

# **Communication on Progress**

## **Implementing UN Global Compact Principles in the QI Group**



To Our Stakeholders:

I am pleased to confirm that the QI Group reaffirms its support of the Principles of the United Nations Global Compact.

We will continue to promote and enforce these Principles and to advance the broader United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs).

In this annual Communication on Progress, we describe our actions to continuously improve the integration of the UN Global Compact and its Principles into our business strategy, culture and daily operations. We also commit to share this information with our Stakeholders using our primary channels of communication.

Yours faithfully,

**Kunaseelan Senathirajah**  
Group Managing Director

## A. Human Rights Principles

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QI Group is committed to ensuring that all our employees, business partners and customers respect the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Based on our commitment, we have set up Standards of Conduct and guidelines to make our position clear to all our employees, suppliers and customers.

QI Group strongly believes that everyone has the right to a better life and education. Through the RYTHM Foundation, the QI Group's Social Impact Initiative, we invest in the communities in which we operate, through strategic partnerships, employee volunteering and community service.

An acronym for "Raise Yourself To Help Mankind", RYTHM, is the corporate heartbeat of the QI Group. The RYTHM Foundation's core values are built on the principles of empowerment, volunteerism, and resilience. Our vision is to empower lives and transform communities. We bring forth sustainable developments to the communities we serve, while being mindful and respectful towards the environment.

RYTHM Foundation strives to enforce the QI Group's aspirations and responsibility in playing a pivotal role in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). All projects supported by the Foundation are designed within the framework of three focus areas and contribute to various interrelated SDGs: Education for All, Gender Equality and Sustainable Community Development.

### 1. Education for All

We believe that education is a catalyst for social and economic transformation. We educate our children, we provide them with the tools to not only analyse challenges facing society, but also to uplift themselves and rise above their limitations.

Over the years, QI Group through the RYTHM Foundation has invested in projects that provide access to education to some of the most underserved communities in the world. The Foundation has provided scholarships, funded school programs, sponsored computer labs, educational supplies and infrastructures in several developing countries. We recognize that education is the greatest equalizer in the history of modern society, and we strive to contribute towards the promotion of an inclusive and equitable society.

Objectives to be achieved	Inputs/Resources	Outcome indicators	Impact
1. Build and upgrade education facilities that provide safe and effective learning environment for the poorer segment of the population.	Education materials, learning space, infrastructures.	Number of education facilities built, refurbished, and equipped with basic needs.	Enhance academic and creative literacy among the rural communities and poorer segment of the population.
2. Provide access to safe, equitable and affordable early childhood education to the neediest children,	Addressing basic needs of educations centres – nutritional meals, clean water and sanitation and transport facilities.	Number of Early Childhood programs and facilities established among rural communities.	Directly contribute to SDG 4.

<p>equipped with basic facilities (water, sanitation, nutritional meals, and space to explore their creativity).</p> <p>3. Ensure quality education and lifelong learning opportunities to poorer segment of population inclusive of boys, girls, women, men, and persons with disabilities.</p> <p>4. Invest in capacity building initiatives for teachers and service providers to be able to provide state-of-the-art learning programs to the learners.</p>	<p>Safe environment that enhances the creativity of the youth (i.e., playground).</p>	<p>Scholarship, access to nutritional meals, education materials, capacity building, programs, and vocational trainings.</p> <p>Number of teachers and service providers and their capacity to serve their beneficiaries efficiently.</p>	
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## 2. Gender Equality

One of the measures of a progressive society is the ability of women and men to enjoy equal opportunity across all levels.

RYTHM Foundation takes prides in curating programs and working with respected global partners to support projects that provide training and opportunities to young girls and women from disadvantaged or rural communities to become independent and learn to live to their fullest potential.

Objectives to be achieved	Inputs/Resources	Outcome indicators	Impact
<p>1. Ensure women from poorer segment of population have access to opportunities to upskill their livelihood, economic growth and be self-reliant.</p> <p>2. Ensure girls are equipped with skills to be self-reliant, have access to equal employment and are shaped to be leaders and to contribute to the social and economic development of their society and country.</p>	<p>Funding for programs that enhance women earning capacity.</p> <p>Training and capacity building program run by RYTHM Foundation. Nutritional meals. Shelter, Skills Enhancement and Behaviour Modification.</p>	<p>Women and girls who are actively engaged in income generating activities can earn and support themselves and their family.</p> <p>Number of girls who are empowered to be self-reliant and participate actively in social initiatives such as sports and vocational programs.</p>	<p>Empowerment of all women and girls critical to sustainable development and stronger societies.</p> <p>Directly contribute to SDG 5.</p>

3. Support organisations that empower women and girls and advocate for the elimination of all kinds of discriminations and harmful practices.		<p>Increase in the number of girls who gain employment through Foundation funded empowerment/social economic programs.</p> <p>Increase in the number of organizations that create awareness, prevention, and intervention programs to reduce or eliminate discrimination and harmful practices on girls and women.</p>	
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### 3. Sustainable Community Development

RYTHM Foundation has joined forces with partners in many developing countries to work at the grassroots level in efforts to upscale the social and economic status of rural communities and disadvantaged segments of society. Projects including building infrastructures for better living conditions and capacity building initiatives to improve social, economic, and environmental conditions.

Objectives to be achieved	Inputs/Resources	Outcome indicators	Impact
<p>1. Provide access to reliable, affordable, and sustainable clean water, improved sanitation, and modern energy services in rural areas for the poorest segment of the population.</p> <p>2. Ensure communities are educated and empowered to access and sustain clean water, sanitation, and modern energy services.</p> <p>3. Provide social and economic development programs to improve their quality of life.</p>	<p>Water and sanitation.</p> <p>Clean energy services.</p> <p>Programs that enable improved quality of life and sustainable earning capacity among the disadvantaged community.</p> <p>Community literacy program to achieve basic reading and writing skills to attain social mobility.</p>	<p>Rural areas with basic infrastructures.</p> <p>Awareness among rural and slum communities on the importance of sanitation and clean energy.</p> <p>Availability of job opportunities through Social Enterprise Initiatives.</p> <p>Basic reading and writing skills attained.</p>	<p>Develop sustainable infrastructures, systems and policies that improve the quality of life among the disadvantaged communities, particularly in rural and slum areas.</p> <p>Directly contribute to SDGs 8 &amp; 11.</p>

## **Implementation**

We have actively informed all our employees and candidates during the interview process, induction and onboarding program and our suppliers of the company's commitment to human rights and encouraged them to commit as well. An internal training system is in place where employees are trained with regards to the company's commitment.

We have ensured that our Workplace Violence Prevention Policy is ingrained in the training program offered to all our employees. QI Group strives to maintain a work environment that is free from violent behaviours. Managers are bound to act whenever violence, in any form, occurs.

We also ensure that the partnering organisations of the RYTHM Foundation adhere to the partnership's guidelines.

We have developed a Volunteer Code of Conduct which our employees will have to sign before engaging in our Staff Social Responsibility (SSR) program as we handle various community based SSR initiatives which include children, youth, and senior citizens. This Code of Conduct will provide guidelines on how all volunteers must conduct themselves in their interaction with one another, the community, and the beneficiaries.

## **Measurement of outcomes**

We have an open-door policy in place that encourages employees and partners to report back any suspected infringement of the company's Standards of Conduct.

QI Group's audit team evaluates businesses, suppliers and customers against a set of defined principles, policies and guidelines. A contravention of human rights will be documented, and the responsible partner will be placed on warning and probation and given a limited timeframe to address and resolve the issue. Continued non-compliance will result in the partner relationship being terminated. Our suppliers are also regularly audited to ensure that they are working within the defined guidelines of human rights.

An internally developed framework is used to measure RYTHM Foundation initiatives' social impact. We apply the same impact measuring guidelines to the partnering organizations. We always strive to identify, understand, and capture the full value of the impact of our activities. Measuring social impact will help us manage and communicate the social value that our work creates in a clear and consistent way.

More information about the projects and impact stories is available at <http://www.rythmfoundation.org/category/impact-stories/> and <https://www.rythmfoundation.org/news-events/>.

## **B. Labour Principles**

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QI Group believes in equal employment opportunity and is committed to providing to our employees - our most important resource - the opportunity to develop themselves to achieve their full potential, both personally and professionally. All employees regardless of age, grade, gender, disability, or ethnic background are encouraged to participate in personal and professional development programs.

Our HR team ensures that workplace policies and practices are fair and do not inhibit employees' potential. All employees are valued and respected and have opportunities to develop their full potential.

QI Group also actively promotes diversity and inclusion in the workplace as we believe that businesses have the transformative power to change and contribute to a more open, diverse, and inclusive society. QI Group has made the commitment to hire people from diverse backgrounds. We are proud to have an almost equal gender representation in our workplace, including in our management team. A growing number of millennials fuel a core part of our growth. We are not just diverse in terms of race and gender but also provide equal opportunities to the differently abled.

### **Implementation**

The HR team ensures that the recruiting policy reflects our commitment as an equal opportunity employer. We make sure that our job ads clearly state the QI Group's core values so that potential candidates have a clear understanding of our culture.

The QI Group is committed to actions that help and support the work life of our employees. This year, despite the limitations imposed by the pandemic, we have implemented several initiatives to foster a safe, open, and supportive working culture and environment and to ensure that all our employees receive the training opportunities they need to grow:

#### **1. Refreshed QI Group core values workshops**

As the QI Group continues to grow, we strive to empower people and make a positive impact around the world. It is vital for all our employees to live the core values which define our culture, our existence and the heart and soul of our company. The core values are the principles that guide us daily when serving our colleagues, customers, and communities. QI Group core values are:

#### **INTEGRITY**

Truth above all. Truth in all! Integrity in thought, word, and action.

#### **SERVICE**

We serve to lead and lead to serve. Service to all is our credo.

#### **SUSTAINABILITY**

We are merely caretakers for the next generation. We must preserve, sustain, and even resurrect.

#### **LEADERSHIP**

Lead to Inspire and Inspire to Lead! We nurture and inculcate entrepreneurial passion as the path to independence, inclusiveness, and innovation.

It has become evident that for QI Group to grow and thrive sustainably, our employees must be in alignment with the core values as they contribute to the overall success of the organization. In addition to the introduction to the core values of the company during onboarding, we also conduct a series of interactive workshops during regular intervals with employees to help them understand and live up to those values and inspire them to take positive action.

## 2. Revamped induction program

We have revamped our induction program. We are approaching the orientation process with the mindset that this is a critical period in the life of a new employee. What they experience during this process shapes how they feel about the company which in turn determines their level of commitment to the job. Our induction program strives to cover important milestones in the life of the new hire such as their experience in the first day, first week, and first month. A roadmap is laid out to cover these key milestones which allows us to shape the new employees' experience in the critical early stages.

## 3. Buddy program

We have implemented a buddy program for new hires by pairing up the new person with an experienced existing employee who can serve as a friend and guide during the first few months. We recognize that it is important to ensure that the new employees feel at home and engaged especially during the early stages of their employment. The seasoned employee will help the new person gain insights into the company's work culture and help them navigate workplace systems and processes better, which results in a quicker settling-in period. The buddy program is intended to encourage healthy workplace relationships that help the QI Group raise levels of employee engagement for new and existing employees alike.

## 4. Mentoring program

The mentoring programme is QI Group's investment in its future leaders. It is a structured framework designed to engage, develop, and retain high potential employees and to ensure that their professional learning and leadership skills are continually strengthened and sharpened in line with QI Group's core values. The program was launched in the later part of 2020 with the company's first cohort of mentees and is ongoing. We conduct regular check-ins with the mentors and mentees and at the end of the 1-year period, we will be evaluating the effectiveness of this programme.

## 5. Higher education opportunity program

We believe in investing in our people and offer them avenues for career development. Through the Quest International University (QIU) in Malaysia, we offer our employees the opportunity to earn an MBA degree at a very affordable cost, by subsidising their fees. Please find more information about QIU's MBA program at <http://www.qiup.edu.my/study/programmes/>.

## 6. Strengthening existing learning and training programs

We have always offered our employees the opportunities to attend specially designed personal development programmes which can help them become not just better individuals but better leaders, better managers, and better human beings. In the last year, due to social distancing and lockdowns around the world, we have adapted all our training programmes into the virtual format.

- i. **The Zone.** The Zone is a unique leadership development program spearheaded by the Executive Chairman of the QI Group. The participants are drawn from a combination of employees, the Board of Directors, and distributors of QI Group's direct selling business. Participants at the Zone go through 4 days of intense reflection and self-assessment to help them find their purpose. In 2020 and 2021, the Zone has been adapted into The Zone Connect programme that is conducted on a virtual platform.



- ii. **QI Rising.** QI Rising is a teambuilding training program that functions as a tool to develop and empower the next generation of leadership of the company. Participants are coached in developing an awareness of themselves as leaders and role models within an environment that allows for freedom of engagement, dialogue, and plurality of voices. The aim is to cultivate among key employees a sense of teamwork, self-confidence, and a spirit of ownership for the company's vision. In the last year and a half, QI Rising has been adapted into a virtual format called 2E sessions, focusing on building the second echelon of leadership for all managers and future managers.
- iii. **STEER.** A training program moderated by the Deputy Chairman, STEER helps build and develop people with the confidence in their ability to do great things for the benefit and progress of their careers and the company. An acronym for Service, Teamwork, Enrichment, Excellence and Resolve, STEER aims to develop amongst employees a strong commitment to delivering genuine, heartfelt SERVICE in their respective fields of work; a sense of TEAMWORK in terms of developing a meaningful understanding on how people are dependent on one another for success; a feeling of ENRICHMENT by nourishing the mental, emotional, and physical well-being; a culture of EXCELLENCE in everything they do and, ultimately, a RESOLVE amongst them in coming to terms with their identity, wellbeing, and purpose in the company. We were able to conduct the STEER programme in early 2020 before lockdowns were announced around the world. We look forward to resuming this programme once restrictions are eased.
- iv. **QiLearn.** Learning Management System (LMS)  
The company launched a brand-new eLearning portal, QiLearn, where employees can enrol in courses online – anywhere, anytime! Through this functional portal, which is powered by Agylia, one of the UK's largest bespoke eLearning companies, employees will not only be able to learn various essential skills, but they can do it right from their own desk, at their own time. The Agylia Learning Management System (LMS) enables companies to provide users with eLearning and microlearning courses, videos, and performance support materials. Learners can also access the Agylia Mobile Learning Application that allows on-the-go access to their lessons. Various topics that cover a broad spectrum of skills such as professional and self- development, leadership, technical and business expertise is offered on the QI Learn platform.

## 7. Community engagement

QI Group provides a purposeful opportunity for all employees to practice community service through the Staff Social Responsibility (SSR) program. Employees of the QI Group are encouraged to dedicate at least 16 hours of personal time each year to causes that benefit their local communities. In some cases, employees chose to dedicate more than the required 16 hours of time as they recognize the importance of serving others and helping to make a difference in their community. Despite the limitations imposed by the pandemic, our employees have continued to give back in their own way, by organising online/virtual fundraisers with friends and family to provide food and groceries to underserved communities affected by the pandemic, and supplies to frontline healthcare workers in many countries.

## 8. Introduction of the Flexitime

The QI Group recognises that a better work-life balance can improve employee motivation, performance, and productivity, and reduce stress. In June 2019, QI Group introduced the Flexitime policy to provide employees with flexible working hours allowing employees to have increased feeling of personal control over their schedule and work environment.

## **9. Whistleblowing policy**

We expect our employees to adhere to the highest standards of professionalism and ethics in the conduct of our business and professional activities. As part of good corporate governance, QI Group has established a whistleblowing policy that sets out avenues for concerns to be objectively investigated and addressed. Our employees will be able to raise concerns about illegal, unethical, or questionable practices in confidence and without any risk of reprisal.

## **10. Sexual harassment policy**

A workplace which is safe and respectful is very important to us and we are currently developing a policy on sexual harassment to encourage our employees to submit to a special committee any complaints they may have about sexual harassment at the workplace. We will provide guidelines on what constitutes sexual harassment and on the process for reporting and investigating claims.

## **11. Employee engagement survey**

We conduct periodic employee engagement surveys to get feedback from our employees. Engagement surveys are crucial because they give an opportunity for our employees to give feedback and for the management to listen to the pulse of our employees and to involve them more in our quest for excellence.

## **12. Employee Mental Health Program**

The QI Group takes a proactive step in supporting employees' mental health. Through a collaboration with Naluri, a global services provider specializing in mental health and wellness, the company is looking for a solution to proactively provide targeted, mental health support services for identified, at-risk employees located within 8 geographical offices around the world.

Following this initiative, the company will launch its Digital EAP 2.0 programme that provides tailored support services according to employees' risk profiles. The program will be (1) Results-based: We measure mental health to deliver targeted interventions to high-risk individuals and measure outcomes; (2) Structured: We provide long-term support and help employees achieve quantifiable health improvements through structured, personalized coaching; (3) Integrated: We use a multi-disciplinary coaching team where our psychologists are supported by other health coaches to provide holistic care.

## **13. Work-From-Home**

The QI Group has implemented Work-From-Home for employees in countries experiencing an increase in Covid-19 infection rates. This is a proactive precautionary measure taken to safeguard the health and safety of our employees.

## **14. Graduate Trainee Program**

The QI Group rolled out the Graduate Trainee Program (GTP) in 2020 to attract fresh university graduates with exemplary academic achievements to join the company. This is in line with the company's talent management initiative to build a sustainable talent pipeline for future leaders of the QI Group. These new Graduates have been assigned to various departments/functions along with a mentor. Regular assessments and check-ins are conducted with the participants of the programme and at the end of 12 months, they will have the opportunity to choose a new rotation in a different subsidiary of function within the group.

The qualification or eligibility criteria includes an undergraduate degree with First Class honours or equivalent in a relevant field of study from a reputable institution of higher learning. Graduates from Quest International University are also encouraged to apply to this programme. Other requirements include an outstanding extra-curricular track record and demonstrable behavioural attributes.

## **Measurement of outcomes**

Keeping records and monitoring activities help keep us accountable. We have internal systems in place to track the progress. Below are major highlights:

- **Inclusion and diversity in our workplace.**
  - Employees: 52% male, 48% female
  - Management: 56% male, 44% female
  - 53% of employees are millennials.
  - We have over 46 nationalities represented
- **Staff Social Responsibility (SSR) program.** Since the SSR program was initiated in 2013, QI Group employees have dedicated over 85,000 hours in more than 20 countries to volunteerism.
- **Refreshed core value workshops.** Over 375 employees have participated in 6 interactive workshops since the start of 2019. More virtual workshops are planned in the coming months.
- **Flexitime policy.** We have received positive feedbacks from our employees, many of whom have benefited from this policy, since its introduction in June 2019.
- **Subsidized QIU MBA Programme for employees.** This subsidised education programme has generated significant interest and some employees have already enrolled in the programme.

## C. Environmental Principles

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The QI Group is committed to making a sustainable social impact on everything we are involved in, be it business, philanthropy, investments, or sponsorships.

We support the UN Sustainable Development Goals to reduce the harmful impact on the environment. We are continually strengthening our policies and business practices to address how we engage with the environment and how we can advocate for a better world.

Safeguarding the Environment is one of the QI Group's sustainability pillars, next to Empowering People and Transforming Communities. As part of our commitment to sustainable practices we have established an internal Social Impact and Sustainability Committee that spearheads a number of initiatives and provides guidance on sustainability principles for business processes.

### 1. Advocacy for Plant Based Diet

Since our inception in 1998, QI Group has chosen to advocate for a plant-based diet. We believe we have a responsibility to the planet and to sustain its limited resources for future generations. It is a philosophy that we actively promote internally to our employees, though by no means is anyone forced to convert to vegetarianism.

All our company events and meetings are completely meat-free. We believe that going meat-free and embracing a plant-based diet is one of the most important things we can do to mitigate the harmful effects of the meat industry on the environment and combat climate change.

### 2. Elimination of Single-Use Plastics

We are determined to being a responsible consumer. Effective January 2019, the QI Group has made the decision to ban single-use plastics from all our offices, events, and conventions. Employees are actively encouraged to follow sustainable practices by eliminating plastic from their lifestyle and reusing and recycling more instead.

We have started taking the following measures to reduce our usage of single use plastics:

- Replacing plastic straws by bamboo straws in our resorts and hotels.
- A starter kit (a stainless-steel straw, a reusable mug, a foldable tote bag) is given to all employees to discourage them from using items like plastic straws, plastic cups, and plastic bags.

### 3. Eco-friendly Headquarters

In 2013, the Building and Construction Authority (BCA) of Singapore awarded its prestigious Green Mark Gold award to the 15-storey QI Tower in Malaysia - QI Group's operational headquarter - in recognition of its best practices in environmental design and performance which meet requirements for energy and water efficiency, building management, indoor environmental quality, and innovation. QI Tower saves at least 20 percent in energy and resources such as water and is Malaysia's first high-rise to be awarded the Green Mark Gold award.

When QI Group purchased the building in 2010, we decided it had to be modified in line with our goal on sustainability, leading not only to cost savings but a better and healthier environment for our employees.

#### **4. Sustainable Retail**

Our retail chain, Down to Earth, extends our advocacy for sustainability in business by fully supporting local farmers and vendors, and strengthening Hawaii's island community. The retail chain purchases over USD4 million in products from more than 400 local vendors each year. Down to Earth is also a strong supporter of Fair Trade, a social movement that helps farmers and artisans in developing countries to get better trading terms and promotes environmental sustainability.

#### **5. Sustainable Product Strategy**

We have the vision and the commitment to become a sustainable company that not only delivers financial results, but also seeks to create value that benefits our society and the planet thus contributing to the Group's triple bottom line (social, environmental, and financial).

In the spirit of product sustainability, our direct selling company QNET promotes purpose-driven products. QNET products are designed and developed to have a purpose, to have a positive impact on society and the environment.

QNET is also committed to sourcing only from sustainable and ethical suppliers. All QNET suppliers strictly adhere to QNET's Code of Conduct for Supply Chain Verification and address issues such as child labour, environment and safety, employee working conditions, etc.

QNET also focuses on sustainable packaging by using environmentally friendly materials and eliminating single-use plastic in all its products.

#### **6. Education in Sustainability**

Our education arm, Quest International University (QIU) in Malaysia, strongly believes that as a higher education institution, it is important to integrate sustainability into our academic activities to ensure that our graduates are fully immersed in sustainability practises that will educate and make them responsible citizens of the future.

"Sustainable Development in Malaysia" has been developed and offered as a MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) to all students from Oct/Nov 2020. It is categorised as a general education compulsory course for graduation. Elements of the course emphasise the SDGs and the implementation of the goals in actual events.

#### **7. Research in Solutions for Sustainability**

Research is a key focus of our university, QIU. It actively researches the causes and develops solutions for the SDGs. Currently, the University has 31 on-going research projects contributing to several SDGs, namely 2 (Zero Hunger), 3 (Good Health & Well Being), 6 (Clean Water & Sanitisation), 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), 14 (Life Below Water) and 15 (Life on Land).

Among the research areas covered are environmental technology, agriculture, aquaculture, plant molecular biology and medical entomology.

## 8. Leadership in Sustainability

We are constantly raising awareness and seeking opportunities to engage local and international communities and partners as advocates for the SDGs.

The QI Group is honoured to be featured in the **50 Sustainability & Climate Leaders** Project web series published on Bloomberg as well as the Global Thought Leaders series on CBS News. This project is a response from the international business community, comprising of prominent multinational companies that demonstrate the desire, leadership, and the will to take effective action in the fight against Climate Change.

Watch the QI Group documentary on CBS News - <https://www.cbsnews.com/video/qi-group-building-a-sustainable-world/#x>

Our education and research arm, QIU and its commitment to the SDGs has also been recognised by the international community after making its debut on the Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings 2021.

The Times Higher Education Impact Rankings are the only global performance tables that rank universities against the UN SDGs. The rankings use carefully calibrated indicators to provide comprehensive and balanced comparisons in three broad areas: research, outreach and stewardship.

QIU is one of 19 Malaysian universities that made it on the global list, ranking on the 601-800 range out of 1,115 institutions worldwide.

### Implementation

QI Group has taken the following measures to insure proper implementation of our environmental policies:

- Regular educational campaigns on the benefits of plant-based diet and lifestyle.
- Regular educational campaigns on the benefits of not using single-use plastic items.
- Employee engagement activities to promote compliance with the policies.
- Provide healthy and delicious vegetarian meals at company events.
- Run social media campaigns to promote healthy plant-based diets.
- Replace all plastic straws with bamboo straws in our resorts and hotels.
- Continue to pursue efforts to increase the use of sustainable materials in our products' sourcing and packaging.
- Educate and train our employees to adopt sustainable practices in the offices as well as at our events.
- Undertake research projects to provide solutions for the environment, e.g., creation of sustainable eco-friendly plastic sand bricks, detection, and identification of the types of microplastic in freshwater and elucidating the role of proline in enhancing phosphorus use efficiency in rice cultivation under phosphorus-deficient condition.
- Promoting energy saving initiatives - power saving, paperless, zero-waste.
- Strengthening business processes and SOP on sustainability efforts.
- Collaborated with strategic partners and participated in sustainability community events. E.g., Vegan Fest in Singapore and Green the Earth - 1 Million Trees Project, a collaboration between QIU and the local state government where 350 trees were planted.
- Organised a sustainability event - Sustainable Webinar 2020: The Role of Universities in Spearheading Sustainability, organised by QIU in collaboration with local and international universities from the US and Japan.

### Measurement of outcomes

QI Group has an open-door policy where feedbacks from employees on how we can improve are always encouraged and welcomed. Each policy has an owner and a team to monitor and report on the progress.

## **D. Anti-corruption Principles**

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Often times companies overlook the reasons why corruption, bribery, and other unethical practices are illegal and immoral. Of course, it creates unfair competition and certainly it is contrary to laws, however the longer lasting effects of corruption ensure no one comes out a winner. Corruption is destabilizing for economies, erodes political legitimacy, and tears the fabric of social cooperation. Markets without these three facets of life intact are not just poor for business to strive, but for people to strive. The cycle of corruption then continues until someone puts a stop to it. Only at that point can nations build themselves up.

That is the kind of change that QI group wants to be. QI Group has a zero-tolerance policy on corruption, bribery and extortion and pursues all of its business transactions in an honest and ethical manner. The following bribery policy is in the company's Standards of Conduct: "QI Group prohibits the offer, gift, or acceptance of a bribe in any form, including kickbacks, on any portion of a contract payment, or the use of other routes or channels to provide improper benefits to customers, agents, contractors, suppliers or employees of any such party's, 3rd parties or government/quasi government officials (regardless of any jurisdiction)".

QI Group prohibits an employee from arranging or accepting a bribe or kickback from customers, agents, contractors, suppliers, or employees of any such party or from government officials/quasi government (regardless of any jurisdiction), for the employee's benefit or that of the employee's family, friends, associates or acquaintances. This includes, without limitation, any indirect benefit or other benefit in kind which may be received. This is additionally important because that means the products or services we are sourcing from within markets not only represents fair trade, but growth to the best vendors possible. Growth in those businesses means we bring the best products to market and the market improves its homegrown businesses as well.

### **Implementation**

QI Group's Standards of Conduct include policies on anti-corruption and bribery and response to incidents. Violators of the policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. There is no room for those at QI that bring down our company or the countries we operate in.

### **Measurement of outcomes**

QI Group does not tolerate corruption or bribery in any of its locations. We have an open-door whistle-blower policy in place that encourages employees, partners and customers to report back if they suspect any infringement to our Standards of Conduct. Any reported corruption will be dealt with stringently in accordance with company policy.