

CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY AND SUCCESS GO HAND IN HAND AT THE WORLD'S LOCAL BANK



The philosophy behind HSBC's corporate responsibility is simple. Success in business is inextricably linked to the strength and well being of the wider community in which a company serves. And therefore with success, comes a responsibility to give something back to the larger community.

At HSBC, the bank is well aware that to enjoy long-term success, it needs to conduct itself in a manner that complements and supports the growth and development of the wider community in which it operates.

"This is integral to our brand as 'The World's Local Bank,'" says Mr Guy Harvey-Samuel, CEO of HSBC Singapore. "It is a key driver of our commitment to operate responsibly in the many communities in which we are a part of around the world."

Sustainability development and carbon neutrality

Remaining true to its philosophy, the HSBC Group employs a variety of ways to maintain its carbon neutrality and fulfill its social responsibilities. This includes the implementation of a carbon management plan to reduce energy use, buy green electricity where possible and invest in carbon neutral projects to offset remaining emissions. As a result, in 2005, HSBC became the world's first major bank to go completely carbon neutral, meaning its worldwide operations contribute zero net carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere.

As a global financial institution, HSBC also recognises that the largest impact they have is through the business that they do, which is why the Bank has moved beyond reactive engagement to proactively include sustainability as a core part of the business, by incorporating environmental criteria into its lending policies to support clients in building environmentally sustainable businesses and encouraging the companies and projects they finance to manage climate change related risks and opportunities.

In recognition of its leadership in integrating business with social and environmental objectives, HSBC was named FT Sustainable Bank of the Year in 2006.

HSBC also pursues business opportunities in the field of sustainability and partner with environmental organisations to assist them with their projects. In May this year, HSBC launched a US\$100 million partnership to respond to the urgent threat of climate change world-wide with the support of The Climate Group, EarthWatch Institute, Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (STRI) and WWF.



HSBC Tree Top Walk

Caring for nature

In Singapore, HSBC launched its Care-for-Nature Programme as early as in 1989 to provide a platform for the Bank and its employees to conduct a whole host of environmental initiatives to conserve and protect the living resources here and to generate awareness and action on the part of community to do likewise.

Since the inception of the programme, HSBC has supported a wide array of community projects to promote environmental awareness and support conservation efforts in Singapore, including:

The adoption of Chek Jawa, which saw HSBC donate \$800,000 to fund education and conservation programmes for Chek Jawa. HSBC also funded the HSBC-Ubin Volunteer Hub on Pulau Ubin, which serves as a one-stop information centre on the flora and fauna of Chek Jawa to facilitate the training of nature volunteers.

The adoption of the HSBC TreeTop Walk, where HSBC established a \$300,000 fund

to support outreach and educational programmes to promote the conservation of the Central Catchment Nature Reserve.

The Heritage Trees Scheme to protect the majestic, mature trees that live among us.

Nature conservation programmes to educate the young on the importance of preserving our natural heritage, including Fun with Nature with Nature Society (Singapore), the Young Naturalists Programme with National Parks Board, and the Seashore Life Programme with the National Environment Agency

The HSBC Care-for-Nature Stamp Series to promote public awareness on nature conservation and the environment. Sales proceeds go into a Care-for-Nature Trust Fund, which in turn supports environmental conservation, education and research projects in Singapore.

The HSBC/National Youth Achievement Award Council (NYAA) EarthWatch study trips for youth leaders to participate in an overseas environmental research projects to expand and enrich their perspective on the environment.

Underpinning its many nature conservation and education initiatives, HSBC has also developed its own core of Green Volunteers, who are trained as nature guides to lead reforestation and conservation projects at nature areas such as Chek Jawa, the HSBC TreeTop Walk and the Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve, playing the roles of green ambassadors to help further the Bank's goal of raising environmental awareness and action.

Engaging customers in environmental conservation

In a pioneering move to engage customers in environmental conservation, HSBC recently launched a first-of-its-kind initiative – the HSBC Green Sale. In making this innovative move, HSBC hopes to help raise consumer awareness and provide its personal banking custom- ▶



Launch of CSR Guidebook for SME's

ers with the opportunity to contribute towards the environment simply with their banking transactions such as home loans, credit cards, internet banking, etc. during the Green Sale.

And to engage members of the business community, the Bank has also launched the HSBC Living Business Programme in 2005 to help small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Singapore to embark on their CSR journey and become more effective and productive by implementing socially and environmentally responsible business practices.

Towards this end, HSBC has conducted several seminars and community involvement projects over the past two years for the Bank's corporate partners in the SME sector including reforestation efforts at the HSBC TreeTop Walk and Chek Jawa.

Through the Living Business initiative, HSBC hopes to enable its business partners to gain a deeper appreciation of the natural beauty and ecological significance of the natural environment in Singapore, and encourage them to adopt environmentally friendly practices and actions that will help to conserve and protect the living resources here.

HSBC in the community

This year, HSBC celebrated the 10th anniversary of its staff volunteer programme - Volunteers@HSBC - a platform through which HSBC employees organise and participate in community service projects. These include meal deliveries for the poor and the elderly, tuition and enrichment activities for disadvantaged children, and sign language storytelling for hearing impaired children.

To commemorate a decade of service to the community, HSBC made a donation of close to \$900,000, which includes a dollar matching by the Bank, to the Straits Times School Pocket Money

Fund and the Society for the Physically Disabled. The funds were raised from the Bank's CSR Challenge in March this year, which involved a team of 22 senior managers and management associates, led by Mr Harvey-Samuel, completing a 30-hour, 101km walk around Singapore overnight.

Youth development

The HSBC Group has also initiated a myriad of community initiatives around the world to create learning and development opportunities for youth and children so as to nurture their talent and character and pave the way for their individual success as well as the collective progress of the community.

"At HSBC, we see Education as the engine for socio-economic development and the vehicle for individual and community success. It is precisely on this premise that youth development is one of the core areas of our CSR efforts," says Mr Harvey-Samuel.

In Singapore, the HSBC Youth Excellence Initiative is the platform on which the Bank directs its efforts towards creating developmental opportunities for outstanding young people to hone their talent to their fullest potential and provide the impetus for young people to strive for excellence and expand the boundaries of their success for the benefit of the community.

Every year, HSBC presents the HSBC Youth Excellence Awards, which come with funding of \$200,000, to help outstanding young Singapore talents such as violinist Lee Huei Min, Gabriel Ng and Janell Yeo, pianists Abigail Sin and Clare Yeo, and opera singer Janani Sridhar to pursue musical excellence by undertaking important developmental initiatives such as recital tours around the world, master classes, and in Abigail's case, to acquire a Steinway piano to facilitate her development.

This initiative is also designed to enable these young talents to in turn contribute to the Singapore community through their involvement in community outreach programmes. These include public performances and fundraising concerts by Abigail, Clare, Janani and most recently Gabriel, which in total raised

nearly \$850,000 for charities dedicated to helping needy and disadvantaged children, such as the ST School Pocket Money Fund and the BT Budding Artists Fund.

Mr Harvey-Samuel explains, "We feel that it is especially meaningful for our Award recipients to use their talents to enable their peers to have the opportunities to pursue educational and artistic aspirations of their own as well."

Giving the Youth Excellence Initiative an even broader dimension, HSBC has extended its ambit to cover its collaboration with NYAA to promote youth excellence in leadership, environmental conservation and community service. As such, in addition to an artistic talent every year, HSBC also presents two outstanding youths with the HSBC Youth Excellence Award, which comes with a grant of \$10,000, which they can draw on for personal development or invest in a personal community project they must lead.

To promote excellence in youth enterprise, HSBC also supports the Lee Kuan Yew Global Business Plan Competition organised by the Singapore Management University to enable enterprising undergraduates to pit their best ideas, creativity and business acumen against their peers around the world.

While HSBC does not conduct its community involvement with winning awards in mind, recognition of its contribution has come in the form of prestigious national awards such as the Green Leaf Award in 1996, the inaugural President's Social Service Award in 2001, the Outstanding Corporate Volunteer of the Year Award in 2003, and the 2006 Corporate Citizen Award from the National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre.

As Mr Harvey-Samuel puts it, "These awards serve to encourage all of us at HSBC, in particular our volunteers, that we are on the right track in living up to our corporate responsibilities and making a real difference to the community."

HSBC was recently awarded the prestigious British Business Award for the CSR category. ■