

Truly, the global goals can only be met if we work together

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Leveraging global partnerships encapsulated in the 2030 sustainable development goal number 17 is a veritable way towards accomplishing quality education for sustainable environmental, economic, and social development. To this end, Muscat College, one of the older private higher educational institutions in Oman, is known for its unalloyed dedication to ensuring that its students are exposed to real-life industrial operations simultaneously with their studies. The spirit of cooperation, support, and a partnership were at full display recently when three of the College's students on the University of Stirling BA Honours in Business Studies programme received laurels in recognition of their distinguished achievement at Pearl Initiative Student Case Study Competition on Corporate Integrity in the Gulf Region in April 2020. The student's project was titled: Anti-Corruption Policy and Practices within the National Gas Company (NGC) Oman. The strategic relationship, town-gown partnership facilitated the capacity and experience of the students' team in gaining valuable insights into the sustainable practices of a reputed Omani corporate giant, NGC, Oman's largest LPG marketing company, with subsidiary operations across the Gulf region, Malaysia and India.

Using corporate data from primary and secondary sources, including a privileged interaction with the company's CEO, on 23rd December 2019, the student team successfully reviewed the development and implementation of anti-corruption policy and practices (ACPPs) at the NGC.

ACPPs are generally designed to eradicate or prevent dishonest or fraudulent conduct, including misuse of executive power for private gain. Aware of the various forms of corruption, notably, bribery, extortion, cronyism, nepotism, parochialism, patronage, influence peddling, graft, and embezzlement, and their damaging effects on national wellbeing, students were able to demonstrate ACPP's critical role in fostering good business practices of accountability and transparency in alignment with public expectation of ethical, moral, honest and transparent business environment.

The students found that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is about ethically doing business. Hence, at NGC, anti-corruption plays a critical role in the ethical functioning of its operations; it is the basis for getting and maintaining the company's clientele, helping the company to align with sustainable governance practices.

The students further documented that regular reviews, dedicated compliance structure, Systematic Employee Training Programmes (SETP), Policy Engagement Practices (PEPs), Clear Communication Strategy (CCS), Sanctions for Infractions (S4I), and Inclusive Accountability System (IAS), were among the key driving factors for effective policy embedding and enforcement. The imperatives for internal and external stakeholders' partnership in the formulation and successful implementation of proactive anti-corruption and bribery policies, were also stressed.

