



## CSR in MENA football: 'More than just a game'

*This case study is for the purposes of education only and does not suggest any good or bad practice on the part of anyone mentioned in the case study.*



September 2018: The Qatar Football Association (QFA) participates in the AFC Conference on Social Responsibility in Kuala Lumpur

Source:

<https://www.qfa.qa/qfa-features-at-afc-social-responsibility-meetings/>

<http://www.the-afc.com/news/afcsection/landmark-conference-underlines-football-s-social-impact>

**Neil Doncaster**

University of Liverpool

## **ABSTRACT**

This case study looks at Corporate Social Responsibility in football in the MENA region. The study briefly reviews the academic literature on the subject of business having a responsibility beyond merely profit maximisation.

The case study focuses on the Qatar Football Association and its activities in the sphere of Corporate Social Responsibility.

The study asks participants to consider why and how important third party commercial interests in the MENA region would want to partner with the QFA and how the QFA and the QNB Stars League seek to incorporate CSR into their own business strategies.

The objective of this study is to create a better understanding of the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility in general – and the impact that it is having on football in the MENA region.

## **INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW**

For several decades, the topic of the proper relationship between business and society has been debated intensely, both in academic research and in the reality of business practice. As far back as the 1950s and 1960s authors have debated whether businesses have social responsibilities, in addition to their more obvious economic responsibilities. The idea that businesses have responsibilities beyond profit maximisation is encapsulated in the term ‘Corporate Social Responsibility’, or ‘CSR’ for short.

Werther and Chandler define Corporate Social Responsibility (“CSR”) as “a view of the corporation and its role in society that assumes a responsibility among firms to pursue goals in addition to profit maximisation and a responsibility among a firm’s stakeholders to hold the firm accountable for its actions.”

Whilst there are many other definitions of CSR (Dahlrud 2006), literature offers two main views:

1. Business is only obliged to make profit, within the law, and is subject to minimal ethical constraints (Levitt 1958, Friedman 1962),
2. Business has a much broader range of obligations towards society (Andrews 1973, Davis and Blomstrom 1975).

Over time, a greater proportion of studies (and indeed businesses themselves) have adopted the latter view. However, there remains considerable debate about the extent to which (and indeed how) corporate entities should conduct their business activities in a socially responsible way.

Carroll (1999) described the evolution of modern CSR and suggests that Howard Bowen's work *Social Responsibility of the Businessman* (1953) is the birthplace of modern CSR literature. Bowen argued that modern business accumulates considerable power over people's lives and that businessmen are responsible not merely for the financial performance of their companies, but also for the consequences of their actions on all stakeholders.

Carroll (1991) suggests a pyramid of levels of responsibility:

Economic	}	<u>required</u> by society
Legal	}	<u>required</u> by society
Ethical	}	<u>expected</u> by society
Philanthropic	}	<u>desired</u> by society

Carroll further argues that Ethics should permeate the pyramid, influencing the other types of behaviour such that the economic activities and the legal responsibilities, as well as its social responsibilities, should all be conducted ethically.

In his 2011 paper, Visser refers to businesses existing in "an age of responsibility", but also highlights some of the challenges and criticisms which have more recently been levelled at multinational corporations in relation to adoption of CSR. He argues that CSR has

been very slow in its adoption by many, other than larger, businesses, that it is often not a central part of business strategy and that it has been viewed by some as uneconomic.

Figure 1:

<b>Curses</b>	<b>Nature of the Failing</b>
Peripheral CSR	CSR has remained largely restricted to the largest companies, and mostly confined to PR, or other departments, rather than being integrated across the business
Incremental CSR	CSR has adopted the quality management model, which results in incremental improvements that do not match the scale and urgency of the problems
Uneconomic CSR	CSR does not always make economic sense, as the short-term markets still reward companies that externalise their costs to society

Source: Visser 2011

Visser argues, therefore, for a new version of CSR, “*CSR 2.0*”, based on the four elements of: value creation, good governance, societal contribution and environmental integrity.

CSR has attracted a great deal of interest and debate in management and amongst economists. However, relatively little academic work has been carried out to understand the role of CSR in football.

In the context of professional football, renowned international consulting firm Deloitte has recommended that clubs integrate CSR into their business model in order to ensure healthy relationships with the communities that surround and sustain them.

On a global level, world football governing body FIFA has created a CSR unit.

### ***CSR in the MENA region***

The vision and mission of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) is to use football as a force for social development. In September 2018, delegates from right across the MENA region gathered in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia for the AFC Social Responsibility Conference.

With Europe's biggest leagues and clubs talking about big money games in foreign jurisdictions, club share sales and huge transfer fees, the AFC Social Responsibility Conference 2018 "provided a timely reminder that football has a far more important role than providing even more money for the super-rich".<sup>1</sup>

In his opening speech, AFC Social Responsibility Committee Chairman Ahmed Eid S. Al Harbi said:

"Football continues to make a difference in many parts of Asia and the AFC is determined to do more. We are fully committed towards strengthening our partnership with the world's best organisations to enhance the quality and reach of our programmes. Together, I am confident we can fulfil our purpose to serve the people in Asia who need us the most and to create a brighter and better future for tomorrow's generation through football."

HAWKAMA, the Institute for Corporate Governance in the MENA region, was established in 2006 to advance corporate governance reform. Awareness about the role and importance of CSR is also advanced by networks such as CSR Middle East, whose members include for-profit companies, NGOs, agencies and other organisations interested in promoting corporate citizenship, sustainability and other CSR initiatives.

'Generation Amazing' is a programme coordinated by the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy aimed at contributing to the lasting legacy of the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar and fulfilling Qatar's promise to use the global event of a FIFA World Cup as a catalyst for positive change in the MENA region and beyond.

Since the programme was established in 2010, it has reached 33,000 beneficiaries in six countries – Qatar, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Nepal and Pakistan, with further projects planned in Kuwait, Oman, India and the Philippines.<sup>2</sup>

## ***QFA CSR***

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1. "AFC conference sends reminder that football's social role is about more than money," Inside World Football (website), 26 September 2018, [insideworldfootball.com/2018/09/12/afc-conference-sends-reminder-footballs-social-role-money](https://insideworldfootball.com/2018/09/12/afc-conference-sends-reminder-footballs-social-role-money).

2. "Generation Amazing: Forging the 2022 FIFA World Cup™," StreetFootballWorld.Org (website), 4 May 2018, <https://streetfootballworld.org/latest/blog/generation-amazing-forging-2022-fifa-world-cup-legacy-0>.

The QFA has a designated CSR page on its website, setting out the following Vision, Mission and Values:

#### Vision

Football association characterized by leadership and creativity within the field of social work

#### Mission

QFA functions on all levels to enhance its role within the local community via social work

#### Values

One team work, striving for success, cooperation & synergy, creativity and stability

The QFA has also listed a number of obligations and CSR programmes:

#### Obligations

Urging all sectors of the local community to encourage the participation in the most popular game in the world through the following:

- Merge of football within the local community through purposeful social programs
- Involving all segments of local community in the tournaments and competitions organized by QFA
- Convening sports programs and initiatives related to football with the local community organizations as well as football fans
- Establishing the concept of (football for all) within the local community and renounce violence and intolerance in sports
- Social communication with the individuals/sectors in order to achieve QFA social vision

## Programs

All QFA social programs and projects depend on the responsibility towards the local community as well as the following targets:

- The use of football as a fundamental pillar within the local community
- Enhancing football culture, sports education, sportsmanship and their positive values upon all community members
- Focus on children and teenagers as well as produce social, cultural and educational programs related to football in order to introduce a football-loving generation
- Introduce sports community that admires Qatari football and national teams

In Manila in 2014, the QFA was awarded the AFC's Asian Dream Award in recognition of Qatar's positive initiatives in the area of social responsibility. The AFC award is given in recognition of those who share the values of Dream Asia, the AFC's social responsibility initiative, which promotes the culture of giving and emphasizes the power of football in bringing about positive change in Asian society.



February 2018: English Football Association Chairman Greg Clarke and Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy Secretary General HE Hassan Al Thawadi sign MoU. (Source: Supreme

Committee for Delivery and Legacy website, <https://www.sc.qa/en/news/english-football-association-chairman-signs-mou-with-sc>)

In February 2018, the Chairman of the English Football Association met with Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy Secretary General H E Hassan Al Thawadi and QFA President H E Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Thani in Doha to sign a memorandum of understanding (“MoU”).

The partnership will “help promote and improve football, share resources and expertise, develop knowledge, understanding and expansion of grassroots initiatives across the world and provide life skills to young and vulnerable people through combined CSR sporting programmes”.<sup>3</sup>

### ***Motives for Sponsorship***

Sponsorship has seen significant growth as a tool in the marketing communications mix over the last twenty years (Cunningham et al., 2009). IEG put the value of global sponsorship activity at \$62.7 billion in 2018, with growth of 4.3 per cent despite a levelling of sponsorship spend in North America.

There are a number of definitions of sponsorship such as that of Gardner and Shuman (1988) that sponsorship is investments in causes or events to support corporate objectives (for example, by enhancing corporate image) or marketing objectives (such as increasing brand awareness). Football plays an important role in the field of sport sponsorship. Football sponsorships include sponsorship of football and also of other football “properties” such as stadium naming rights.

International brands, such as QNB, Shell and Sony choose to sponsor football properties for a number of reasons.

The aims of football sponsorship can go beyond awareness, to a range of sponsorship

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3. “English Football Association signs MoUs with SC and QFA,” Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy (website), 14 February 2018, <https://www.sc.qa/en/news/english-football-association-chairman-signs-mou-with-sc>.

goals such as making associations between the values of the brand and the attributes of a football team or star or league (Cornwell and Maignan 2008). Two things about which there are consensus are that sponsorship involves an exchange between the sponsor and the sponsored property in which both parties gain some benefit, and that the sponsor and the sponsored property become associated in the minds of customers and other publics (Meenaghan 2001).

Motives for sponsorship can be commercial (for example increasing awareness of the brand) but can also be philanthropic or aim to enhance the social value offered by the sponsor, through goodwill and building relationships in the community.

## **REFLECTIONS**

This case study has looked at Corporate Social Responsibility in football in the MENA region. The decades-old questions about the right and proper relationship between business and society and whether businesses have responsibilities beyond mere profit maximisation, will continue to be debated across the globe by businesses and academics alike.

What appears clear is that CSR is becoming more and more relevant and important in the context of professional football.

How the QFA and the QNB Stars League seek to incorporate CSR into their own business strategies will undoubtedly be a key feature of the development of football in the MENA region over the next decade.

## Case Study Questions

1. Current QFA sponsors include Qatar National Bank, Shell, Sony, Qatargas, Nike, Qatar Airways, Toyota, Ooredoo, Alkass and Fifty One East. What are the reasons for such important brands in the MENA region to want to partner with the QFA?
2. In what ways do the QFA and the teams in the QNB Stars League incorporate CSR into their business strategy? Please list specific activities and initiatives that have been implemented by individual clubs, or at a league-wide level.
3. How successful have other countries in the MENA region been at integrating CSR into their club and league business models? What are the key barriers to them doing so successfully?

## Teaching Note

The case study looks at CSR and the important role of social responsibilities of organizations. There is a summary of different views of the role of organizations, whether they have social and philanthropic, as well as economic responsibilities.

The case study both discusses the CSR and social role of organizations within MENA football, but also the motives of organizations who sponsors these organizations.

**Question 1. Current QFA sponsors include Qatar National Bank, Shell, Sony, Qatargas, Nike, Qatar Airways, Toyota, Ooredoo, Alkass and Fifty One East. What are the reasons for such important brands in the MENA region to want to partner with the QFA?**

This question asks students to consider what is meant by sponsorship and whether the goals are necessarily commercial or whether the value gained from the relationship can be in building goodwill or social value.

Students might identify a range of motives for the different sponsorship relationships mentioned in the case study question. These might include building awareness of a brand with a target market, perhaps to showcasing products at sporting events and venues but also to creating positive associations with the sponsoring brand and building goodwill with customers in the MENA region.

**2. In what ways do the QFA and the teams in the QNB Stars League incorporate CSR into their business strategy? Please list specific activities and initiatives that have been implemented by individual clubs, or at a league-wide level.**

Some of the initiatives are identified in the case study, but students might also identify other initiatives either from their own research or experiences. As well as identifying the activities and initiatives which are used to incorporate CSR into the strategy of the QFA and the teams in the QNB Stars League, students should consider what these are and how they work.

**3. How successful have other countries in the MENA region been at integrating CSR into their club and league business models? What are the key barriers to them doing so successfully?**

The final question asks students to build on what they have learned from the case study, to identify other CSR initiatives that they can find, or have been involved in other countries in the MENA region. Students should provide an analysis of what constitutes “successful” in the context of CSR objectives, and whether these initiatives can be judged to be successful against these criteria.

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