

DUBAI ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE 2019

## Partnerships for Progress

Over the past few years, Dubai has risen as a regional association hub, with a rapidly developing association community that's offering plenty of advantages for organizations setting up shop in the ever-growing emirate.

This comes on the back of decades of economic diversification in the emirate and rapid progress in key sectors. Later this year, when the two-day Dubai Association Conference returns for its second edition, 9-10 December at the Dubai World Trade Centre, delegates will witness first-hand how building a community like the one underway in the emirate will drive forward positive societal impact for future generations to come.

Words Lane Nieset

At Dubai Association Conference 2019, attendees will explore how their association's main activities can—and should—generate true value and fuel innovation on a larger scale. The conference, titled "Driving Change: The Societal Impact of Associations" is divided into four pillars: Impact and Legacy—Key Concepts; Designing an Impact Management and Measurement Programme; Organizational Resilience and Foresighting; and The Art of Collaboration.

In previous issues, we honed in on the two-day conference and the first three pillars. Here, we'll dive deeper into the fourth and final pillar, **The Art of Collaboration**. The pillar's sessions will tackle global issues and address a key point: why associations should put partnerships at the core of their strategy for resilience and growth.

*"For associations, companies or institutions to be successful—or even to survive—in the 21<sup>st</sup>*



*century, they need to offer world-class services. That requires tight specialization and a ruthless focus on core competences. And this, in turn, explains why partnerships have become so essential,"* explains Martin Sirk, Global Association Hubs Partnership (GAHP) International Advisor and session facilitator at this year's conference. *"No organization ever has enough in-house knowledge, access to markets, skills, or innovative bandwidth to adequately exploit opportunities or deal with new challenges in our exponentially changing business and societal environment. I'm really looking forward to examining these strategic issues with the Dubai Association Conference delegates."*

According to conference program curator Geneviève Leclerc, CMP, president of Caravelle Strategies and co-founder & CEO of #MEET4IMPACT, one of the highlights of the inaugural conference in 2017 focused on the critical role of community or ecosystem approaches. At the time, HE Hamad Buamim, President & CEO of Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry, one of the founding partners of Dubai Association Centre, stressed that "Associations are

### Details on Dubai Association Centre

The Dubai Association Centre (DAC) was created in 2014 as demand for association engagement in the UAE and Middle East was on the rise. Now, over 60 associations that are licensed under DAC are helping to drive forward the knowledge economy in the wider region—and the world. "Since its establishment, DAC has grown to become a platform for international associations that simultaneously benefit from and contribute to the numerous opportunities Dubai has to offer as a global knowledge and business events hub," says Issam Kazim, CEO of Dubai Corporation for Tourism and Commerce Marketing, another founding partner behind DAC. "We are looking forward to the second edition of the Dubai Association Conference this year to further facilitate our transformation agenda as we work cohesively with key stakeholders to create an ecosystem for associations to prosper."

*among the biggest contributors of economic growth and business activity globally, and they are crucial for generating the flow of innovative and creative ideas that can add value to our society."* To which Leclerc adds: *"In the end, the conference underscored the importance of collaboration in building communities, and that these collaborations should involve as many stakeholders as possible, even going beyond local geographies."*

#### GLOBAL GOALS

In Pillar 4, sessions will focus on how the full potential of shared value in helping solve global issues can be unlocked through collaboration across sectors, crossing unconventional boundaries. "Through a culture of distributed leadership and multi-disciplinary approaches, internal collaboration can challenge teams to move mountains," Leclerc says. "Associations have traditionally been struggling at partnership building and many are reporting serious challenges when attempting to collaborate with other organizations

*in different sectors. Yet, collaboration and the ability to create strategic partnerships are essential skills to master in order to improve business outcomes."*

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will be weaved throughout the program in an effort to engage associations in a collaborative discussion on ways to develop a sector-wide approach to pursuing the UN's SDGs by 2030 through 17 goals designed around "peace, prosperity, people, planet, and partnerships."

At a session titled "Partnership for Purpose," Guy Bigwood, managing director of the Global Destination Sustainability Index, will lead an expert panel on SDG Goal 17: "Partnerships for the Goals." Attendees will hear case studies from associations and foundations who have maximized their impact and increased their range of benefits through global, multi-stakeholder collaboration projects. The following session will dive even deeper into these goals with a theme of "Roadmap to Agenda 2030," offering insight from speakers on how associations could come together to build a common roadmap to an association-sector approach to pursuing the SDGs.

*"Many sectors are implementing partnerships as a mainstay strategy: governments are working with the business sector; not-for-profits are embracing the agility and innovative mindset of young start-ups; industry is fueling its R&D with contributions from academia. But associations have looked to the outside sectors in the past mostly for fundraising, and have faced increasing difficulties in delivering the value that these external stakeholders expect from what used to be mostly a one-sided approach,"* Leclerc explains. *"A new approach for collaboration is needed, one that is centered around the notions of shared value and distributed leadership."*

For further information regarding registration, please contact Mr. Junjie Si via [Junjiesi@Dubaiassociationcentre.com](mailto:Junjiesi@Dubaiassociationcentre.com) or visit [www.dubaiaassociationconference.com](http://www.dubaiaassociationconference.com)