



Pearl Initiative (PI) in collaboration with SABIC organized an exclusive **Train the Trainer session on 'Gender and Anti-Corruption: Developed with the B20 Integrity and Compliance Task Force'** exclusively for all PI corporate partners to advance corporate governance in their respective companies.

The workshop was led by Baker A Sindi, Senior Manager, Compliance Programs MEA at SABIC and Shatha Awdah Al-Shammari, Specialist Human Resources Business Partner at SABIC. The session was designed to educate and empower women to identify and report corruption in the workplace. The training session would also serve as a great resource for PI partner companies to train women employees within their company and look at developing policies and processes to support women employees. Participants engaged in discussions, role plays, case studies and shared their personal experiences and responses with the group.

The session focused on addressing some key questions on corruption in business and the workplace:

- What are the different forms of corruption and its key effects in the modern workplace?
- What are different ways in which women experience corruption?
- What are the different compliance challenges that organizations face in tackling corruption?
- What are some of the techniques to detect, prevent and report corruption?
- How can a business adopt a more gender-focused orientation in designing an anti-bribery programme?

## Key Learnings & Insights:

- Studies in behavioral and social sciences have found differing patterns of attitudes and behavior between men and women when it comes to social issues, risk-taking and criminal behavior
- As stated in the survey by the United Nations Development Programme - 76% of women responded that corruption has prevented their access to public goods and services
- Several studies suggest that women tend to be less corrupt and that countries or companies with a greater number of women in decision-making positions perform better in terms of their corruption levels
- Corruption leads to a series of reputational, legal and financial risks to any business entity
- Research and the discussion highlighted that; women experience high levels of corruption in every step of the economic cycle in the business world
- Research also indicates that 60% of violations related to corruption, ethics and compliance are never reported, while 24% of violations reported are not actioned upon by the firm
- It is often observed that employees avoid reporting issues related to corruption and ethics in their firms as they fear retaliation and the destruction of other people's careers
- A gender-equal top-management improves the opportunities for women, boosts the financial performance of a company and increases its transparency
- With the growing number of indirect and direct cases of bribery and corruption in the business community, there is a strong need to create a robust anti-bribery program and pave the way for a strong corporate culture of advocacy.

## Two key questions discussed:

### A. How can organizations help other women fight corruption?

- Ensure a good tone of compliance and openness to hearing issues from your employees and colleagues
- A company's anti-bribery program can be enhanced by incorporating a gender-based focus
- Find out about specific experiences and risks faced by women in your company and supply chain
- Ensure a robust whistleblower program where women feel safe to raise concerns
- Consider establishing a gender-specific response team in addition to other whistleblowing channels (i.e. women report to women)
- Anonymous reporting tools can be considered to help women feel more comfortable with reporting, especially in countries where retaliation by those accused may take place
- Reward good and ethical behavior – support women in bringing issues to your attention and make them feel appreciated
- Foster women's networking and discussion groups where women can talk over their experiences
- Engage with local advocacy groups to find out what others are doing and have a greater impact
- Connect with business federations as many will have special sections established for ethics and compliance

### B. How can I help other women fight corruption?

- Know what internal and external whistleblowing channels are available to raise concerns at the start of a project

- Let women in your company know that they can always come to you to discuss concerns confidentially if they do not feel comfortable using an official whistleblowing channel
- Support women to draft written statements if necessary
- Work collectively with others to stand up against corruption
- Speak out on social media - #womenagainstcorruption
- Fear of Retaliation or the sense that there is no reward for doing so may stop women from reporting. It is important to have the appropriate internal channels to encourage women to raise concerns confidentially
- You can encourage women to talk to you in a safe, women-only environment
- Show appreciation for their courage to come forward
- Reassure women that they won't lose their jobs by speaking up

The session provided women leaders from different organization the opportunity to discuss situations and challenges when tackling corruption and share insights on how they handled various situations.