

COMMUNICATION ON ENGAGEMENT (COE)



Period covered by this Communication on Engagement

From: 2015

To: 2016

Part I. Statement of Continued Support by the Chief Executive

28th January 2017

To our stakeholders:

I am pleased to confirm that the Sri Lanka Institute of Marketing reaffirms its support to the United Nations Global Compact and its Ten Principles in the areas of Human Rights, Labour, Environment and Anti-Corruption. This is our Communication on Engagement with the United Nations Global Compact. We welcome feedback on its contents.

In this Communication of Engagement, we describe the actions that our organization has taken to support the UN Global Compact and its Principles as suggested for an organization like ours. We also commit to sharing this information with our stakeholders using our primary channels of communication.

Sincerely yours,

Sanath Senanayake
CEO / Executive Director

SLIM in cooperation with the Department of Marketing, Faculty of Management & Finance of the University of Ruhuna, INDECOS and European Union celebrated the fourth consecutive CSR project branded “Gamata Marketing” in the year 2015/16. The project lead initiatives in the Bamboo, Refined Cane and Tally pot industries over the previous years and paid attention to the fisheries industry for its latest venture. Keeping with SLIM’s mission of Establishing Marketing as a driving force which enhances business and national value, the vision of the endeavor was to Identify and uplift unseen entrepreneurs in rural areas and emphasize the importance of marketing to enhance the living standards & maximize profit by supporting indigenous dying industries in Sri Lanka.

An investment of SLR.1.3million was made during the time span of 2years for the project with an expected outcome of empowering women in a selected fisher village in Matara with an intent to provide business ideas, opportunities, elevate the status of their living standards and provide them with the necessary support to add value to their businesses.

The programme schedule entailed training workshops, theoretical sessions on marketing, real life scenarios for the Ruhuna undergraduates who got an opportunity to put theory into practice, thus identifying marketing strategies and applying knowledge. Developing existing markets for the fisher folk locally and internationally may bring them revenue never dreamt of. SLIM firmly believes that persons engaged in the fishing industry will be strengthened as “Gamata Marketing” offers them an opportunity to stand on the shoulders of the giants.

Currently SLIM is developing a process to take an update on the participants of the fisheries project. In association with the Ruhuna University SLIM is carrying out a scaling up process for the next year by bringing the project to Colombo, the business hub of the country exposing the entrepreneurs to hotels, retail chains and other industry giants. Further the website www.slimgamatamarketing.com will expose the project to the world.

Part II. Description of Actions

SLIM as Sri Lanka's national body for marketing is poised to elevate the status of marketing in the country in a socially responsible manner. In line with this endeavour, SLIM has embarked on a CSR programme branded as "Gamata Marketing" which makes emphasis on the Triple bottom line, society, economy and environment.

The core objective of the "Gamata Marketing" programme was to make regional SMEs aware of marketing principles and its applications using relevant strategies and tools for effective targeting of customer segments. The main focus of this project was the empowerment of women in the fishing villages of Matara whose husbands and sons have been fishermen for longer periods of time.

For past four years Gamata Marketing has gone into the Bamboo, Refined Cane and Tally pot industries in the pursuit of delivering more specific products and services which satisfy segments effectively and efficiently than its competitors. This knowledge based initiative would help uplift their business performances to the next level from where it stands now. Streamlining their focus, attitudes and orientation towards market based product offerings is the Key to success.

SLIM collaborated with the Department of Marketing and the Faculty of Management and Finance of the University of Ruhuna, INDECOS and European Union in this venture, mainly with the aim of amplifying the performance of the fishing community in Matara.

The stakeholders

- Entrepreneurs – Fisher folk of Matara
- The undergraduates of University of Ruhuna

The Beneficiaries

- Women in the fishing village, who were the highest beneficiaries got the opportunity to add value to the products they market to earn an additional income.

The Problem

Most entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka confine to conventional methods or mimicking their peers in doing day-to-day businesses merely because they do not know what is meant by innovation. Yet SLIM personnel on their field visits and research have identified many people throughout the island who have rich innovative ideas. These people represent Colombo as well as suburban areas and villages. Thus SLIM identified the need to ignite the innovator in each of these entrepreneurs with a view to groom them to be resourceful business individuals.

The solution

SLIM with the ‘Gamata Marketing’ programme educated them on value-creation to their businesses via workshops and practical sessions with the help of undergraduates from the University of Ruhuna and other resource personnel. Marketing is an alien subject to the less educated entrepreneurs in the island. The regional fishing communities is one such segment. SLIM via the “Gamata Marketing’ programme made these communities aware of marketing principles and its applications and taught them in a very practical approach. We helped them to identify the ‘marketeer’ in them. Once they grasp the essence of marketing principals, apply them to their businesses and reap ‘tangible’ benefits, they realize the value of marketing implementation to their businesses. In the process some will excel to cater to Colombo niche markets and even beyond. This will contribute towards the GDP growth in the country in the long term.

Challenges

- Budgetary constraints emerged as the main challenge

However SLIM is determined to find sponsors by communicating the success stories of previous “Gamata Marketing” programmes to the corporate sector and other relevant segments in the society to arouse interest.

Impact of the programme/expected outcomes

- Education & increased awareness of the market:

Women play a vital role as entrepreneurs in this society. They have enormous capacity to indulge in sustainable businesses. Yet women living beyond urban and sub-urban areas of the country often lack the education and exposure to newest trends in the world. Thus they confine to conventional methods when engaging in business and home affairs. SLIM with Gamata Marketing intends to provide these women with business ideas, opportunities and also look forward to elevate the status of their living standards in the process. As sisters, mothers they could then add value to their families apart from adding value to their businesses.

- Attitudinal changes

The right attitude is Key to this process. If women are ready to move into new markets or develop their existing markets for their existing businesses and are confident of their capabilities, SLIM with the support of Ruhuna University via Gamata Marketing can provide them with the necessary support to add value to their businesses.

Part III. Measurement of Outcomes

- Where do we want to go?

Answers to these questions gives the project a distinctiveness and ensures effectiveness. 500 number of fisher families were targeted for the “Gamata Marketing” programme including 2000 number of women ranging from ages 20 to 45 The project is currently under the observation period giving time for the participants to implement the knowledge learnt in their own volition to their individual businesses. Improvement in revenue and standard of living will be measured eventually. The feedback received from the project participants have been very satisfactory. This feedback along with the lessons learnt over the last four years will be stepping stones for the project team in all the future ventures.

Creating opportunities to expose these businesses to Colombo is currently on the cards and in collaboration with Ruhuna University an update on the participants and the fisheries industry in Matara are being designed.