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Disclaimer

The recommendations presented in this report do not necessarily represent the views of the project sponsors, Our Youth Our Future program and the Saudi Arabian Royal Dutch Embassy. The findings should be viewed as independent research adding to the thought leadership within the space of diversity and inclusion.
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FOREWORD

We are in a period of strong transformation within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for women in the workforce. We foresee significant positive change in the coming decade for the Kingdom. Key stakeholders are working coherently to support this change that will, in our view, lead to further economic development and prosperity, increased competitiveness and enhanced equality.

AccountAbility and Glowork have partnered to explore beyond the theme of female employment, to assess the landscape of women in management and leadership in the Kingdom. This analysis would not have been possible without the generous time and insights of the individuals and organizations who responded to our survey and interview requests. Further, we’d like to formally thank our sponsors, Our Youth Our Future program and the Embassy of the Kingdom of Netherlands who share our commitment to this topic and journey.

We strongly believe in the positive and sustainable value that can be created with diversity in management and leadership of organizations. Diversity brings new perspectives, it brings new skills and new ambitions that add strength to an organization’s ability to strategize, to communicate and to deliver in society.

We also recognize that progress is based on partnership and collaboration. We can be inspired by the efforts of select organizations that have risen to the challenge of gender equality and appointed female leaders. We can learn from their experiences and insights. Above all, we need a variety of stakeholders in the Kingdom to work side-by-side, constructively and coherently.

The government has set a strong and achievable ambition with Vision 2030, together with concrete objectives for empowering and integrating women in the workforce. We need the relevant organizations in the public sector to work effectively together with the private sector, the not-for-profit organizations and Academia to chip away at the barriers to gender equality step by step. Together, we need to build a strong foundation of relevant and well-targeted policies, programs and initiatives to support women in their career development and ultimately into management and leadership roles so that the Kingdom can reap the rewards.

AccountAbility and Glowork look forward to actively supporting this journey, to strengthening current employment practices and the lives of the talented women who have so much to contribute to the Saudi economy. We sincerely hope that this research provides a platform for further debate, discussion and work in this area.

David Pritchett                        Khalid AlKhudair
Global Head of Research                Founder and CEO
AccountAbility                          Glowork
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Saudi Arabia has seen significant development throughout the past years targeting female inclusion, empowerment and development. Building on past progress, the recently launched Saudi Vision 2030 aims to improve the status of female employment, targeting an increase of 8% in the percentage of women employed by 2030.

However, the current participation of women in the Saudi labor force, notably in the private sector, remains low. Similarly, the proportion of women reaching management and leadership levels is low when compared to the global or regional average. The Global Gender Gap Report (2015) places Saudi Arabia in the lowest quartile of participating countries, with a gender equality percentage score of 60.5%. This indicates the need for further female-oriented policies and actions in order to increase the economic participation and opportunity for women, and encourage their career advancement.

This report evaluates the landscape of women’s employment and career development practices in Saudi Arabia and explores existing structures that support the progression of women into management and leadership positions.

The key findings of this research are as follows:

• Positive outlook with regard to women employment, with one in two survey participants reporting that women make up more than 15% of their workforce.

• An underrepresentation of women in management and leadership positions is evident, as one in two survey participants employ less than 1% of women in leadership roles.

• Companies are beginning to realize the value of investing in an inclusive workforce, with three in four participants acknowledging the productivity gains brought to their workforce by engaging in female employment.

• Diversity and inclusion motivations appear to be why most organizations support women advancement into management and leadership positions. This was a driver for more than two in five survey participants.

• Organizations are increasingly providing professional development structures for female employees, with business travel opportunities and formal management training and development implemented by close to 60% of the survey participants.

Based on these findings, the report concludes with recommendations for how key decision-makers can contribute towards greater female inclusion and career advancement throughout the Kingdom.
1. WOMEN IN MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

1.1. Overview of Global State

Gender diversity in management and leadership roles has become a key enabler of effective business management. Companies finding themselves in the top quartile for gender diversity are reported to perform better financially compared to the national industry medians.

Even though the topic is high on corporate agendas, progress remains slow, as presented by a recent report exploring female leadership in business, highlighting that the level of women in senior roles has increased by 3% globally, in the past five years, reaching a level of 24% (Figure 1). Furthermore, a third of businesses, globally, do not have any women in senior management, while, on average, 40% of businesses in the G7 countries do not employ women in senior roles. Typical roles held by women in senior roles, in order of frequency, are Human Resources Director and Chief Financial Officer, followed by Chief Marketing Officer, Corporate Controller, Chief Executive Officer, Chief Operating Officer and Sales Director.

A variation among gender leadership and the proportion of women in management and leadership positions becomes evident on a regional and continental level. The Global Gender Gap Report, established in 2006 and published yearly by the World Economic Forum, analyses each country's state of gender equality in four different aspects: economic participation, education, health and political empowerment; and shows the effort countries.
make to close the gender gap. In the latest report published in 2015, North America, Europe and Central Asia lead the field in the Index overall, followed by Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific, Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa. However, there is a fair amount of variation within each region. The global average of the 145 countries covered in the Report is 96% equality in health and 95% in educational outcomes, however only 59% equality in economic and 23% in political participation.

Instituting policies and defined structures have proven to be an important step which policymakers within government and businesses can take in order to promote gender equality. If effectively designed and consistently adhered to, policies can enable women to build successful careers and take on diverse roles in an organization. Countries who lead in empowering women in business generally have some form of gender equality legislation in place, e.g. Canada, Australia and South Africa.

As research indicates, an increasing female participation in the workforce obviously helps, but does not directly link to an increase in the proportion of female managers. Russia, for example, is reported to have the highest participation of women working in the public sector equal to 71%, however only 13% of those are in leadership positions. A number of obstacles have led to the existence of a so-called “glass ceiling” for women with regard to reaching higher management levels, such as social and cultural norms, unequal pay, or lack of support structures such as affordable childcare.

Additional determinants have been indicated in the research, which hinder women from reaching management and leadership levels. One primary factor impacting the opportunities women are given in terms of becoming leaders is the traditional “alpha male” image of a leader, which is based on the historical understanding of leadership as “command and control”. However, nowadays’ expectations of a leader’s character are different, as stated by Grant Thornton. 35% of senior business people report that communication is the most important attribute of a business leader, 31% inspirational vision and 25% the ability to delegate. In addition, collaboration skills are becoming increasingly more important. Research implies, however, that men and women portray different characteristics; women have a preference for two-way conversations over one-way communication, and they expect leaders to be willing to listen to others. Women are also more inclined towards collaboration than delegation.

Balancing family and career responsibilities remains a major obstacle for women in the workplace. The establishment of childcare support policies is critical to help retain female employees in the workforce and enable their career advancement. Examples of where this is missing can be seen in Germany where the country has a tax system which favors traditional families. The lack of childcare —access to day care is limited to only 18% of German children below two — means women are often forced to quit their career midway through. The situation is similar in Japan, where 70% of women quit their career completely after their first child.

Definition of “Glass ceiling”: Invisible but real barrier through which the next stage or level of advancement can be seen, but cannot be reached by a section of qualified and deserving employees. Such barriers exist due to implicit prejudice on the basis of age, ethnicity, political or religious affiliation, and/or sex. (www.businessdictionary.com)
1.2. The Current State in the Kingdom

The past years have seen multiple policy enhancements and female-oriented measures to support the empowerment of women in the Saudi society. The private sector is increasingly realizing the value of female participation in workforce. Despite the positive experiences over the past two decades with regard to female empowerment, Saudi Arabia still scores relatively poorly in terms of women participation and advancement within the workforce.

There was limited improvement on the employment status of women in Saudi Arabia between 2011 and 2015, as shown by the country’s latest government statistics. Female economic participation remains low (17.3%), however slightly increased since 2011 (14.4%) (see Figure 2). Going back to as far as the adoption of the 4th Development Plan, economic participation of Saudi women was 4.2% in 1990, showing an increase of more than 13% to the 2015 level.

A limited participation of women in management and leadership positions is indicated by the Labor Force Survey reporting 3.2% of female managers as a proportion of Saudi female employees within the workforce. At the same time, male managers are reported to constitute 6.8% of Saudi male employees within the workforce. Additional literature sources place the percentage of women holding senior legislative and managing roles within the Kingdom at 7%, as a percentage of total available positions. In terms of gender diversity within the Boardroom, the same source reports a 0.1% proportion of female seats held by women.

![FIGURE2: EMPLOYMENT IN THE KINGDOM](image-url)

This figure presents the development pattern of the Saudi workforce participation from 2011 to 2015. Arrows indicate an increase/decrease of the 2015 state compared to the 2011 levels.
Research indicates that the level of international competitiveness of Saudi organizations is strongly linked to the successful integration of women with strong skills both into the job market and management positions. A large percentage of employed and unemployed Saudi women appear to hold some level of academic degree, indicating that access to education is not a hindrance for the employment and advancement of women. This observation is supported by a study published by the Pearl Initiative which shows that 52% of students enrolled in tertiary education are female. However, Saudi Arabia presents the lowest female participation rate (20%) in the workforce compared to most other GCC countries, which have rates over 32%.

The Kingdom displays potential for improvement with regard to gender equality and female empowerment. According to the Global Gender Gap Report 2015, Saudi Arabia ranked 134th out of 145 countries, with an overall score indicating 60.5% equality. The country received a near perfect score in terms of educational attainment as well as health and survival, however, performed poorly with regard to economic participation and opportunity. It is noteworthy that the country received an average score for its wage equality for similar work, however scored significantly below the average for women legislators, senior officials and managers.

Multiple barriers to the career advancement of women exist in Saudi Arabia, as underlined in the literature. This is particularly true in the GCC states. A deeply rooted obstacle is cultural practices, such as defined gender roles, gender-based occupations, and restrictions of interactions between men and women. Furthermore, the family network seems to be crucial in recruitment and selection processes, often over-riding qualifications. Senior executives of organizations in the region address the four biggest barriers to female leaders:

1. the double-burden syndrome
2. lack of pro-family public policies and support
3. social expectations to not work continuously
4. lack of culturally acceptable, gender-appropriate infrastructure

Moreover, the lack of empowerment and female role models is also a significant obstacle to female leadership in Saudi Arabia. Some sectors are more advanced than others in terms of diversity, but there is still a strong social pressure for women to take jobs in healthcare and education. Female leaders interviewed by the Pearl Initiative feel that “society as a whole is still not entirely supportive of women in the workplace, and even less of women in senior roles.”

Young Saudi women who are skilled, ambitious and just about to enter the workforce have high expectations for their career opportunities. The Saudi Vision 2030 captures this strong ambition of its female citizens and has the potential to successfully provide equal opportunities for them. The Vision 2030 aims to strengthen their future and contribute to the development of our society and economy and ultimately to increase women’s participation in the workforce to 30% by 2030.

Definition of “double burden”: a term used to describe the workload of people who work to earn money, but who are also responsible for significant amounts of unpaid domestic labor. (Phyllis Moen (1989). Working Parents. University of Wisconsin Press)
2. OUR RESEARCH

2.1. Introduction and Purpose

The primary goal of this research is to add to the overall understanding of the Kingdom’s workforce by exploring the ways that KSA employers support the advancement of women’s careers into management and their underlying motivations for doing so. Analysis of this research will help to develop practical and actionable recommendations for both employers and public policymakers on how to improve opportunities for developing female management and leadership talent. More specifically we aim to:

- Understand the current state of women in management and leadership positions both in the Kingdom and globally
- Identify and analyze current and future challenges and opportunities for female management and leadership
- Highlight examples of leading practices through case studies
- Provide practical recommendations for employers, as well as strategic policy recommendations

Research Methodology

Data collection was conducted through an online survey, interviews with a selected number of companies and independent research. To achieve the most representative dataset possible, more than 300 small medium and large companies in the Kingdom were contacted from a variety of industries, including: consumer goods, hotel and tourism, banking and financial services, transport and logistics, retail, telecommunications and information technology, oil and gas, petrochemical, agriculture and food, professional services, industrial investment, education, building and construction, manufacturing, healthcare, and non-profits.

Online Survey

The online survey was compiled of 15 questions and targeted individuals who were able to comment on:

- KPIs of female employment at their organization
- Practices and policies in place at their firm to support female employees in general, and women in managerial roles in particular
- Hurdles with regard to career advancement into management and leadership positions
- Policy implications

Interviews

Further to the online survey, a number of interviews were conducted with female representatives of selected companies which possess a significant share of women in senior positions, in order to validate the survey results as well as to identify leading practices. The structure was based around focus areas such as current business practices, barriers for women’s career advancement, and recommendations for employers and public policymakers.
2.2. Landscape Analysis of Respondents

The survey attempted to solicit as many respondents from as many industries as possible to make our sample representative of the business activity in the Kingdom. However, there seemed to be a natural self-selection bias against organizations that do not currently have female employees. 100% of our responses came from companies that already employ women. It is logical to assume that organizations already employing women are more likely to respond to a survey about employing and supporting the development of women in the workplace. Conversely, organizations that do not have female employees likely would be reticent to respond to a survey asking about their policies. We analyzed our sample for other trends and potential biases; the results are below.

Overview of Company Size

There was an effort to survey mostly large and medium-sized companies. These efforts were proven successful. Definitions of small, medium and large companies were borrowed from the Saudi Industrial Development Fund (SIDF). Together, large and medium-sized companies comprised 71% of our respondents. Small companies were responsible for 26% of our sample, while the other 3% did not provide information for this question.

Overview of Industry Participants and Sector Groups

The survey attracted a diverse pool of respondents. We received participation from a variety of industries but most notably in healthcare, industrial investment, building and construction, and non-profits. In order to simplify and better understand our results, companies were grouped into four sectors. Survey responses were analyzed as a whole and separated by sector to filter for trends. Primary industries proved to have the fewest respondents. This was expected as they also historically have low rates of female employment. Consumer services driven sectors represented the largest sector for responses.

**FIGURE 3: SECTOR GROUPS OVERVIEW**

This figure explains our sample broken down into percent respondents from each industry and shows how we split these industries into four different sectors.
3. OUR FINDINGS

Our research aimed to investigate the present situation in Saudi Arabia with regard to women employment and development into management and leadership roles, and understand current practices, policies and structures within the Kingdom.

The research identified an underrepresentation of women in management and leadership positions in the workforce. We found one in two companies reporting that less than 1% of their leadership roles (defined as directors, C-level positions senior managers, vice presidents, etc.) are filled by women. There is a more positive outlook in terms of existing structures to enable women inclusion in the workforce, with just under 80% of companies reporting an equal pay policy in place, and more than 40% of respondents reporting transportation and other policies to allow for women flexibility at work. In addition to the above, respondents reported a range of structured policies to support female employees and provide them with exposure to business and leadership opportunities. More than half of the companies surveyed offer business travel opportunities, management training and development, as well as formal performance assessments for female employees.

A synopsis of the report’s findings is illustrated in the figure below.

FIGURE 4: KEY REPORT FINDINGS

KEY FINDINGS FOR WOMEN EMPLOYMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

- Opportunity to address gendered occupations and under-representation of women in Management
- Room for improvement in understanding the benefits brought by women inclusion practices
- Heightened potential to enhance women-oriented policies, structures and infrastructure
3.1. Women in the Workforce

SECTION SUMMARY

• Most companies hired their first female employees after 2010 however there were many who began hiring women before 2005

• 49% of companies report that women make up more than 15% of their workforce

• 35% of companies report that women fill between 1-5% of their management positions

• 52% of companies report that less than 1% of their senior leadership roles are filled by women

• Certain sectors find it harder to employ women than others like those requiring hard labor or acquiring and processing of raw materials

Our findings in this area are in-line with the conclusions of previous research. Several studies investigating employment in the Kingdom show increasing economic participation for both male and female Saudis. In 1990, Saudi women made up only 4.2% of the workforce,8 this has increased to 17.3%. Still, compared with male participation (64.1%), this is very low.9

We surveyed companies to find out when they first began hiring women, their motivations for hiring women, and to what extent they employ women currently. One necessary consideration in understanding these findings is that our results are limited to companies that already employ women. This fact has an effect on the outlook of respondents and, potentially, their answers to survey questions. As one may expect, we found that certain industries have historically had a harder time hiring women than others. There may be several reasons for this. In some cases, it is due to the difficulty in providing Haia-appropriate facilities for women. In other cases, certain industries may experience difficulty in soliciting interest from qualified female candidates. Although the data may not show strong and continuous growth, every year new Saudi companies are hiring their first female employees.

We also found evidence that Saudi employers understand the business value and benefits of hiring women and promoting a diverse workplace. Our findings suggest that the Kingdom is set up to make solid advancements towards a more gender-inclusive workforce using this data as a baseline to monitor progress.
The graph above explains when companies first began to employ women. It would appear that some of the companies sampled have always employed women as illustrated by the 35% of respondents that were hiring women before 2005. Between 2005 and 2010 there was a much lower rate of companies hiring their first women (only about 8%) while there was another high surge after 2010 of about 40%. There could be a multitude of reasons for this increase, and this may be a topic for further investigation. Only 16% of respondents began employing women in the past year.

A small number of our sample included companies that only hire female employees. Thus, their founding also corresponds with beginning to employ women. The Kingdom also began to see a strong push from the government for companies to hire women starting around the turn of the decade through its Development Plans and other policies. This emphasis corresponds with the high percent of companies beginning to hire women after 2010.

When split by sector, we noticed that companies in our Sector 1 Primary Industries, (mostly industries that acquire and process raw materials) have only begun to hire women since 2010. Traditionally, these industries have been more heavily male dominated and most of these jobs in construction and manufacturing have been taken by non-Saudi workers so this matches our expectations.
We asked our sample to estimate the percentage of women that make up their total workforce. 49% of respondents replied that greater than 15% of their workforce is made up of women. Keeping in mind that all of the companies that responded to our survey currently employ women, the sample is likely skewed favoring more progressive companies. The second largest response for this category seems more in line with what other studies have found, i.e. 27% of respondents having between 1-5% of their workforces made up of women.

The largest proportion of respondents employ only between 1-5% women in management positions; this is followed by companies that selected “fewer than 1%”. The fact that most respondents answered in the 1-5% category is actually a positive sign although the percentage of women employed is still low. This suggests that most companies are actually increasing their number of female managers. It is not surprising that few organizations have women in management positions. But it is encouraging to see that more companies have “between 1-5%” than “less than 1%”.

We also asked respondents what percentage of their senior leadership consists of women. As expected, most of the respondents (52%) report having less than 1% of women in senior leadership positions. The percent of respondents decreases as the percent of women in senior leadership positions increases. The one exception to this rule is in the “greater than 15%” category. Here, there is a surprising 16% response rate. Once again, this could be attributed to our more progressive sample.

We found the workforce percentages to be surprising, yet promising – even if the results are affected by a self-selecting, progressive sample.
Companies operating within the Primary Industries (Agriculture and Food Industries, Petrochemical Industries, Oil and Gas) all report having less than 10% female employment. This aligns with expectations as well as the findings in Figure 7. Secondary Industries companies (Manufacturing, Building and Construction, Industrial Investment) report to have between 1-5% female employment. However, respondents in this sector reported female employment throughout the spectrum of possible answers. This is also supported by the conclusions from Figure 6 implying consistency among the data.

The Consumer Services-driven Industries (Non-Profit, Education, Services, Telecommunications and IT, Banking and Financial Services, Hotel and Tourism) show the best female employment statistics with the most companies reporting greater than 20% female employment. The results are similar for Consumer Products-driven Industries (Healthcare, Retail, Transport & Logistics Industries, Consumer Goods Industries). These industries tend to have fewer roadblocks to hiring and integrating women into the workplace so it makes sense that on average they would have begun hiring women earlier and have developed a larger female workforce than the Primary or Secondary Industries.
Splitting the responses by sector for female managers reveals some interesting results. Having women in management positions appears to be very sensitive to industry. All of the Primary Industries respondents report having fewer than 1% women in management positions. We saw this to be true for the female workforce overall in Figure 8, so it is not surprising that these companies have few women in management positions; what is startling, is that none of the companies from these industries have more than 1%.

The majority of respondents in the Secondary Industries report having between 1-5% of female managers as do Consumer Product-driven Industries. However, most of the Consumer Services-driven Industries are split between having fewer than 1% and greater than 15%. Again, these results mostly follow expectations, insomuch as we expect the more labor-intensive industries to report fewer women overall, including those in leadership positions, while the less labor-intensive industries would yield higher figures.
When split by sector, we see the various industries spread across the various female employment percentages. We expect to see a downward sloping trend line from left to right in this graph. This bares out somewhat for the Secondary Industries which represents a large number of responses in the “Less than 1%” category. This response rate is much higher than all other sectors. Also of note, none of the Primary Industry respondents sampled have more than 5% of female senior leadership which is consistent with our findings for the other levels of employment in Figures 7 and 8. Again, there are a few companies that report having greater than 15% female senior leadership due to our progressive sample.

Comparing our findings to other research, it is clear that hiring female employees is still not the norm overall and some sectors are more advanced than others. Other studies show that many women feel it is not socially acceptable for them to work, whether they are single or married with children, and if they do, they feel that they are at a disadvantage due to conscious or unconscious bias in companies. Additionally, stereotypes of female occupation are still widely present: Women are expected to take jobs in the health or educational sector as we see in our survey. Achoui (2009) points out that two thirds of all higher education students graduate are in humanities and other non-technical fields, which creates a mismatch between the labor market requirements – asking for more skilled workers in scientific and technical areas – and the skills and number of university graduates wanting to enter the labor market. This is especially problematic for women who choose, or who are led to choose, to study the humanities and thus have difficulties finding employment after graduation. A question we have not asked in comparison to other studies is when and why women leave the workforce or take a career break – the so-called “leaking pipeline” problem. It has been found that women leave two to three times faster than men, and typically due to decisions regarding family.
There has been a great deal of research into gender diversity at the workplace within the Kingdom. However, few studies have investigated the advancement of women in their careers once they are employed. Our survey asked respondents to find out what percent of their managers and senior leadership are female. The responses followed an expected pattern – most answered that they had few female managers employed at the organization and generally, responses trended downward as the female employment percentages increased. Official KSA government statistics show that of the total workforce, 3.2% are female and 6.8% male directors and managers, which equals a 1:2 ratio. This number is opposed by other findings showing only 7% female managers in total, a conclusion more aligned with our findings. Of course, further research should be done to validate these results. However, it should also be noted that we suspect our results to be slightly more progressive than the reality of employers within the Kingdom.

CASE STUDY: Cisco
Measuring and managing inclusion
As a technology company, Cisco has found making its workforce more inclusive to be difficult. Understanding the difficulties that the technology industry has with this issue, Cisco began to actively monitor the number of women employed by the company in various departments and at every level within the hierarchy.

With a performance measurement system in place, Cisco has been able to take actions to tackle the problem more effectively. The baseline diversity data they have collected has led them to create internal leadership development programs that target future female executives and prepare them for positions in management. They have also instituted technology education programs in several countries that focus on training women in the industry.
3.2. Drivers Behind Female Employment and Development

SECTION SUMMARY

- Survey respondents appear to comprehend the value of investing in a female workforce. Companies seem to realize the benefits of nurturing a balanced workplace and inclusive culture; yet most companies are still in the early stages of integrating female talent into the workforce.

- Productivity as well as diversity and inclusion were the prominent drivers reported by respondents. Interestingly, there appeared to be misalignment between the business drivers behind employing women and supporting women's career advancement. For employment, productivity was the primary reason, whereas the motivation for supporting career advancement was to promote diversity & inclusion.

With Saudi Arabia’s ambitious targets to diversify resources with the vision of becoming a thriving economy, the need for a competitive workforce is emerging as a primary issue of concern. As the Kingdom prioritizes developing its workforce, providing equal opportunities for women is becoming an imperative for competitiveness. Companies in the Kingdom are progressively realizing the value added by incorporating diversity across the hierarchy levels of their organizations.

Drivers behind Employment of a Female Workforce

We surveyed companies to ask about the drivers behind their employment practices, and better understand their motivation and expectations.

Survey responses indicated that, even though respondents realize the value of cultivating a female workforce, they have not figured out the more difficult issues of making an inclusive workplace a reality within the Kingdom. Most Saudi companies are still in the beginning of their journey towards female inclusion and continuing down this path requires further investment and probably pressure of some kind.

The most common drivers we found for employing women were (Figure 10):

1. Gains in productivity
2. Promoting diversity & inclusion within the workplace
3. Acknowledgment that women bring skills and capability to the workforce
4. Empowerment of women
Our data shows strong linkages between female employment practices and understanding the business benefits. The sample was fairly definitive in its response with 75% acknowledging that the productivity and skills that women bring to their workforce were their primary reason for hiring women. This assumption has been substantiated with other research showing that business productivity and innovation is positively affected by higher levels of gender diversity, which helps to broaden employee perspectives, strengthen team dynamics and offer more robust problem-solving processes.7. It should again be stated that there may be some bias in this answer as the entire sample is made up of companies that already employ women. This, therefore, does not take into consideration the rationale that a company not currently employing women would use to hire its first female employees.

Diversity, inclusion and equal opportunity are the second most common reason behind the employment of women. The establishment of inclusive culture is driving female employment for more than one in three companies. Furthermore, more than one in three companies aim to empower women and continue to offer more opportunities to them, through investing in female employment and female-oriented practices.

It is noteworthy that less than 1 in 7 companies are driven by alignment to the national policy and Vision 2030. Although it is positive to see companies realizing the value of employing women and extending their practices beyond statutory requirements, it may also be a sign that companies question the enforceability of these regulations.

Vision 2030 aims to increase women’s participation in the workforce from 22% to 30% and to support female employment and advancement. The Vision offers a very thorough framework, with specific metrics and KPIs to help the Kingdom move forward and, at the same time, help evaluate progress at all levels. However, it will be important for the government to outline sanctions for nonconformity.
Drivers behind Development of a Female Workforce

Our survey further explored business drivers behind female career advancement to management and leadership positions.

Our responses indicated that while business drivers tended to be the main reason respondents cited for hiring women, promoting women into positions of leadership showed different results. The link to business drivers was far weaker for the advancement of women once they are hired. There seems to be a misalignment of drivers for the employment of women and a company’s motivation behind promoting women into leadership roles.

Increasing diversity & inclusion within the company was the most cited reason behind the advancement of women to leadership positions, with more than two in five companies providing this response. Female empowerment was not indicated as a prominent reason for the development of women into leadership positions – only 9% of companies were motivated by this.

The desire to create a more diverse and inclusive workplace is a positive driver. Even though the present survey does not evaluate the actual motivation behind the above, companies will still reap the many benefits of a more diverse workplace. Over time, these other benefits will come into focus and affect driving motivations. This response does show a sensitivity to concerns of certain stakeholder groups.
Only 1 in 10 companies are driven by alignment to the national policy environment. Again, as in Figure 11, compliance with government initiatives and mandates is not a driving factor for most employers. In some ways, this is positive, as it shows that companies look beyond legislation and compliance drivers and move towards realizing the value of promoting women into management and leadership positions.

Researching further drivers to employ women in Saudi Arabia presented the example of Atos SE, a digital services leader, which decided to focus their efforts on employing female professionals in the Middle East in 2012, because of various reasons. Main drivers include that gender diversity will foster more rounded teams and departments; and also because there was a demand for more female client-facing staff.15

The drivers behind increased employment of women is also backed by international scientific research, which suggests that diversity in groups offers a great opportunity for organizations. By considering a greater range of perspectives (“think outside the box”), more high-quality solutions can be generated, thus increasing business creativity, problem-solving and performance. Additionally, public-owned organization adapt new (pro gender diversity) practices as an attempt to gain legitimacy in the eyes of society and the public opinion. As observed in our findings, large establishments also tend to make greater efforts at prevention because they have direct legal obligations, like antidiscrimination laws, so called “Affirmative Action Regulations”.9

CASE STUDY: General Electric (GE)

Realizing the business gains behind inclusion of women in the workforce

Career development for women is central within GE’s workforce strategy, and forms part of day-to-day matters and targets. The company realizes the benefits of having a diverse and innovative way of thinking, and, therefore, aims to be inclusive of both genders and offer equal opportunities for exposure and advancement.

So where do females come into the above? “Women in the workforce and management support a company’s ability to have a workforce that thinks differently and that operates differently,” comments Su Corkeron, HR Leader at GE in the Gulf region.

GE’s innovative approach and viewpoint is embedded within the organization’s strategy and practices, adopting a proactive female-oriented approach in all aspects such as recruiting, empowering and developing women.
3.3. Structures to Promote Women’s Career Advancement

SECTION SUMMARY

• Our sample presented a diversity of structures and policies to recruit, embed and develop women into management and leadership roles.

• A good variety of recruitment practices was indicated, positively showing that companies aim to proactively recruit women so as to identify female talent to bring into the workforce.

• With regards to policies encouraging the inclusion of women within the workforce, we observe the vast majority of respondents to have an equal pay policy in place. Our findings indicate the potential for further development of agile policies, as well as structures that allow balance between personal and professional life.

• A wide range of female development structures was further indicated, aiming to support the career advancement of women.

Promoting Inclusion of Women in the Workplace

Respondents were asked to select from a list of policies, those that were supported by their employers. Respondents were able to make multiple selections and also given the option to submit additional policies not covered in the list provided. The graph below discloses the most commonly selected policies.

Some of the organizations surveyed have implemented a number of policies to promote a more equitable and inclusive company culture. A variety of policies have been reported by these organizations but by far the most common is a gender equal pay policy. Still, most organizations reported having few official policies in place at all to promote gender equity or attract and retain female employees.
Respondents exhibited a mix of the available policies to support the inclusion of women within the workforce. On average companies selected a total of three policies each. One in five companies exhibited only one policy available to support women, with equal pay being the most common selection. The lack of relevant structures was most obvious for the Primary and Secondary Industries sector, likely because there have been few women employed in these industries, historically.

An overwhelming majority of respondents appear to believe in the principle of equal pay in the workplace, and the benefits an equal pay policy brings to the business. Equal pay was by far the most commonly institutionalized policy among the sample of respondents, with four in five respondents selecting this option.

Survey findings further indicated the existence of agile policies at some companies allowing for flexibility in working hours. Dedicated means to enable transportation for women to and from the workplace also appear to be common among respondents. Both policies were selected by more than 40% of companies. This finding further indicates the potential to enhance such policies into a larger scale within organizations, in order to support work/life balance for female employees and enable their professional advancement into senior roles. At the same time, policies enabling remote work for female employees were evident in less than 40% of respondents, while providing childcare facilities onsite was found in less than one out of five companies.
More than two in five respondents indicated the existence of a formal process for women (and other employees) to raise grievances and concerns. Having a defined and structured process that allows employees to voice issues and concerns is critical for an organization and yields benefits such as improved confidence, wellbeing, and morale; key criteria for women holding management and leadership positions.

**Supporting Women’s Career Advancement**

Companies who consider their employees’ development and provide opportunities for growth are more likely to attract and retain the best talent. It is important for companies to make these opportunities available to all employees and for managers to recognize the next generation of leadership and mentor them. This is especially true for workforce minorities who may not recognize development opportunities as readily as those with more obvious role models. Cultivating the Saudi female workforce will require concerted efforts on the part of present leadership to help more junior employees grow and develop in their careers.

We surveyed companies to ask what employee development opportunities were institutionalized at their organizations. Respondents were presented with a list of policies and opportunities to choose from as well as given the ability to write in policies not listed. Respondents could choose multiple answers.

**FIGURE 13: DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES FOR A FEMALE WORKFORCE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business travel opportunities</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management training and development</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal performance assessment process</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities for continuous education and external</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal mentoring opportunities</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal discussions of career track and promotion</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities to attend networking events</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal mentoring opportunities</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graph presenting key drivers behind women employment.

* Respondents could select more than one answer

Our findings indicate that companies in the Kingdom are progressively aiming towards the creation of a highly competitive and productive workforce, by progressively enhancing comprehensive professional development opportunities offered with regards to leadership and technical skill sets. Companies appear to have a range of available structures to support the development of female employees. On average, companies chose four of the workforce options provided. Only one out of seven companies selected just one structure for supporting female career advancement. Splitting by sector showed potential for improvement of the Primary Industries sector, where there are a limited number of structures available.
Business travel opportunities and management training and development were the most common structures selected by respondents. Each of these responses solicited a 60% response rate from survey participants. Business travel for employees provides several benefits, ensuring employees feel more engagement, and are given the opportunity to network and grow their own personal brand and skillset. Management training offers many of these same benefits for employees; they can grow their management and leadership skills and feel valued. Another important effect of providing official management training is that it allows the employer to mold the next generation of managers so that they can be effective and set up for success.

Formal performance assessments appear to be a common structure utilized by more than half of respondents in order to support the enhancement of their female workforce. Providing formal performance assessments within the workplace ensures regularity in reviewing employees as well as addressing performance issues. Along with reduction in negative employee performance, formal performance assessments can improve employee morale and productivity and ensure employee talent is fully realized bringing benefits to both employees and the organization.

**CASE STUDY: Unilever**

**Structures and policies to support women’s career development**

Gender diversity is a key topic within Unilever KSA. The topic is a central aspect within Unilever’s workforce scorecard and is a main business priority. The Saudi organization offers a wide range of policies to support female employees and their advancement.

- **Suitable infrastructure:** The company has refurbished its female facilities during the past year to offer the right environment for its female employees as well as transportation to and from the workplace.

- **Agile policies:** Unilever makes sure to offer an extended maternity leave that can support women starting their families. The company offers further policies for flexible working, for both genders, which allow work from home or part-time working hours.

- **Career progression structures:** The organization has established inclusive practices for both male and female employees. All staff is offered formal mentorship, as well as training and development opportunities.
4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Legislative commitments and policy decisions during the past years have opened many doors for Saudi women. Women have been given the opportunity to hold managerial positions in a number of businesses and organizations. Nonetheless, the country still lags behind most developed countries in the integration of women into the labor force and enabling women’s advancement into leadership positions.

The recently developed Saudi Vision 2030 creates a solid foundation for further improvements in this regard. The ambitious yet achievable blueprint sets a measurable target for female employment, aiming to increase women’s participation in the workforce from 22% to 30%. The framework will further support women career advancement and their development into management and leadership positions.

In order to achieve such an ambitious target, effectively integrate female employees in Saudi Arabia’s labor force, and support them in their career advancement, it is critical that governmental and policy actors collaborate and engage with the business sector. Policy and business stakeholders would be encouraged to assess existing structures, policies and programs, so as to align with women’s needs and expectations.

Recommendations for Regulators and Policymakers

Enforcing Female-Oriented Legislation for the Saudi Labor Force

Going forward, the government may consider enhancing the current Labor Law, through the introduction and enforcement of regulations that focus on the integration of women into the Saudi workforce, enforcing mandatory inclusion policies, and promoting targeted recruitment and employee development programs to support career building.

The first step would be to create legislation requiring equal remuneration for all employees performing the same type of work. The government should ratify and enforce legislation that promotes gender equality within the workplace. The employee recruitment process, particularly in the private sector, should consider the use of quotas, mandating a balanced percentage between male and female candidates. Women should be given an equal chance in applying and being considered for a diverse range of positions. It is critical to provide social security coverage to female employees, a transportation system for women to-and-from the workplace especially for industrial cities and factories, as well as agile policies that enable flexibility in the workplace and allow for work/life balance and career progression.

The recently launched remote employment program, by the Ministry of Labor and the Human Resources Development Fund, could be enhanced so as to allow for private sector companies to outsource their call centers to women working from home rather than countries abroad.
Regulations could be embedded within the Ministry’s Wages Protection System (WPS) leading to the creation of a more comprehensive system that will not only monitor the process of wages disbursement for private-sector laborers, but will also evaluate whether employment and remuneration practices are in line with the national laws and standard. The system could further be expanded to cover the public and non-profit sectors. The United Kingdom’s Equality Act presents a good example.16

CASE STUDY: The UK Example
With the aim of promoting gender equality and closing the gender gap, the UK Equality Act 2010 gives both women and men a right to equal pay for equal work.

The UK government further aims to enable gender pay gap reporting, and is currently in the process of legislating to require UK organizations employing 250 or more employees to measure and report on their gender pay gaps.

Establishing Policies to Enable Female Integration and Advancement within the Workforce
The Government is encouraged to consider the introduction of gender-sensitive policies, with particular focus on female education and employment. Strengthening educational policies and offering equal opportunity for education is the first step to building a pool of female talent, tackling female unemployment issues, and ensuring equal participation of women and men in all industry sectors. Access to secondary and higher education will help the Saudi society create a skilled and knowledgeable female labor force, equipped with the necessary business and management competencies to develop themselves and their careers.

With regard to the business environment, along with enforcing legislation, the government may formulate policies and programs to support the inclusion and development of its female workforce, enabling women to better balance their professional and personal lives and succeed in their business careers while also meeting family obligations. The creation of nurseries and childcare facilities at places of employment would go a long way towards enabling women to pursue their careers.

Establishing Partnerships
Establishing meaningful partnerships will be key in ensuring a results-oriented approach that will foster innovation and improvements, and help achieve the Vision target for women’s employment.

Partnerships with local communities: Regulators may consider the establishment of partnerships with local community organizations and actors that will support the implementation of gender-equal laws and policies. For example, the Ministry of Labor could consider collaborating with local schools and nurseries in order to recruit skilled people for in-house childcare facilities at their workplaces.
Partnerships with non-governmental and social enterprises: The Saudi Government may develop partnerships with social enterprises and non-governmental organizations to promote the recruitment and capacity building of female talent. For example, the Ministry of Labor could enhance its own recruiting strategy as well create recruiting models for companies by partnering with relevant enterprises matching female job seekers to organizations. Additionally, partnerships could be utilized to strengthen the communication on current segregation laws which are more flexible compared to the past, however not effectively communicated. Partnerships could promote the current workplace laws, as many international companies are hesitant of entering the Saudi market, primarily due to the lack of awareness and proper understanding.

Partnerships with local media: The Government could leverage traditional and social media to bring awareness to the participation of women in the workforce and their importance to the economy. In addition, the Government could be further encouraged to use appropriate media to promote female education and talent, notably through female role models. Saudi Arabia has a number of inspirational women and leaders that could serve as role models for young females.

Partnerships between Universities and business sectors: The Government should encourage partnerships between female or mixed universities and the business sector. Providing internships to female candidates would be a useful way to train female students and support them in seeking employment.
Recommendations for Businesses

Proactively Engaging with the Female Workforce

Businesses should make an effort to proactively engage with female employees, to listen and understand their needs. Assessing the expectations of female employees will help the business address any issues or complaints more effectively, allow for better integration of women within the workforce and build appropriate structures that will enable capacity building and career advancement.

“A defining moment for GE has been the creation of the GE Women’s Network. Setting up the Network was not easy. We tested a variety of things, which were not working well in the first place. Then we sat back and thought let’s stop doing and let’s start listening. We started engaging with the female workforce asking what they wanted, and what their expectations were. What I would encourage organizations to do when building such programs is not to assume anything but rather to engage, and go ask what is important for your employees”.

Su Corkeron,

Encouraging a Women-Friendly Mindset

Internally: An effective and proactive approach to inclusion and promotion of female employees within the workforce requires a suitable foundation. Companies need to foster the right environment within the organization to build a balanced culture. This may involve staff training, particularly male staff, on how to communicate and collaborate with female coworkers. Staff should be trained on the various business benefits of employing women and supporting their career development into leadership roles. Senior management plays a pivotal role in setting the strategic vision for steering a company. Therefore, businesses should be mindful in selecting the right leaders that are open-minded and have the appropriate skills to lead their companies. Senior leaders should be committed to gender diversity issues and be able to strategize and steer the company appropriately.

Externally: Companies are encouraged to be open and transparent about their practices, particularly regarding being supportive of the participation of women in the workforce. Transparency on will raise awareness in the business landscape, and will encourage other companies, peers or competitors to engage in similar practices.

Establishing Suitable Facilities and Infrastructure

Having appropriate infrastructure in place is critical to ensuring employees feel comfortable, confident and are set up to succeed within the business. Employers should not be afraid to engage with female employees to listen to their workplace needs and requirements. The term ‘infrastructure’ can have a number of meanings, depending on the industry sector and type of business. Leading companies support their female staff by offering the right workspace, a transportation allowance or a transportation system to and from the workplace, or provide other Haia-appropriate facilities for women. As our findings indicate, less than one in five companies offer childcare facilities for working mothers. Providing in-house childcare is essential for allowing female employees to have a work/life balance, be motivated and productive and still meet family obligations.
Ensuring Equality and Fair Practices between Employees

Attractive employers offer fair practices applied consistently across their workforce. Companies should establish a uniform process for conducting recruitment, training and capacity building, performance assessments, and to offer business development and exposure opportunities. This requires making a formal commitment to fair practices and establishing a structured policy that applies to both current and prospective employees. Notable mention should be made to the establishment of fair recruitment practices, allowing female candidates not to disclose information of sensitive nature, which may hinder their chances of entering the labor market. However, a policy is only as effective as those who implement it, so having the right management staff is critical. Frequent internal self-assessments and audits to ensure policy effectiveness are recommended.

Establishing a company-wide policy of equal remuneration should be a priority. A transparent and fair pay policy for male and female employees will bring further benefits to the business, including increase of female employee satisfaction and enhanced attraction and retention of female talent, along with reduced turnover rates.

Establishing Agile Policies and Programs

The business sector would benefit from the introduction of female-oriented agile policies and programs that support flexibility in the workplace, and allow for flexible or part-time working hours, and/or remote work capabilities. Such initiatives are important in ensuring balance of personal and professional life, allowing women pursue their career aspirations, while maintaining meeting their family responsibilities.

Designing and Implementing Women-Oriented Development Structures and Programs

Businesses could be encouraged to further existing structures that support the development of female employees into management and leadership positions.

Companies are encouraged to provide both formal and informal structures for female support, guidance and professional development. It is important for women to gain industry exposure, participate in networking opportunities, receive career guidance, training and development opportunities. The key to employee development is providing diverse, flexible and interactive learning options that align with the business objectives and employee career aspirations. Proactive engagement is a critical component of the process, as it will provide valuable insights on how to tailor the company’s learning methods to its employees.

Mentorship Opportunities

A formal mentorship program can support women’s advancement in the workplace, by building confidence and support for women exploring new business areas and uncovering new opportunities. Mentors can be male or female employees from senior management or leadership positions that can educate and inspire younger female staff. Businesses could consider partnering with NGOs or charities promoting female empowerment or collaborating with female role-models of the Saudi society.
Career Mapping
Career mapping is a mechanism used for effective career development. Career maps will help female employees adopt strategic thinking with regard to their professional aspirations and evaluate how they can best meet their career objectives. A successful career mapping tool should be founded upon a comprehensive and robust foundation of appropriate HR policies and structures, including formal target setting and performance reviews.

Training & Capacity Building
Training and capacity building are crucial in developing a skilled, knowledgeable and productive workforce. Developing successful female leaders is strongly dependent on the experiences and training available to them that will allow for the growth of their leadership skills. Organizations could consider offering a wider range of coaching and training opportunities on both technical and job-related aspects as well as leadership skills. In order to nurture future women managers and leaders, businesses are encouraged to introduce a series of management and leadership seminars where participants will be exposed in relevant situations and will be asked to make appropriate decisions. Such seminars could be conducted in-house, or off-site in partnership with a third-party training organization. Companies should also consider inviting global or national female role-models to discuss about their experiences and offer insights.

Employee Development Schemes
Saudi employers, notably larger-sized companies, could consider financially supporting continuing education opportunities for their employees. Employees could be encouraged to pursue qualifications, such as Masters of Science, Masters in Business Administration or Management degrees that will build their knowledge and skills and bring direct for them and the business overall.

Networking and Business Travel Opportunities
Networking and business travel offer employees and their employers inexpensive professional development. These activities result in higher levels of confidence for female employees, while simultaneously broadening their perspectives and improving their knowledge and business competencies. Business travel for female employees could be further linked to a Foreign Language Training Program allowing candidates to better prepare and represent their organization effectively.

Performance Assessment
Formalized performance reviews offer an excellent opportunity for employees and their managers to discuss training and development and set pragmatic, measurable goals that are in line with business objectives. These reviews provide clarity for employees regarding their personal performance and outline the steps required for them to advance and accomplish their short- or longer-term goals.
Incentive Schemes
Introducing incentive schemes and diversity targets motivates company management to develop policies that promote the development of women within the workforce. Businesses could consider introducing quantitative targets with regards to women, which could become a part of annual performance indicators and year-end reviews. Targets could relate to the percentage of women recruited, the percentage of female employees evaluated, or female career & networking events facilitated. Management staff could be further encouraged by introducing a financial reward in cases where exceptional targets have been accomplished. Establishing such schemes will motivate employees, encourage teamwork and will eventually improve the overall business performance.

Job Rotation Programs
Establishing a job rotation schemes for employees could be an effective career development tool for female employees as well. Rotating through diverse roles within the business will provide female employees the opportunity to work across a range of teams and develop their network while enhancing their skillset – essential qualities of a good leader.
CONCLUSION

Saudi Arabia is on the path of transformation and aims to be a leading model of excellence in workforce development on a global level. As part of the Saudi Vision 2030, the country has set in place a measurable target with the aim of increasing the percentage of female employment. A number of policy enhancements throughout the past decades have significantly supported the empowerment of women within the Kingdom. While the percentage of female Saudi Economic Participation has presented an increase of 3% since the 2011 level (14.4%), the reported percentage remains fairly low at 17.3%, in 2015.3

In order to accomplish its target for female employment, the country could be encouraged to design and implement an inclusion strategy and framework for the business environment. Going forward, Saudi regulators and policy-makers could consider creating and enforcing policies and programs that enable workplace flexibility and the participation of women within the workforce, which, in turn, allows for successful career advancement into management and leadership roles. In partnership with the private sector and the local communities, the Saudi government should support, develop and promote awareness of female talent and abilities.

The report further highlights the key role of the private sector into effectively nurturing female leaders. Companies could be encouraged to establish a range of corporate policies, structures and programs, such as capacity building and networking initiatives, employee development programs, incentive mechanisms and job rotation schemes. Such measures will offer a robust development framework for Saudi’s female employees, exposing them to leadership opportunities and expanding their knowledge and skillsets.

Research Limitations

The findings and outcomes of this study have been limited by a number of factors. The most prominent of these is sample bias. As discussed in previous chapters, our sample is skewed due to response bias that is inherent in all optional surveys. It has been well documented that optional surveys tend to collect data from those who care most deeply about the topic. In our case, respondents who felt strongly about advocating for the employment and advancement of women in the Kingdom as well as companies that were eager to communicate their female employment statistics, were most likely to respond. This created a sample that was not fully representative of all companies in the Kingdom and that leaned in favor of those with the most progressive results. Further limitation of the present research was that the data collection, survey and interview processes were conducted entirely in English. This certainly had an effect on the overall response rate and possibly, unintentionally, favored certain types of companies over others.
Suggestions for Further Research

• Performing Research in the Arabic Language: Given the limitations of the present research and outreach, conducted in English, it is recommended that further research on the topic to be conducted in Arabic. This will garner wider participation of organizations, particularly smaller-sized organizations, that may be more comfortable with sharing views in their native language.

• Exploring Drivers Behind Organizations Not Employing Women: Underpinned by the support of Saudi governmental actors and decision makers, further research could target organizations that do not currently employ women. Understanding the barriers they view to hiring female employees would be invaluable.

• Investigating the Benefits of Female Participation in the Public Sector: Further research should aim to investigate the benefits of women in public sector positions. This is an area where women have been able to make the most progress in gaining employment so understanding the drivers and results of this would certainly add to the dearth of knowledge on this topic.

• Researching the Role of NGOs and Social Enterprises: Supplementary research should investigate the influential role of non-governmental organizations, social and women-oriented enterprises, and female role-models, identifying the means and vehicles through which these organizations can improve the current situation. Additional research can further investigate the establishment of potential partnerships with the governmental and public sectors.

• Landscape Review of Saudi Women’s Career Aspirations: Last but not least, any future studies should explore all of the above in convergence with Saudi women’s career views and aspirations. What are Saudi women’s career goals? Understanding this would help us develop a clear understanding of female objectives and well as perceived barriers to their career development into leadership roles. Saudi research should be linked with international examples of ‘glass ceiling’ barriers, as well as examples of leading practices.
THE PROJECT TEAM

ABOUT ACCOUNTABILITY

AccountAbility is a leading global research, consulting and standards organization providing innovative solutions to the most critical challenges in corporate responsibility and sustainable development. Since 1995, we have been helping corporations, nonprofits and governments embed ethical, environmental, social and governance accountability into their organizational DNA. Our unique value proposition brings together cutting-edge research, widely applied standards and strategic advisory services to deliver practical solutions for our clients.

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<th>Research</th>
<th>Standards</th>
<th>Advisory</th>
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<tr>
<td>The AccountAbility Institute focuses on applied research that provides businesses, NGOs and government agencies with:</td>
<td>AccountAbility’s AA1000 series are principle-based standards that help organizations become more accountable, responsible and sustainable:</td>
<td>AccountAbility’s Advisory Services team works with clients in the areas of:</td>
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Examples of our thought leadership

AccountAbility Standards Secretariat for the AA1000 AccountAbility Assurance & AA1000 Stakeholder Engagement Standard

Growing into Your Sustainability Commitments

Redefining Materiality: Why it Matters and Who’s Involved
ABOUT GLOWORK

Glowork was formed in 2011 by young Saudi entrepreneurs who aim to enable women and increase diversity in the Saudi workforce. Glowork has a range of online and offline HR and recruitment solutions tailored close the gender gap within the labor market. With over 60 employees Kingdom wide and in operation over the last 6 years, Glowork has assisted over 30,000 women directly in securing a career, and over 300,000 women indirectly through the various solutions available. Glowork currently works with over 500 private sector entities and on average places 28 women a day into the private sector.

In 2016 Glowork restructured and received an investment to step up from being a startup company to be a structured organization with various services to offer.

Examples of our thought leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Virtual labor, possibility and opportunity in Saudi Arabia</th>
<th>Females tackling the challenges in the retail sector</th>
<th>Bridging the gap between the labor market and the education sector (females)</th>
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REFERENCES


