Creating a Workplace Culture that Fosters Accountability

Workshop 1

Roundtable 1: Gender, Workplace Culture, Accountability
Roundtable 2: Perceptions, Practices, and Barriers
Roundtable 3: Strategies and Accountability Mechanisms

The Pearl Initiative in partnership with SABIC hosted a workshop titled, '**Creating a Workplace Culture that Fosters Accountability' on July 15, 2025 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.**

Diversity and Inclusion are vital drivers for business success, fostering innovation and resilience. However, many organisations treat diversity and inclusion as isolated initiatives rather than as an integral part of the culture. Through facilitated roundtable discussions the workshop explored the critical role of accountability in cultivating and sustaining an inclusive workplace.

Below are the key insights from the discussion:

1. Leadership and Accountability

- Leaders should serve as role models, encouraging team members to take accountability for their actions.
- Leadership plays a crucial role in shaping workplace culture and ensuring inclusion is not just policy but practice.
- Leading by example is about small daily actions, not just statements.

2. Inclusion and Culture

- Inclusion should be context-sensitive, acknowledging that women may prefer women-only spaces for cultural reasons.
- True inclusion means offering choice and respecting cultural norms, rather than enforcing one-size-fits-all approaches.
- Inclusive policies must be localised and adaptive, not just adopted from global models.

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3. Challenges in Embedding Inclusion

- Lack of transparency about policies, their purpose, and their impact.
- Poor enforcement and weak implementation of inclusion policies.
- Limited accountability, often disconnected from responsibility and transparency.
- Conscious and unconscious biases require active mitigation through training, simulations, and case studies.

4. Organisational Practices

- Organisations must start small and scale diversity and inclusion efforts piloting in one department can build momentum.
- Regular internal workshops and feedback help identify barriers and ensure inclusiveness is ongoing.
- Proactive engagement and insights are vital to shaping relevant and effective inclusion practices.

5. Employee Voice and Safe Spaces

- Mechanisms like ethics officers, anonymous hotlines, and external legal support help build trust.
- Employees need safe spaces to raise concerns or seek guidance, even on non-reportable discomforts.
- Confidential feedback systems help measure sentiment and guide improvement.

6. Structural and Societal Influence

- Organisational culture exists within **three concentric circles**:
    i. The organisation itself.
    ii. The national/regional context (laws, culture).
    iii. The global/international policy environment.
- Aligning these layers fosters deeper integration of inclusion and governance.

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7. Measurement and Evaluation

- 360° evaluations, attendance data, internal mobility, and turnover trends are useful engagement indicators.
- External facilitation of surveys ensures confidentiality and trust.
- Blending HR, EHS, and compliance data provides a holistic picture of organisational health.
- Inclusion should be evaluated using qualitative narratives alongside data; stories reveal deeper insights.
- Effective evaluation blends anonymous surveys, 360-degree feedback, and HR/compliance collaboration.
- Metrics should go beyond representation (e.g., gender ratios) and focus on impact and inclusion across all levels.

8. Well-Intentioned Actions Can Be Counterproductive

- Inclusion efforts, if poorly executed, can alienate or demoralise staff despite good intentions.
- Tokenism and superficial diversity metrics without culture change undermine trust.