

Press Release



The Pearl Initiative and SABIC Engage with Saudi Youth to Break Biases in the Workplace

- Challenging bias is an enabler of change as Saudi Vision 2030 sets target of increasing women's participation in the workforce from 19.7% to 30%
- Pearl Initiative and SABIC have launched a youth awareness campaign for Saudi students to increase diversity & inclusion in the workplace

Sharjah, June xx, 2022: SABIC and the Pearl Initiative, a non-profit organization focused on corporate accountability and transparency in the Gulf region, launched a business series to raise awareness amongst university students on conscious and unconscious biases in the workplace.

Attending the first session in the series, over 30 students from King Saud University in Saudi Arabia discovered the importance of addressing potential biases in the workplace. The discussion focused on broadening the horizon of the future workforce and equipping students with the practical know-how and tools that will help them anticipate, overcome, and break the bias. The interactive session featured SABIC leaders in compliance, brand management and human resources, including Baker Sindi, Sr. Manager, Compliance Programmes Middle East & Africa; Lama Alhodaibi, Analyst Branding; and Shatha Al-Shammari, Specialist HR Business Partner for Engineering & Project Management. The speakers shared their personal experiences and examples of what successful business practices SABIC and other companies in the Gulf region have adopted to mitigate bias.

During the session, students were introduced to the different types of bias typically experienced in the workplace, such as ageism, gender bias and name bias, and how if left unchallenged, it might turn into or be perceived as discrimination and harassment. The facilitators from SABIC shared with the students comprehensible examples on how to measure bias in the workplace; through measuring pay discrepancies, career development and advancement opportunities, and compliance with employee rights and policies.

Commending the launch of the series and highlighting the importance of raising awareness amongst university students to adopt more robust corporate governance, Baker Sindi said, “It is our role as the business leaders of today to pave the way for future business leaders and prepare them to face challenges as they set out on their career journeys. This will help them make an impact and initiate change in the workplace. The first step is to appreciate the value of diversity as it fosters a more creative, innovative, and productive workforce, which is essential for businesses to compete in today’s volatile global economy.”

One of the students shared: “As a graduating senior setting out to explore different career opportunities, I’m very thankful for the Pearl Initiative and the speakers for giving me a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of unconscious bias. Their advice and rich experience opened my eyes to how I can shift my mindset and become someone who can take pride in doing the right thing and actively stop ingrained biases from influencing my decision-making.”

For universities in Saudi Arabia who wish to participate in upcoming sessions, reach out to the [Pearl Initiative](#) for further information.

Note for the Editors

About the Pearl Initiative

The Pearl Initiative is the Gulf region’s leading independent, non-profit organisation working to promote the business case for a corporate culture of accountability and transparency. The organisation was established in 2010 by regional business leaders in cooperation with the United Nations Office for Partnerships. The Pearl Initiative is the only private, non-profit Gulf business network to receive special consultative status from the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

The Pearl Initiative runs a series of corporate governance-related programmes, including Anti-Corruption Best Practices, Diversity in Business Leadership, Governance in MSMEs, Governance in Family Firms, Governance in Tech, and Governance in Philanthropy. The organisation also conducts locally relevant research, hosts workshops and executive education training sessions, and convenes business leaders, policy makers, students, and non-profit executives to encourage a proactive approach to implementing best practices in the workplace across the Gulf region.

With a growing network of over 40 regional and international partners, the Pearl Initiative continues to strive to be the leading business-led action-oriented platform to advance corporate governance as a key driver of competitiveness, job creation, and sustainable economic growth across the Gulf region.

For more information, please visit www.pearlinitiative.org and check out our Social Media Channels: @PearlInitiative on Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter and @ThePearlInitiative on LinkedIn and Instagram.