

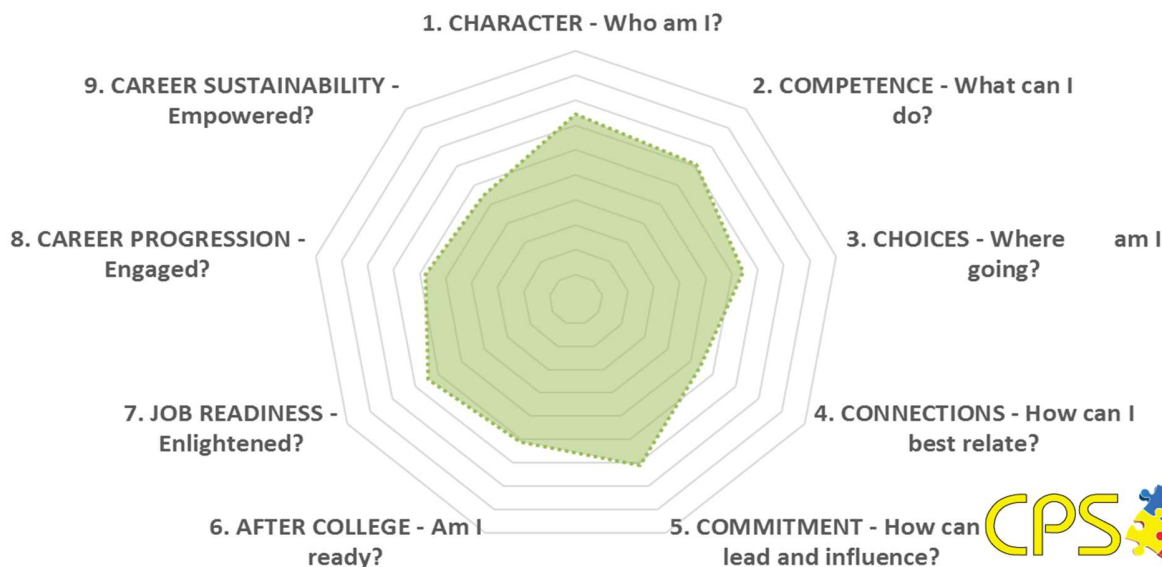
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CPS Success Story— Research Solutions

In February-March 2017, Port of Salalah in the Sultanate of Oman sponsored Creative People Solutions (CPS) to conduct the largest ever leadership development research amongst youth in Dhofar, in partnership with the College of Applied Sciences Salalah. This pioneering CSR project was funded by the Port of Salalah to understand and develop youth leadership needs among College students in Dhofar. 40% of employers in the Arab world identify skill shortages as a major constraint (World Bank Report 2013) so CPS set to find out the key soft skill gaps that students in Dhofar need to develop.

To provide practical experience of working in a team and professional experience on a real research project, CPS trained a team of 8 current students at the College of Applied Sciences Salalah to design, distribute and analyse the data. These student researchers distributed the survey among 50% of the student population at the College of Applied Sciences Salalah with statistically significant sample sizes from all years. A total of 315 students completed a 45 question survey. The survey measured 5 responses for each of the 9 key capabilities that CPS have identified youth need to thrive. The results provided fascinating insights that will help educators, parents and students in Dhofar. Students perceived themselves to be strongest in response to questions that measured "CHARACTER- WHO AM I?" and "COMPETENCE - What can I do?". Questions that students most strongly agreed with in the CHARACTER related questions included "I know my character and all my strengths and weaknesses" and "I have clear self identity and really know who I am". In the COMPETENCE related questions students most strongly agreed with "I am very confident and know who I am and I believe in my abilities". CAS Students self confidence (even to stand out before prospective employers) may seem as a surprise but as CAS Student Researcher, Muntasar Al Habsi clearly affirmed, 'We trust ourselves and our experiences', but this is also balanced by student researcher Amani Baomar's observation that "students need to see the benefits of extra activities and workshops that will really make them stand out since lots of other people have same degrees"!



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Students perceived themselves to be weakest in response to questions that measured "CONNECTIONS - How can I best relate?", "AFTER COLLEGE - Am I ready?" and "CAREER SUSTAINABILITY - Empowered?" Questions that students rated the lowest (identifying key development areas) across the 45 question survey were:

- *I am very FOCUSED and DISCIPLINED with purpose and determination*
- *In any conflict situation I can find WIN-WIN solutions*
- *I easily TRUST others and they easily TRUST me*
- *I can always manage my anger and frustration in healthy ways*
- *I have a lot of practical experience working in a team*
- *School/university has given me all the skills I need for a successful career*
- *I know exactly how to lead and influence others from where I am*
- *I have all the skills needed to excel in the global workplace*
- *I am well equipped to make career decisions*

To address these development needs, CPS recommended a series of actions steps to Leadership of the College of Applied Science, Salalah. CPS coached each of the student researchers to choose one of these development areas and conducted interviews and case studies with other students to understand the development area further. On the 28th March, these students each creatively presented their findings and inspiring stories of change to over 100 students, staff and leaders at the College of Applied Sciences along with Mr Mohammed Al Mashani, the GM of Corporate Affairs at Port of Salalah.



CAS Student researcher, Salma Al Burami observed, "*the problem is students are too motivated by marks and not on student activities that widen their experience*", and Ghalib Al Siayabi said '*students need to be motivated by how important we are and what we can be in the future and we need to learn to be motivated more internally by opportunities not externally with prizes and rewards*'. Much of motivation relates not just having a clear vision but a plan to achieve it with student researcher Qusai Al Yafai providing the insight, "*Many youth think vision is about a job, car and getting married, only some of us are thinking HOW will we achieve the vision*'.

After presenting the Student Researchers with CPS Certificates of Experience, Mike Pola, the CPS Middle East Regional Director who led the research project and coached the student researchers said, "*At CPS we believe that learning equals a change in behaviour. Students haven't learnt a thing until they can take action and use it. The aim is not for the research and learning to lead to just more knowledge, but to also lead to action and real change. What our team at CPS, Port of Salalah and College of Applied Science are ultimately aiming for in doing research like this is to help students discover how to start to change their behaviour now so that they can grow to be an influential leader in their community. The good news from this research is students seem ready to adapt to a changing environment in order to grow themselves and others, but one of the key paradigm shifts that we need to help them with is to move from seeing leadership as a position or job title to leadership as influence – so students can start getting experience leading and working in a team by positively influencing others today.*"

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Taking these research findings, with the support of Port of Salalah, CPS ran a practical, experiential development program to help both staff and students at College of Applied Science to discover their leadership potential. The Port of Salalah Leadership development program for 2016-2017 Academic Year at College of Applied Sciences climaxed with the CPS Youth Leadership workshop being conducted with 18 college students in the end of February. As part of their pioneering vision to use Corporate Social Responsibility to develop a future generation of leaders, **Port of Salalah** sponsored a group of 18 outstanding College students from the Communication, Business and IT departments to participate in a 5 day CPS Youth Leadership program hosted by the **College of Applied Science**, Salalah.



The program helped students discover answers to five crucial questions as highlighted by the research results: Who am I? What can I do? Where am I going? How can I best relate to others? and how can I lead myself and influence others? Mike Pola, the CPS Middle East Regional Director said *'answering these 5 questions helps students develop what we call the 5 C's – Character, Competence, Choices, Connections and Commitment. The CPS practical, challenging and fun experiential learning approach helps students discover many things about themselves and their classmates and we are always encouraged by their commitment to put what they learn into practice in their college, home and wider community'*.

In the final session, students each confidently shared their action plan and the impact of the program and how it has helped them discover and sharpen their leadership vision and potential. Attending this session was Dr Ahmed Balkhair, Dean of *College of Applied Sciences*, Mr Abdul Rauf Al-Oraimi, Director of Dean's Office and Mr Mohammed Al Mashani, GM of Corporate Affairs at *Port of Salalah* along with family members of students.



Participants gave the CPS Youth Leadership program an average score of 9.3 out of 10, describing the experience as **"AMAZING"** as summed up by final year IBA student Omais Salim Al Hinai, *"This program is more than wonderful and I have discovered my weaknesses and strengths. It helped me to discover that I am brilliant and every human being is something special. This training illuminates your path and opens your mind and helps me to be a better person and increased trust in myself. If I could continue with this training all my life I would!"*

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Every student had was eager to share testimonials about how the CPS Youth Leadership program has helped them discover their potential:

“Before I did not have a clear goal but now after this workshop I have everything clear in my mind”. Ghalib Mohammed Al Siyabi, Final Year Communication student.

“I realised the most important thing is the strong integrity and clear values needed to be an effective leader” Qusai Ahmed Abdullah Al Yafai, Second Year IBA student

“I improved myself more and more and I know where I am and who I am now. I discovered many things inside me that I want to develop” Alzahara Ali Masoud Bait Said, Final Year IBA Student

“This training helped me to discover that I have skills that I didn’t know about and it made my personality stronger and made me to think in a different way” Eman Abdurahim Mastakou, Final year IBA student

This was an exceptional experience and I am very happy to participate in it before I graduate and it is very useful for now and for future. It makes us feel that we are special and helped us to love ourselves” Safia Salim Amer Haedan, Final Year IBA Student.

“This CPS program is very helpful for students who want to improve their leadership skills and really I changed my ideas that there is no solution for weakness. Now I realise that improving my weaknesses will make me stronger than yesterday” Wiam Al Katheeri, 2nd year IBA Student.



CPS also measured pre and post training attitude and behavior change. The results indicate that there was a significant and genuine perceived improvement in attitudes and understanding of the key learning outcomes. In summary there was an overall improvement of more than 30% in understanding and attitudes about the key expected behaviours. Students have moved from scoring themselves an average 4.2/7 (60%) of key qualities of leadership to 6.6/7 (94%). This is a significant result in just 30 hours of development. Some key changes were **prior to the training** college students had an underdeveloped sense of personal identity (average 3.6) and Personal Vision (4.05) with their perceived ability to relate with others to be strongest (average 4.7). **Following the training** they saw their ability and understanding across all key outcomes to be significant improved (scoring themselves greater than 6), with hugest improvement in understanding their character, competence and commitment to lead. This provides objective evidence of clear growth in their ability to discover and understand the real essence of the 5 key learning outcomes to help *students discover the ‘5 C’s’ of leadership development – Character, Competence, Choices, Connections and Commitment.*

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