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Everyone Can Help Someone

BY ZARINA PASALIC · DIRECTOR OF DIGITAL EXPERIENCE · UNITED KINGDOM

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I've been with Cisco for just under 15 years. I'm passionate about customer success and I'm a digital fanatic who found my niche in the Digital Lifecycle Experiences team in EMEAR.

Zarina (blue coat, center) with the digital lifecycle experience team during an offsite meeting last year in Budapest.

Apart from being digitally obsessed, inspiring and impacting people with the "art of possible" drives me. Cisco encourages all our employees to give back, so helping those in need can become a reality.

What's Your Humanity Brand?

I've become familiar with product, personal, and employer branding throughout my time at Cisco. Until recently, I had not heard of "humanity branding".

Your humanity brand defines you as an active voice for inclusion, collaboration, and equality. For me, last year's challenges felt like the perfect time to bring humanity branding into my life.

Despite the current global pandemic's restrictions, the potential of digitally delivering hopes and dreams excites me. Keeping a charitable culture alive is still possible, even in a virtual environment. We just need to be even more creative and resilient!

Changed Plans, Same Mission

A year ago, my team and I started a project with SOS Children's Village in Morocco, a division of SOS Children's Village, which supports more than 61,000 children at risk in 134 countries.

Our plan was to make contributions to local Moroccan communities, including painting hospitals and schools, training students with soft and technical skills, and offering language assistance.

But when COVID-19 struck, we had to reassess things.

Visiting Morocco in-person isn't possible — at least for the near future. After much deliberation and consultation with my EMEAR CX team members, we decided to take a different approach with a digital volunteering program.

Our team visiting local communities in Morocco to assess their needs during a field trip in March 2019.

The Project Proceeds ... As Fully-Digital

Over the coming months, we will be working with SOS children between the ages of 14 and 20. We'll offer mentorship, coaching, and career support during regularly scheduled virtual sessions.

These sessions focus on teaching practical workplace skills, like creating an engaging CV, dressing for a job interview, and using social media for a job search. Cisco Networking Academy will provide invaluable support by presenting sessions on IT and cybersecurity. They'll even issue certifications to participants for future job references.

Additionally, we will begin working with young girls who aspire to have professional careers, but are otherwise restricted by cultural, social, and economic factors. We'll offer tools to help them achieve incremental success.

Our sessions aim to create tangible benefits to break the cycle of poverty and social exclusion. By furthering the SOS mission, we can build more opportunities for underprivileged children.

And that's just the beginning. Work with SOS will grow — hopes to pursue our in-person plans are merely paused.

Shaping Our Future Virtually

I hope my story inspires you to encourage your teams to give back virtually so future generations can build a more sustainable future.

Your personal commitment to help others is your unique humanity brand. And while we can't help everyone, everyone can help someone.

Employees can show their support by making a donation in Bright Funds which will be matched by Cisco.

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