partnerships that Schema has trained all participants to follow; creating partnerships that would benefit all stakeholders, as opposed to the traditional philanthropic approach of giving away financial support without true engagement and partnership between companies and the supported NGOs.

The other important aspect in building the partnerships is the tangibility, sustainability and scalability of the resulting impact on both the society and the partnering private companies. As such, continuous follow up and engagement between all partners and also by the monitoring and evaluation team of Schema throughout the first year of the projects, would help make sure the project is achieving the desired results for all partners.

THE PARTNERSHIP

As the main objective of the Anhur project is raising awareness on a critical topic as human rights, two participating companies were very interested to support the project and signed partnership with Anhur at the Bridging Day event during which competitions between NGOs took place to attract attending companies.

The core business of both D1G and Masmou3 strongly aligns with the type of project Anhur proposed. While Anhur project was mainly focused on working in the field with school teachers and students, the partnering companies proposed to take this project into another level to widen the scope of its impact.

Mainly, D1G and Masmou3 signed on to help Anhur create an online presence for the NGO and the "Games for Human Rights" project and create new means to reach out to teachers and children not only in the five schools in Eastern Amman but also throughout Jordan and potentially the region.



D1G'S PART



As D1G is an online portal community for forums, social media, and advertisement, the company proposed to create an online platform for Anhur through which the NGO can promote "Games for Human Rights" and post engaging material to attract their targeted audience to adopt the games in different schools and communities.

D1G team worked closely with Anhur team to structure the platform and equip it with the needed social media tools; they also equipped Anhur team on how to best manage their platform and keep it up to date and vibrant with new attractive posts. They also trained them on how to make the best out of the social media tools available and how to engage with followers and people who join their online page. Moreover, D1G helped promote "Games for Human Rights" through the advertisements they posted on other D1G pages with high online traffic.

The business case of this CR partnership for D1G is strongly evident in this partnership; while D1G spared Anhur the high cost of going online with their efforts – a step that they might not have ever considered due to lack of funds and knowledge in the area – for D1G they also managed to create a new platform that would be attracting new viewers and users to the main D1G portal. For a business model like D1G's, the more they create platforms/online communities that can attract high traffic, the more chance they can have to convince advertisers to place their ads on the portal. So the Anhur project serves as a win-win scenario for both partners.

On an employee engagement level, D1G's team who worked with Anhur were very encouraged and felt that they are doing something good for the society; a rewarding feeling that helps retain employees and lift up morale in the work place.

MASMOU3'S PART

Specialized in producing and publishing audio publications in Arabic, Masmou3 saw a promising opportunity in partnering with Anhur. Masmou3's role has been to create 7 stories around Human Rights in Arabic language, with key characters leading the dialogue, and record those stories in audio files that could be posted as a next step on social media and through Anhur's platform on D1G.

Masmou3 took the lead in creatively coming up with attractive, children-friendly characters and writing 7 stories scenarios that would deliver human rights messages and insights to children who listen to them. This audio publication not only present a possibly more appealing way to learn about human rights but also would help children with visual impairment to be reached with such important information.

As a next step, Anhur would aim to translate those stories into English and widen the scope of their efforts to reach children in non-Arabic speaking countries; a possibility that becomes within reach with the D1G online platform and the social media efforts to promote the project.

For Masmou3 the business case is mainly in widening their portfolio of audio productions and further promoting their services through the published audio stories for Anhur, while at the same time serving the society by attending to such an important cause.

PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Anhur's project, "Games for Human Rights", has been progressing smoothly on the field side:

- So far, 15 teachers and 6 employees of the Ministry of Education have been trained and equipped with tools to promote the culture and values of human rights in five schools in Eastern Amman
- 300 students, age 6-12, were reached by the Anhur project, and expectations are to reach a total of 500 students in the second year of the project. And though it could still be early to assess the impact on the violence levels amongst students; an initial assessment found that the level of violence in the 5 targeted schools decreased by 50%. This indicator will be



also further assessed at latter stages of the project.

Work with the partnering companies is in progress:

- Two D1G platforms for Anhur project and the NGO itself have been built and Anhur team now regularly update the pages and put effort to generate more traffic through social media engagement
- The 7 stories by Masmou3 have been drafted and reviewed by Anhur. The stories are now being tested in one school to collect feedback on how effective and attractive the stories are and how successfully they engage students. Upon final feedback, stories will be amended and recording work commences.



LESSONS LEARNED

As a pilot project, and the first of its kind in Jordan, the Bridging Program throughout its different phases provided a great platform for learning. Some of the key lessons learnt in regard to the Anhur project are:

- Considering the resource limitations of the NGO, and the tremendous needs that exist, there remains a need for financial support to ensure smooth implementation of the social development projects they have. As such, a social investment by the participating companies aligned with the other partnership areas they could commit to, would better enable the execution and development of the 'Games for Human Rights' project and potentially other projects in the future. This means that SMEs might not always be the best



partners for such projects, and there is a need to consider attracting large companies that can afford both a social investment and contributions through their core capacities and expertise;

- After being provided with the proper capacity building and orientation on strategic CR and sustainable development, both NGOs and private companies were somehow enlightened on the potential that could be created when thinking strategically and in terms of partnership rather than donor-beneficiary relationships. This paradigm shift caused by the Bridging Program and Schema's team throughout almost a year of work with participants has created a platform for creativity that resulted in strategic sustainable partnerships that create shared value for all stakeholders, such as the Anhur partnership with D1G and Masmou3.

This is but a seed project with tremendous potential; all three partners need to work together to progress with this partnership and create higher impact and more shared value for all.

Schema's team is very proud to see how this partnership is progressing successfully, amongst a number of other partnerships that resulted out of the Bridging Program. Schema also aims to take this 1st of its kind experience in Jordan and scale it up to reach wider business and civil society organizations in Jordan and the region.