

PRESS RELEASE

The Pearl Initiative and SABIC Collaborate to Raise Awareness on Conscious and Unconscious Biases

- Study from the Center for Talent Innovation titled "Disrupt Bias, Drive Value" shows that approximately 33% of those who experienced workplace bias reported feeling alienated and disengaged.
- A Gallup survey estimates that active disengagement costs U.S. companies \$450 billion to \$550 billion per year.

The Pearl Initiative, a business-led non-profit organisation focused on promoting corporate accountability in the Gulf region's private sector, recently collaborated with SABIC to conduct a series of sessions under the theme 'Break the Bias'. The aim of the series was to raise awareness amongst university students on conscious and unconscious bias as well as ways to prevent them utilising best practices implemented by SABIC.

Over 850 students from six different universities in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and the UAE participated in the sessions. The initiative introduced different types of workplace bias, such as ageism, gender bias, and name bias, and how they may lead to discrimination and harassment if left unchallenged.

During the sessions, senior leaders from SABIC, Baker A Sindi Sr. Manager, Compliance Programs MEA and Shatha Awdah Al-Shammari, Sr. Manager, New Hire Experience discussed with students' examples of different types and levels of bias.

"As business leaders, it is our role to prepare the leaders of tomorrow by ensuring they understand and appreciate the value of diversity and inclusivity for fostering creative, innovative, and productive workplaces. By partnering with the Pearl Initiative in this 'Break the Bias' initiative, we will ensure that future workforces are aware of their rights, trained to recognise and understand bias, both conscious and unconscious, and are equipped with the resources and tools to overcome the associated challenges" said Baker Sindi

Bias in the workplace leads to social isolation, withdrawal, and health issues and impacts employee productivity and retention levels. In addition, it is estimated that active disengagement costs economies billions every year. Gallup estimated that active disengagement due to workplace bias costs US companies \$450 billion to \$550 billion per year. A recent study from the Center for Talent Innovation titled "Disrupt Bias, Drive Value" shows that 33% of those who reported experiencing bias felt alienated, and 34% withheld ideas and solutions. In addition, approximately 80% of those surveyed said they would not refer people to their employer if they experienced workplace bias.

Vineetha Mathew, Senior Advisor Programmes at Pearl Initiative said: "The effects of conscious and unconscious bias at work can be detrimental not only to individuals, but also to the wider workplace, economy, and society. By raising awareness of these biases among young people, we can take a crucial step towards building a more inclusive and equitable society. This approach not only fosters critical thinking but also facilitates dialogue and strategies for managing these biases in the workplace."

Following the sessions, students reported that the training was both informative and engaging and equipped them with tools to identify and recognise bias in the workplace.

The 'Break the Bias' initiative is a collaboration between the Pearl Initiative and SABIC. The series was organised to engage SABIC youth programs 'By Youth, For Youth' with youth across the Gulf region. SABIC has several youth programs such as Young Leadership Council and Young SABIC Professionals.

For information on partnerships and trainings please contact the Pearl Initiative at enquiries@pearlinitiative.org

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Notes to 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.

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