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# 

# **GENDER DEI TOOLKIT 01 : BEST PRACTICES TO ENHANCE GENDER EQUALITY IN PAKISTAN**

## **BACKGROUND**

In order to utilize the skills and experience of women, organizations need to focus on gender DEI practices. A number of Pakistani organizations understand the need to bring this change and are making conscious efforts to foster an inclusive environment, yet most of the organizations still have a long way to go. Societal norms and the patriarchal mindset which governs the everyday life in Pakistan also has a significant impact on workplace gender diversity. Whether it is enhancing women representation in firms, devising women friendly initiatives or effective policy implementation, these norms become obstacles for women's empowerment in the country. Currently, only 20.7% of women are active in the workforce and many leave their jobs due to the lack of accommodating policies, worsening the situation. Therefore, a strong need is felt for creating awareness and launching innovative policies which would act as steppingstones for organizations to promote gender DEI. The corporate sector can play a major role in facilitating women, channelizing their abilities and helping them become future leaders by acknowledging their responsibilities and adopting gender DEI best practices.

# 

## **Executive Summary**

This Gender DEI Toolkit is developed on the basis of best practice examples collected from Pakistani organizations. Its purpose is to serve as an indigenous resource to facilitate organizations in increasing the adoption of gender DEI practices. The toolkit presents examples from various Pakistani organizations under the 13 categories adopted from the international GDEIB 2021 standards. While examples of DEI practices that exist in organizations across the world are available in international books and toolkits, examples from the Pakistani context are likely to be more relevant for organizations operating in Pakistan, thereby encouraging the wider adoption of such practices. Finally, Section 3 concludes the toolkit. It mentions a few examples of organizational practices catering to diversities other than gender and recommends the need to enhance efforts in this area as well. This toolkit is a first step undertaken by the Management Advancement Research Centre (MARC) to facilitate the wider adoption of gender DEI practices in Pakistani organizations. As a way forward, there is an urgent need to share best practices, engage in dialogue, and discuss commonly faced challenges in the implementation of gender DEI practices with the aim to facilitate nation-building through supporting females in the workplace. There is also a need to develop additional toolkits or practical guides to facilitate implementation of practices to enhance various forms of diversities in organizations in Pakistan. Section 2 is the main section of the toolkit, and provides practical examples of gender DEI best practices currently adopted by Pakistani organizations. This section briefly explains the 15 categories of the international GDEIB 2021 standards, and then divides the examples from Pakistani organizations into 47 tools under 13 categories of GDEIB 2021. Several of the tools have sub-categories under them; thus the toolkit presents over 80 practical tools, with examples from 19 organizations who have generously shared examples of their best practices. These organizations (in alphabetical order) are as follows: Abacus, Bank Alfalah, British Council, Engro Polymers and Chemicals Limited, Feroze1888, FINCA Microfinance Bank Limited, Hashoo Group, HRSG, Interloop, Jazz, JS Bank, Mobilink Microfinance Bank Limited, PPAF, PTCL Group, S&P Global, Telenor, Teradata, TPL Corporation and Unilever.

# 

## **SECTION 1**

### **Introduction**

I am delighted to share this Gender DEI Toolkit with organizations across Pakistan. I conceived the idea in 2019, after acting as a jury member for the Global DEI awards in 2018 and 2019. These awards are a praiseworthy effort by the HR Metrics to encourage behavioral and cultural change towards DEI in organizations in Pakistan. In the process of reviewing the various practices from many organizations as a jury member, I felt that sharing and learning from each other was the best way to build a diverse and inclusive environment in organizations and create a positive change in the society. The toolkit is planned as an indigenous resource and presents tools extracted by the MARC team from practices of Pakistani organizations; best practices across the globe are available in international books and toolkits. I hope the toolkit will serve as a useful practical resource for organizations in Pakistan who want to set small or ambitious targets to contribute towards nation building through supporting females in the workplace. MEET THE TEAM

Introductory Message

Dr. Sadia Nadeem

Professor, FAST School of Management, NUCES

Director MARC

Ayesha Siddiqa Javeria Jamil Neeha Khan

Razeen Fawad Ayesha BanoDr. Sadia Nadeem

# 

### **BACKGROUND**

In order to utilize the skills and experience of women, organizations need to focus on gender DEI practices. A number of Pakistani organizations understand the need to bring this change and are making conscious efforts to foster an inclusive environment, yet most of the organizations still have a long way to go. Societal norms and the patriarchal mindset which governs the everyday life in Pakistan also has a significant impact on workplace gender diversity. Whether it is enhancing women representation in firms, devising women friendly initiatives or effective policy implementation, these norms become obstacles for women's empowerment in the country. Currently, only 20.7% of women are active in the workforce and many leave their jobs due to the lack of accommodating policies, worsening the situation. Therefore, a strong need is felt for creating awareness and launching innovative policies which would act as stepping stones for organizations to promote gender DEI. The corporate sector can play a major role in facilitating women, channelizing their abilities and helping them become future leaders by acknowledging their responsibilities and adopting gender DEI best practices.

A key step while adopting and expanding the use of DEI practices is understanding the difference between the key terms of diversity, equity and inclusion.

#### **Diversity**

Diversity means the collective mixture of human beings with varying characteristics, and the identities that they have, coexisting within organization.

#### **Equity**

Equity refers to fairness. It recognizes that each person has different circumstances, and allocates the exact resources and opportunities that are required to reach an equal outcome.

#### **Inclusion**

Inclusion at work reflects an environment where all individuals are treated fairly and with respect, regardless of their diversities, and are provided equal access to opportunities and resources which allow them to be fully engaged in organizational activities, and contribute to its success.

# 

### **PURPOSE OF THE TOOLKIT**

This toolkit has been developed to help organizations progressively adopt best practices that foster gender DEI. It primarily intends to reduce gaps that hinder gender DEI by sharing best practices under the 15 categories of the GDEIB 2021 standards. It identifies multiple tools under each category that may be employed by organizations to enhance DEI at the workplace. These tools have been derived from gender DEI best practices implemented in organizations in Pakistan.

Following are the key objectives of the toolkit:

· To serve as a practical guide for organizations to foster a diverse and inclusive environment.

· To enhance understanding of diversity, equity and inclusion, through explaining various dimensions of DEI initiatives, as stated in the GDEIB 2021.

· To share practical ideas to improve DEI practices in organizations, by highlighting the DEI best practices implemented within organizations in Pakistan.

· To facilitate organizations in self assessment, by identifying the gaps that exist between the current organizational practices and best DEI practices.

· To cater to nation building through supporting and empowering females in the workplace, contributing to the 5th Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), developed by the UN, namely gender equality

### **WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN THE WORKFORCE IN PAKISTAN**

Ranked 145th out of 146 countries on the gender parity index.

Only 20.7% women active in the labor market.

Only 4.5% of women are legislators, senior officials and managers.

Only 23.4% of professional and technical roles held by women.

8th among nine countries in South Asia, namely Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, India, Iran, Maldives, Bhutan, Pakistan and Afghanistan on the gender parity index.

### **QUAID-E-AZAM'S VISION FOR THE WOMEN OF PAKISTAN**

"No nation can rise to the height of glory unless your women are side by side with you.”

By Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah

Fatima Jinnah was the first female dentist of the combined subcontinent. In 1919, she was accepted in the very competitive university of Calcutta where she studied dentistry at the Dr. R. Ahmad dental institution. Following her graduation, she pursued her dream of founding a dental clinic in Bombay in 1923. Although, she was extremely successful in her career, she left dentistry to support her brother for the cause of Pakistan.

### **WOMEN IN ISLAMIC HISTORY**

Pakistan was created in the name of Islam. The Islamic history provides numerous examples of strong, empowered and resilient women who serve as role models for women to confidently take up careers, establish and lead businesses and work side-by-side with men in all domains of life.

Hazrat Khadijah (RA) was a successful and leading business woman in Arabia. She inherited the abilities of her father, who was a top merchant. She expanded her business and made it larger than all the Quraish trades put together through her vision, intelligence and hard work. She was able to achieve all this in a male-dominating era while also maintaining her truthful and pious image.

Hazrat Aishah (RA)’s life serves as an excellent model for women who want to thrive in scholarship, military leadership and politics. She had exceptional public speaking skills, had directed an army on the war field and taught Islamic law to men and women.

Shafa Bint Adwiya (RA) was made the in charge of administering Madinah’s marketplace during the caliphate of Hazrat Umar ibn Khattab (RA). She was given the responsibility of ensuring that all commercial transactions followed the law and also defended customers against deception and other nefarious activities.

# 

## **SECTION 2 BEST PRACTICES UNDER GDEIB (Global Diversity Equity and Inclusion Benchmarks) CATEGORIES**

### **GDEIB: STANDARDS FOR ORGANIZATIONS AROUND THE WORLD**

The design of Section 2 of this toolkit is based on the 15 categories of the Global Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Benchmarks (GDEIB) 2021, © Molefi, O'Mara and Richter. The GDEIB 2021 standards are published by the Centre for Global Inclusion with the support and input of 112 expert panelists from around the world, and are used in this toolkit with permission. These 15 categories, divided into four groups, are a resource for planning actions to enhance DEI initiatives and promoting a culture of inclusivity and equity in organizations. An overview of the four groups and 15 categories, as per the GDEIB 2021 standards, is provided below.

#### **THE FOUNDATION GROUP: DRIVE THE STRATEGY**

1. Vision: Develop a strong rationale for DEI vision, mission, and strategy and align it to organizational goals.

2. Leadership: Hold leaders accountable for implementing the organization’s DEI vision, setting goals, achieving results, and being role models.

3. Structure: Provide visible, dedicated support and structure with authority and budget to effectively implement DEI.

#### **THE INTERNAL GROUP: ATTRACT AND RETAIN PEOPLE**

4. Recruitment: Ensure that attraction, sourcing, and recruitment is done through the lens of DEI.

5. Advancement: Ensure that DEI is integrated into professional development, performance management, advancement, and retention.

6. Compensation: Ensure that job design and classification are evaluated for bias and that compensation is equitable across key dimensions of diversity.

7. Benefits & flexibility: Achieve work-life integration, flexibility, and equitable benefits. Flexible work options are widely available and accessible.

# 

#### **THE BRIDGING GROUP: ALIGN AND CONNECT**

8. Assessment: Ensure that all assessments, measurement, and research guide DEI decisions

9. Communication: Make communication clear, simple to understand and a crucial force in achieving the organization’s DEI goals.

10. Learning: Educate all to achieve the level of DEI competence and confidence needed to create a diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization.

11. Sustainability: Connect the organization’s DEI and sustainability initiatives to increase the effectiveness of both.

#### **THE EXTERNAL GROUP: LISTEN TO AND SERVE THE SOCIETY**

12. Community: Be proactive in working with community, public and private partnerships, government, society at large, and through philanthropy.

13. Services & Products: Embed DEI in services and products development to serve diverse customers and clients.

14. Marketing: Integrate DEI into marketing and customer service. 15. Responsible Sourcing: Practice responsible and ethical sourcing. Develop and nurture underrepresented suppliers.

# 

### **CATEGORY 1: A DEI vision and mission statement Organizational values that promote DEI VISION, STRATEGY AND BUSINESS IMPACT**

#### 

#### **Industry Examples of Tools for Vision, Strategy and Business Impact**

##### **A DEI vision and mission statement**

Many of the participating organizations have developed DEI vision and mission statements to extend systematic efforts towards the cause of fostering DEI in the respective organizations. Some examples are listed below.

Hashoo Foundation: DEI Vision statement “An ethical, equitable, inclusive society in which people live with dignity and have power over their own lives.”

Jazz: DEI Mission statement “To improve the lives and livelihoods of women in Pakistan through technology."

PTCL Group: DEI Vision statement “To be recognized as an inclusive workplace where diversity is appreciated and is considered imperative for enhanced business performance.”

PTCL Group: DEI Mission statement “To foster a culture of diversity, inclusion, and belonging through our systems, processes, and human interactions.”

Telenor: DEI Vision statement “Winning together by valuing our differences, leading to a High-Performance Culture.”

Teradata: DEI Vision statement “We are committed to an inclusive workplace culture where everyone feels welcome, respected, supported, valued and can be themselves.”

#### **A DEI strategy**

Organizations that are trying to improve DEI planning and implementation prepare strategic plans in order to enhance their DEI efforts and materialize their long-term vision regarding DEI. Some organizations have developed specific strategies while others have general roadmaps laid out, to create a culture that consistently promotes DEI; it is a part of their overall strategy and is integrated in their organizational culture

Teradata acknowledges the attainment of DEI as a challenge. They believe that it is a gap that needs to be addressed for which they create a sense of acknowledgement across the organizations. This ensures that each individual demonstrates ownership to promote equality and puts in their best effort to eradicate discrimination.

Unilever aims to eliminate any kind of bias or discrimination in their policies and practices.

The DEI strategy of EPCL is divided into the external and internal component. The external component of the DEI strategy of the organization looks for ways to collaborate with the industry to increase the number of females in STEM education. The internal focus lies on bringing in the right talent, developing their capability, and ensuring their retention.

MMBL has a two-fold strategy of female empowerment. The first wing called Women Inspirational Network (WIN) program focuses on women empowerment. It encourages and facilitates female customers or borrowers, belonging from rural or urban areas, to become entrepreneurs by training and digitally equipping them. The other wing is called Mobi Circle, which focuses on internal women empowerment by developing females as emerging leaders and empowering them.

British Council's strategy in 2021 revolves around three areas, i.e., business case, moral case, and legal case. This strategy has three objectives; an inclusive organizational culture, developing capability and leaders, and measuring performance, impact and legal compliance.

JS Bank formulated a three-year D&I strategy in 2021. The first year focused on introducing initiatives for enhancing women representation, progression and developing family friendly policies and inclusion policies and efforts for people with disabilities. The next two years focus on enhancing interventions for these groups, along with introducing interventions for other diversities.

At S&P Global DEI is central to who they are and is vital to their success. DEI is rooted in three key areas; people, customers, and community. The company integrates DEI into everything they do, starting with their workforce and workplace, and extending far beyond company walls, into the marketplace and local communities

Several participating organizations have devised DEI strategic plans around three to four main pillars, centered around different aspects of gender DEI. Examples of these are listed in Table 1.

##### **Table 1: Examples of pillars of the DEI strategy**

###### **Abacus**

Become an employer of choice by attracting and retaining top talent, Develop a diverse pool of talent Secure an inclusive work culture ,Leverage D&I in the marketplace in partnership with customers, suppliers and communities

###### **Bank Alfalah**

Introducing D&I analytics, Taking a conscious approach to recruitment, Focusing on learning and development, Catering to employee retention and engagement needs

###### **Jazz**

People: Covering talent, leadership and culture, Business: Covering content, products and partners, Community: Covering public image, advocacy and service

###### **Telenor**

Female talent development, Female retention, Female inclusion

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#### **Organizational values that promote DEI**

Organizations aim at creating an ideal workplace environment and culture where employees feel included and rewarded for their efforts.

Abacus’s core values concentrate on attracting the best talent and maintaining a diverse and inclusive organizational environment. Gender diversity is catered to by engaging women, not only in the lower tiers but in the higher positions as well, and sustaining a female-friendly workplace culture.

Unilever's philosophy is reflected in everything the company does. For instance, D&I has ownership from the top management, the company has a clearly spelled out purpose for pursuing D&I, a proper structure for enablement, channels for articulating and communicating its D&I philosophy and its essentiality across the organization.

EPCL believes in motivating, developing, and rewarding employees as a means of achieving success, respecting its employees’ rights, and encouraging freedom of expression and open dialogue.

Feroze1888's value system is defined as “PROSPER”. P stands for People Development, R for Respect, O for Ownership and Accountability, S for Success Will, P for Proactive, E for Excellence in work, and R for Reliability. Every Feroze1888 employee has had trainings on PROSPER and are encouraged to know it by heart. These values are a reflection of their organization's aspiration for ensuring an equitable and inclusive workplace.

#### **A DEI motto**

Few organizations have formed DEI mottos implying the importance of synergy that is created when diverse groups of people collaborate and work together. These mottos serve as a declaration of the organization's commitment to furthering DEI

Hashoo Group: “Together we make a difference”

Telenor: “Creating together services and solutions that include different perspectives.”

### **CATEGORY 2: Executives' involvement in DEI LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

#### **Industry Examples of Tools for Leadership and Accountability**

##### **Leadership's commitment to DEI**

Leaders of the organizations who have successfully implemented DEI practices in Pakistan are committed to a very proactive approach with regards to gender DEI within their organizations. This is evident from the statistics presenting enhanced female representation in various organizations.

Under the committed leadership of former CEO of PPAF, women's representation significantly increased from 19 percent to 33 percent from 2011 to 2021.

The board of directors at TPL Corp set fourth an agenda in 2022 to have a more diverse workforce. It is integral to TPL Corp that the top management feels strongly about having a diverse workforce, encouraging the rest of the team and senior management to inculcate and adopt practices that have a rippling effect across the entire organization.

FINCA Microfinance Bank Limited has also improved its diversity ratio from 17% to 24.7% through the dedicated efforts of its leadership

#### **Executives' involvement in DEI**

Members of the board of directors and other senior executives of different organizations are actively engaged in the promotion of DEI.

EPCL's executives including its members, CEO, board, and the entire management committee is truly invested and committed to increasing female representation in the organization. This commitment from the top allows the support needed to extend DEI initiatives into the organization.

Feroze1888's board of directors adopt practical steps to promote a diverse and inclusive environment within the organization. They keep track of real-time progress through analyzing stats and gauging where they currently are and where they want to be headed by setting yearly targets in the quarterly meetings.

Abacus, which is led by a female CEO, Ms. Fatima Asad-Said, has a clear DEI vision that brought the company towards the progressive change of diversity and inclusivity. The departments of corporate strategy and finance, corporate human resources, corporate communication and branding, and D&I are also being led by female leaders. The company has appointed senior representatives in all practice areas, who act as visible champions of diversity.

The Deputy Chairman of the Hashoo Group, Mr. Murtaza Hashwani, has taken a very vocal and a deliberate stand with regards to gender DEI in terms of recruitment of employees, their pay packages, engagement and career growth levels. The senior management of Hashoo Group also displays great commitment towards enhancing gender inclusivity in male dominant departments such as the finance department, by encouraging and training females to work in these departments where female strength is generally low.

At Unilever, each function is gauged through the lens of diversity. Male to female ratio of every department is presented to the CEO, the management committee, and the South Asia cluster on a monthly basis. The top management analyzes these numbers and plans accordingly.

Executives at Teradata take a DEI pledge, which inculcates the value system of Teradata and signifies the commitment that the senior management has towards DEI.

· We will encourage all to speak up when they experience or witness intolerance, mistreatment, incivility, or conscious/unconscious bias in action.

· We will ask ourselves, “Do our actions and words reflect the values of inclusion?”

· We will initiate meaningful, complex and sometimes difficult conversations with colleagues.

· We commit to ensuring an inclusive environment for all.

· We will see different perspectives and respect points of view and communications styles that are different from our own.

· We will ensure our actions and words reflect the value of and our commitment to inclusion.

· We will encourage all to move outside zones to learn about the experiences and perspectives of others.

###### **Teradata is an Anti-Racist Company**

In addition, we are committed to be an anti-racist company in which we identify and extinguish any system, value, behavior or organizational process but perpetuates systemic racism. To do this, we commit to:

· Actively contribute to a culture in which racism is not accepted.

· Acknowledge and confront incidents of racial discrimination and provide support for the employees who are negatively affected.

· Engage in ongoing opportunities to learn about the importance of diversity, equity and inclusion, including our collective responsibility with respect to anti-racist behaviors and processes.

By committing to these behaviors and actions, together, we will create an environment where employees feel safe and free from discrimination and racism

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#### **Role modelling by male leaders**

Engagement and support from men is critical for achieving true diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Male leaders at all levels need to actively support gender DEI and role model their ideals. A vivid example of this is male leaders becoming change agents and taking action to support, empower and help women achieve their goals.

Leadership's commitment in several of the participating organizations is reflected through the CEO's becoming Male Champions of Change (MCC). Members of MCC meet regularly in small action-orientated groups centered around a collective work plan, where they learn from and challenge their peers. As a coalition, they work collectively to publicly share their learnings and their progress. As individuals, change champions implement change within their organizations and publicly advocate for gender equality. Examples of organizations whose CEOs have served as a MCC include:

· Founder of HRSG, late Mr. Azhar's focus had been directed towards ensuring a work environment which was transparent, free of negativity, and allowed open communication and feedback. These values provided the foundation for DEI initiatives within the organization.

· The CEO of Jazz, Mr. Aamir Ibrahim's efforts have greatly contributed to the open and inclusive culture of Jazz, initiatives for gender-equality and enhancing women empowerment. He is an embodiment of inclusivity.

· Telenor’s CEO, Mr. Irfan Wahab, took a panel pledge to promote inclusion in the organization. The pledge promised the presence of female employees in every internal and external panel talk, ultimately giving them a meaningful voice in the organization. In an exciting way to spread the message, he handed over his position as CEO to a female student for a single day. This symbolic takeover highlighted Telenor's commitment towards increased female participation in the workforce.

### **CATEGORY 3:DEI STRUCTURE AND IMPLEMENTATION**

#### **Industry Examples of Tools for DEI Structure and Implementation**

##### **A suitable DEI structure**

Organizations in Pakistan attempt to foster gender DEI through various DEI structures. These structures can be divided into eight types including having a management sub-committee on DEI, diversity champions, diversity council, diversity unit, DEI working group, cross-functional DEI teams, gender committee and a department of DEI.

##### **Budget and resource allocation to DEI**

Budget and resources need to be allocated for the successful implementation of the DEI strategy and initiatives. In this regard, a few organizations have an exclusive annual budget put aside for DEI activities. For example, organizations that have a separate DEI department or a gender committee, allocate at least some budget exclusively to DEI. All organizations have some budget embedded within other budget heads. For example, embedded budget is often used for DEI training, various employee engagement activities, benefits offered to women etc., in most organizations. Overall, the examples illustrate that sufficient budget needs to be allocated to the DEI structural body and its professional staff in order to implement the planned strategy and achieve the DEI targets.

· The Board Committees have been reconstituted at Abacus keeping in mind the D&I element, and its objectives are to provide executive leadership and direction to the D&I initiatives. To judge the successful implementation of objectives, the council typically meets on quarterly basis.

· Bank Alfalah's D&I council, created in the year 2021, constitutes of twelve people out of which six are group heads and the rest are representatives from other levels in the organization. This top driven group head level council meets once a month to discuss ideas, track the implementation of the D&I agenda, and plan and finalize the way forward. It also allocates a specific budget with some cushion for D&I initiatives every year. In addition to this, there is a network of HR business partners and an employee relations team that serve as diversity champions and play their part in keeping the work environment fair, equal, and inclusive for everyone.

· At EPCL, D&I efforts fall under the Talent and Culture function. In each of the company’s subsidiaries a different model exists but what they all have in common is that, a General Manager, Senior Manager and a specific employee look after D&I.

· At British Council, there is a diversity unit that involves DEI policy makers from the UK. The organization, thus adopts a centralized approach to feed the DEI policies and initiatives that are implemented around the world, within the organization locally. In Pakistan, there is a working group under the country lead. This working group consists of different staff members from different teams, who are engaged on voluntary basis, and they have 5% of their role dedicated to DEI.

· FINCA Microfinance Bank Limited has a management subcommittee on diversity, inclusion and belonging (DIB), consisting of a leadership forum. The members of the forum include two female HODs, two females and two males from senior management, and one female from middle management. The bank has separate active committees that deal with issues related to sexual harassment, workplace harassment and workplace bullying.

· Interloop’s Equality and Diversity Committee (EDC) incorporates both females and males from the management. The committee's mandate includes D&I target setting, trainings on D&I and handling cases of discrimination or harassment.

· JS Bank is currently in the process of formulating a D&I council that will consist of people from the upper management tier, including the CEO, CHRO and COO. The council will sponsor different programs advocating gender diversity.

· Prominent DEI roles exist at the leadership level at Jazz, demonstrating how it is one of the key priorities for the company. Cross functional teams are formed, in which employees from different departments such as Sustainability, Commercial, Strategy and People Organization are brought together, and given specific DEI related responsibilities and targets.

· At PTCL Group a department of DEI has been formed which is actively involved in coming up with solutions to increase the representation of women within the organization, and fostering a culture of inclusivity with the help of a strategy formulated under the guidance of GDEIB benchmark standards. The responsibility of DEI comes under group head Culture, Transformation and Change Management, and Assistant Manager (D&I).

· PPAF’s gender committee has been allocated a seperate budget to take DEI initiatives. The committee ensures active gender representation and participation within its operations. The purpose of this committee is to support PPAF in mainstreaming the concept and practice of gender equity in all its internal and external work. It also aims to assist PPAF’s stakeholders in meeting their obligations in terms of what is set out in the results framework to achieve Millennium Development Goals (MDG) of gender equality.

· Unilever has a group of forty people from different functions across all levels, who work in the form of cross functional teams. These teams are responsible for different areas of D&I such as gender, transgender and PWDs. They share ideas with the management committee and the CEO for approval, so that they can proceed with executing the plan in the years ahead.

· Teradata has a cohesive organizational structure with a global board. There are regional committees with voluntary representatives responsible for ensuring implementation of all plans within that particular region. At present there is a representative of DEI initiatives in Pakistan who is a part of the regional forum, who ensures that activities done outside of Pakistan are reflected within the country as well.

### **CATEGORY 4: RECRUITMENT**

#### **Industry Examples of Tools for Recruitment**

Pursuing the agenda of DEI, organizations that have embraced DEI in Pakistan have carried out many initiatives to incorporate DEI in their recruitment system. These initiatives broadly fall under four categories. These include gender neutral job advertisements, gender balanced interview panels, equitable recruitment process and returnship programs. Detailed examples are presented below.

##### **Gender neutral job advertisements**

Organizations make an effort to ensure that the language used in job-ads remain gender neutral and free of any biases. This ensures a diverse pool of candidates. They try to project an overall supportive culture to attract and retain female talent. Feroze1888 and PPAF are examples of such organizations which ensure that their job advertisements are free of specific gender focus and have gender-inclusive language.

##### **Gender balanced interview panels**

Another important aspect which facilitates to make the recruitment and selection process unbiased, is having gender balanced interview panels. For example, FINCA Microfinance Bank Limited has a policy to have at least one female in the panel of interviewers. This incorporates female opinion and removes biases. Hashoo Group also ensures the presence of females in interview panels with the aim of making the interview process more inclusive and encouraging for the interviewees. MMBL maintains neutrality in promotion interviews by ensuring female presence in panels along with the mandatory presence of their female CHRO.

##### **Equitable recruitment process**

Many organizations in Pakistan are rigorously trying to maintain an equitable recruitment process. Examples of such efforts include targets for female applicants per job posting, targets for short-listing females, avoid stereotyping while short-listing, aggressively headhunting for females, pre-employment training for females, targeted recruitment drives for females and monitoring gender ratios at all stages of recruitment. Some industry examples are presented.

· Abacus is fully committed to the principle of equal opportunity and adopt non-discriminatory hiring practices. The company ensures one to two ratio when shortlisting resumes and for this purpose it aggressively headhunts to find talented and skillful females who can proficiently meet the technical requirements of the job. Since January 2021, Abacus has welcomed over 300 employees and consciously boarded more females on senior level positions for business-critical roles to ensure the inclusion of females in strategic decision making.

· FINCA Microfinance Bank Limited has a program called “Trainee Credit Officer” (TCO) which hires 25 females in each batch as trainee credit officers and provides them a three-month stipend along with on-the-job training. The training involves fieldwork, mentorship, and disbursement and mobilization trainings. A female senior credit officer is allocated to each trainee through a buddy system to enhance their productivity. After completion of three months, those who fulfill the qualification criteria are given permanent positions as assistant credit officers. The company also strictly follows its policy of having females in the pool of shortlisted candidates in every hiring round.

· Telenor is very actively involved in creating a gender balance in the workplace. It creates separate talent pools for females, and ensures that the company is doing 50% talent pooling of females in its recruitment strategy. The company is constantly in touch with headhunters across Pakistan who are on the lookout for female talent. This has negated the concept of “pink roles” and has helped in appointing females on tough roles in remote locations.

· PPAF makes conscious efforts to shortlist candidates from diverse backgrounds, especially females. Females are not discriminated on the basis of stereotypes related to their gender, and are encouraged to apply for technical positions. Equity is ensured in terms of providing them equal opportunity as males till shortlisting. After that it is entirely based on merit.

· Hashoo Group has developed a merit-based quota system to increase representation of females in departments where there is minimal female representation. If the desired female candidate lacks certain qualifications or experience she is provided coaching and mentoring. This ensures that the essential competencies and mandatory requirements are not compromised.

· In a conscious effort to build PTCL Group’s future female leadership, the organization inducted 30% women through the management trainee program known as “Summit”. The talent acquisition teams are encouraged to share analytics on the kind of candidates they are attracting for each category and whether there is a need to explore other forums for advertising jobs.

· MMBL recommends all its managers to give priority to female hiring. When a male and a female candidate are at par in terms of the required skill set, the company prefers to hire the female candidate.

· Teradata monitors the female to male percentage religiously and ensures that the hiring manager does not discriminate on the basis of gender when a CV is received and analyzed.

· Jazz has committed to gender balance improvement and has worked on removing any systemic biases from the entire recruitment process with a target of balanced gender ratio at all stages of the recruitment process

· TPL Corp provides an equal chance to both genders to be hired; the company has made it mandatory for recruiters to try their best to shortlist as high as 50 percent females in the organization. TPL Corp as a company encourages women (who have taken career breaks for whatever reasons) to rejoin office and restart their careers, be it 1 year or 20 years

· S&P Global makes intentional investments in identifying and recruiting diverse talent, such as partnering with relevant external organizations and conducting targeted sessions for women in universities. S&P Global’s People Movement team in Islamabad has been able to increase the percentage of females hired to 33% in 2022, and has increased female representation in its Pakistan's workforce to 26.6%.

· At Unilever each function has an internal target guiding the percentage of hiring that should be gender balanced. Similarly, the company’s flagship programs like management trainee programmes, "Unilever Internship Programme" Leadership (ULIP), "Unilever Future Leaders Programme" (UFLP) and supply chain trainee programs are all designed to enhance female representation.

#### **Returnship programs**

Several organizations in Pakistan have introduced returnship programs for females who have taken a career break and want to resume their career. Companies tap in the female talent and provide ease of access needed to return to the corporate sector. These programs are aimed to not only offer skills - uplift, but indulge in providing a meaningful and real role to women, while offering emotional and social support alongside as well. Examples of such returnship programs are represented in Table 2.

##### **Table 2: Examples of returnship programs**

Name of organization/Program name

Bank Alfalah/Welcome Back

EPCL/Break Kay Baad (After the break)

Jazz/She’s Back

JS Bank/Reboot Program

Telenor/Naya Aghaaz (New beginnings)

Unilever/Career by Choice

### **CATEGORY 5: ADVANCEMENT AND RETENTION**

#### **Industry Examples of Tools for Advancement and Retention**

The true essence of gender DEI is observed when women are provided equal opportunities to climb up the organization ladder. Organizations that have DEI best practices have designed and implemented action plans in order to maintain gender parity in advancement and retention, After analyzing the data, we can see that majority of the practices under this category fall under three broad themes; equitable promotion process, women's leadership development programs and confidence building initiatives for women. Detailed examples of these categories are discussed below.

##### **Equitable promotion process**

Organizations that consider female representation across hierarchical levels as important, integrate initiatives in the talent review process to ensure that females are developed for leadership positions and encouraged to apply for promotions. Examples under this theme can be divided into two sub-themes; equitable succession planning and equitable talent reviews.

Unilever has set an ambitious target to become gender balanced for mid-level management and above. The company has had two female CEOs in the past 10 years along with a very gender diverse management committee.

At PPAF, if a position is held by a man for a long time, they make an effort to identify competent females from within the organization or outside to disrupt the chain and change the narrative.

FINCA Microfinance Bank Limited makes an effort to find competent females whenever there is an internal job posting, to ensure career growth of females in the organization.

MMBL has a talent review and development plan which is focused on uplifting female employees and making them actively involved in leadership roles.

In light of its aim to retain a strong talent pool of female employees, HRSG has reached 33% female representation at their senior leadership level, and is now focusing on promoting females to C level for further advancement.

TPL Corp gives special attention to women leadership by promoting females within the organization and enabling them to reach leadership roles. On April 01, 2022, the company promoted their female Head of Learning and Development to the position of "Chief Learning Officer" within the 8 months of joining.

##### **Women's leadership development programs**

Organizations that are committed to gender DEI offer women's leadership development programs that aim to equip potential future leaders with the required skills and abilities. These programs facilitate women in qualifying for senior positions and help them in becoming successful leaders. Table 3 provides examples of women leadership development programs in various organizations.

###### **Table 3: Examples of women's leadership development programs**

Abacus

Next Gen Female Leaders: A program aimed at developing first time managers. It focuses on developing high potential females who are first time managers. The program facilitates top females to reach leadership positions where they can make decisions and have autonomy.

Bank Alfalah

She Lead: Women leadership development program. The program focuses on building a personal brand, self promotion for women, forming effective and strategic connections, overcoming self-limiting beliefs and career development planning.

EPCL

Breaking the Glass Ceiling: Leadership development program for females. This program, is based on a one-year leadership journey for females with group coaching and one-on-one coaching sessions conducted every month. Each month, a different module is covered, for example communication skills, negotiation skills, presentation skills, and so on, thereby making women proficient in multiple competencies. It has resulted in an 11 percent increase in the performance ratings of females.

Jazz

Jazz has launched various talent development programs female's at all career stages. Examples include, “Phoenix", which focuses on essential skills for leadership potential. "Maximize", which is to maximize the technical skills in females, and "Empower" which is a leadership development program for females. Each of these programs is designed specifically for women to help them progress in their career ensuring they can easily climb the corporate ladder.

S&P Global

I’m Woman: Leadership development program for females. I’m Woman was a 3-month program focused on the personal and professional development of 26 females from S&P Global Pakistan. The key theme of this program was to expand the perspectives of women who were interested in leadership positions and to facilitate their development through the lens of highly accomplished female executives who had been able to attain work-life integration. The program consisted of a series of round table discussions with senior female leaders at S&P Global, and the formation of mentor-mentee relationships which could continue beyond the 3 month program, by mutual consent between the mentor and mentee.

Telenor

Telenor has launched a female leadership program aiming to uplift senior female leaders and to encourage leaders to manage diversity within their teams.

##### **Confidence building initiatives for women**

Organizations that have embraced DEI are deeply committed to providing initiatives that build confidence of women. These initiatives can be divided into three types; DEI networks and clubs, mentorship and sponsorship for women, and support to overcome psychological barriers.

· PTCL Group launched its Pink Club in 2017; it undertakes initiatives revolving around the professional development and well-being of females across the company. Pink ambassadors appointed at all regional and zonal offices act as representatives of the cause for DEI-related women centric initiatives. The team uses Workplace to run campaigns, for example Mehfil-e-Milad, Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS) Awareness Campaign, and Breast Cancer Awareness Campaign. Each year the club celebrates International Women’s Day with great vigor in line with the global campaign by United Nations. In 2021 male employees at the PTCL Group pledged their support for the cause through the campaign “Strong Men Wear Pink”.

· Telenor sets up focus groups called "Listen and Learn" for the female employees with the CEO to listen to their ideas. Telenor has also established female forums “EmpowHer Network” that is dedicated to female succession planning and is a tool to motivate and support development of female talent.

· Unilever carries out a connect and share circle called “She for She”, in which a senior person from the top 50 leaders interacts with 25 to 30 female employees. These circles allow females to share their problems, attain solutions and listen to inspiring experiences from one another. Initially these circles were limited to particular functions, but now the company plans to conduct them with cross-functional groups

### **CATEGORY 6: JOB DESIGN, CLASSIFICATION AND COMPENSATION**

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#### **Industry Examples of Tools for Job Design, Classification and Compensation**

To retain and strengthen a talented pool of employees, organizations that have DEI best practices are taking steps to ensure parity in pay and offering flexible job design. Industry examples under these two categories are presented below.

##### **Gender pay parity**

Organizations such as EPCL, Feroze1888, JS Bank, PPAF and Abacus, put in effort to have compensation packages that are unbiased and free of discrimination. These organizations are frequently involved in conducting market research and health checks to ensure that market competitive compensation is given to their employees. Telenor is directly and actively monitoring pay parity. Telenor conducted a pay parity exercise in 2020 and has made it a policy to provide equal salaries for equal work, regardless of gender. Telenor Group publishes gender pay analysis annually to exhibit its commitment to this area. It has an annual salary review processes in place, whereby, salaries of both male and female employees are reviewed to ensure that no group is disadvantaged.

##### **Flexible job design**

Almost all organizations that have DEI best practices are involved in providing a flexible job design to their employees, bearing in mind the responsibilities of an average Pakistani woman. Organizations provide flexible work programs which enable women to effectively balance their work alongside their care obligations at home. Further details of flexible job design from participating organizations are presented under Category 7.

### **CATEGORY 7: WORK-LIFE INTEGRATION, FLEXIBILITY AND BENEFITS**

#### **Industry Examples of Tools for Work-Life Integration, Benefits and Flexibility**

Organizations that have embraced DEI have introduced various benefits and flexible working arrangements for the sound work-life integration for female employees. These efforts facilitate women in pursing their careers while also catering to their personal needs. The most common benefits are maternity leave, flexible working hours, transport facility/allowance for women, paternity leave, daycare or daycare/nanny allowance and sabbatical leave. The less commonly offered additional DEI benefits include iddat leave, secure on-site residence or guest houses, enclosure for niqab wearing women during lunch, scotty loan for women, adoption leave, new mother's adjustment program and priority parking for women. These have been represented in Table 4.

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##### **Maternity leave**

Maternity leave applies to expectant or new mothers who require time off for pregnancy, childbirth and childcare. The maternity leave comprises of statutory or extended leave depending upon the organization. Organizations that are supporting gender DEI are providing fully paid, partially paid, or unpaid maternity leave of varying time period exceeding legislative requirements. Table 5 has the details about some organizations that are offering generous maternity leaves compared to other organizations in Pakistan.

###### **Table 5: Examples of maternity leave duration in organizations**

Organization name/Duration of maternity leave

Bank Alfalah/6 months (full-paid)

EPCL/6 months (full-paid)

FINCA Microfinance Bank Limited/ 3 months (full-paid) + an extendable leave of 2 months or work from home

Jazz/6 months (full-paid for full term) 4 weeks (full paid in case of early miscarriage) 6 months (full paid in case of miscarriage in third trimester or still birth)

MMBL/3 months (full-paid) + an extendable facilitation of up to 3 months with work from home two days a week (full-paid)

PTCL Group/3 months

Teradata/6 months (full-paid) + an extended unpaid leave of 12 months

Unilever/6 months (full-paid)

##### 

##### **Flexible working hours**

Organizations are offering various flexible working arrangements and policies to work from home to help female employees maintain their work-life balance; some examples are presented in Table 6.

###### **Table 6: Examples of flexible working hours policies devised by organizations**

Organization/Policy facilitations

· Abacus: Abacus anywhere: This policy encourages remote working so that female employees feel safe, supported and productive, especially after the outbreak of the pandemic. While it encourages remote working for every staff member, it specifically provides flexible working hours to women at different life stages. They are allowed to work remotely, or work from home.

· FINCA Microfinance Bank Limited: Work from home: FINCA Microfinance Bank Limited has a policy offering 4 days’ work from home every month for females.

· JS Bank: Flexible working arrangements: JS Bank provides flexible working hours in the form of work from home, and reduced hours, depending on the needs of women, especially working mothers.

· MMBL: Flexi working hours: This policy has been devised by MMBL to allow working mothers to work from home. A working mother can opt for one day as a flex day in the week. A working mother can arrive late and leave early as long as her productivity is not affected.

· Telenor: Both males and females are allowed to work from home on any two days of their choice every week. Female employees, having children less than or equal to four years of age, are allowed to work home the entire week.

· Unilever: Everyone at Unilever, except factory production workers, are permitted to work anytime, anywhere, as long as they meet business expectations.

### **CATEGORY 7: WORK-LIFE INTEGRATION, FLEXIBILITY AND BENEFITS**

#### **Transport facilities/allowance for women**

Transport facility or allowance is provided by several organizations so that female employees can commute easily from home to work. This benefit may be in the form of car pick and drop services, female specific buses, travel allowance to compensate for non-availability of pick and drop services, and discounts on Careem or Uber rides. Many organizations are offering such facilities/ allowances, as presented in Table 4.

#### **Paternity leave**

Paternity leave is a period of absence from work granted to a father after or shortly before the birth of his child. Organizations are offering paternity leaves to male employees so that they can spend time with their newly born child. Different companies have different policies for the paternity leaves as presented in Table 7. One organization, S&P Global, offers parental leave as well.

##### **Table 7: Examples of paternity leave policy of organizations**

Organization/Terms of paternity leave policy

Bank Alfalah/7 days

EPCL/15 days of leave which can be used in the first three months of the child’s birth.

Hashoo Foundation/3 days

Jazz/30 days to support the family whether it is a healthy pregnancy, a complex one, or if the mother has lost the child.

PTCL Group/5 consecutive days

S&P Global/26 weeks of paid parental leave for all parents, regardless of gender.

Unilever/3 weeks

#### **Daycare or daycare/nanny allowance**

Daycare is a facility offered by organizations to support working parents. An in-house daycare facility enables working mothers to focus better on their work responsibilities without feeling the guilt of neglecting their child. Examples of organizations that offer in-house daycare at their head office or larger work sites include Abacus, PPAF, PTCL Group etc. An alternative to on-site daycare is daycare allowance that provides monetary assistance to aid working parents to admit their child in a daycare outside the organization’s premises such as by Jazz. Another option is to provide nanny allowance so that working parents may hire a nanny who would look after the child at home. Examples of organizations that provide daycare/nanny allowance include Bank Alfalah, HRSG, MMBL etc.

#### **Sabbatical leave**

A sabbatical is a lengthy, intentional break from one's career. Organizations are also offering sabbatical leave as a means to provide flexibility to their female employees; a few examples are presented in Table 8.

##### **Table 8: Examples of sabbatical leave policies of organizations**

Organization Name/Sabbatical Policy

EPCL/Off-track Policy: If a female employee wants to go on a sabbatical due to personal reasons, she is granted a leave of up to 2 years after the management committee’s approval. Upon her return, the organization accommodates her either in the same department, or elsewhere, as per the availability of positions at that time.

Telenor/Female employees can take a sabbatical for a period of 6 months to 2 years, based on "family/personal needs."

#### **Additional DEI benefits**

Iddat leave is a leave given to a female employees in case of the death of her husband. Many organizations e.g. Bank Alfalah, FINCA Microfinance Bank Limited, Hashoo Groups, Interloop, MMBL and PTCL Group offer Iddat leave.

On-site residences or guest houses are provided to females when they are travelling for business proposes so that they have a safe place to stay and to make their stay more convenient. Table 4 presents examples of organizations that provide this benefit.

Separate enclosures for niqab wearing women during lunch have been created by organizations within the workplace for women who wear niqab to provide them privacy and comfort while having lunch. MMBL and Teradata are examples of two organizations offering this benefit.

Scooty loan is a short- to medium-term loan, specifically for female employees, to purchase a scooty or motorbike in order to make their commute easier. Bank Alfalah, FINCA Microfinance Bank Limited and MMBL are examples of organizations offering this benefit.

Adoption leaves are leaves that are provided to working mothers/parents after adoption so that they have the time and space to adjust and adopt the responsibilities that come with motherhood. Jazz, S&P Global and TPL Corp. are examples of organizations offering adoption leave.

New mother’s adjustment program provides coaching to women who join the workforce after becoming mothers, to teach them ways to maintain a healthy work-life balance. Bank Alfalah and Jazz are examples of organizations providing this benefit.

Priority parking allocates specific areas for women, irrespective of their position, to park their vehicles within the organization’s premises or close to the premises, thus providing them a safe and secure parking area. PTCL Group and TPL Corp. are examples of organizations offering this benefit.

An additional noteworthy initiative "Momentum" launched by Jazz to facilitate female employees. Momentum provides a complete support system, referred to as “Momentum”, for moms who are returning from any kind of maternity leave. It is a six-month adjustment program in which the access of these women is eased out gradually, so they are not expected to return and start working immediately. After the maternity leave, all women are given 3 months work from home with reduced hours and reduced workload. At the end of the first three months, post-partum women and their line mangers can agree on flexible working arrangements (there are several choices available) for the next three months. Momentum also includes two support groups, one for new moms and one for new fathers, which is supported by a qualified psychologist who provides useful counseling and coaching in regular support group meetings. Grief counseling for grieving parents, and post-partum depression support is also provided through a qualified mental health practitioner.

### **CATEGORY 8: ASSESSMENT, MEASUREMENT AND RESEARCH**

Organizations that are implementing best practices are actively involved in assessing the effectiveness of their DEI initiatives. The assessment tools they are using can be grouped into two themes; gender DEI analytics and gender DEI research.

#### **Gender DEI research**

Organizations use various surveys and data collection techniques to conduct research and assess their DEI initiatives. Data and analytics provide the ability to identify whether there are any gaps, prioritize areas for action and enable ongoing measurement of progress. The tools used for gender DEI research include DEI items in employee engagement surveys, focus group discussions on DEI, pulse surveys on DEI, coverage of DEI in exit interviews, DEI one of the themes in 360-degree appraisals and benchmarking for DEI.

DEI items in employee engagement surveys

Organizations such as Teradata, PTCL Group and Unilever include DEI items in their Employee Engagement Survey (EES). The data collected from these surveys is dissected under the lens of DEI to identify patterns of non-inclusivity highlighted by the employees.

Pulse surveys on DEI

Some organizations such as MMBL conduct pulse surveys to understand if women in their organization feel safe, respected and comfortable in their workplace. These pulse surveys are mainly conducted to gather women's feedback, in order to develop a strategy that best caters to their needs and priorities.

DEI one of the themes in 360-degree performance appraisals

A 360-degree performance appraisal takes place when employers evaluate employee performance from multiple sources instead of only one-on-one feedback from a direct manager. Once all the feedback is collected, it is used to measure employees’ strengths, weaknesses and skills and can provide a well-rounded performance review. While 360-degree appraisals are more of a developmental tool than a rating tool, many organizations integrate this performance review system with other evaluation tools to accelerate improvement company-wide. Organizations such as EPCL identify specific themes regarding gender gaps that are reflected in different persons’ feedback in the 360-degree assessment in performance appraisals

##### **Focus group discussions**

A focus group discussion on DEI involves gathering people from similar or diverse backgrounds and experiences together to discuss a specific topic of interest related to DEI in the workplace. Questions are asked in these group discussions about the perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, opinions or ideas of the participants. The PTCL Group has focus group discussions in order to identify the root cause of any inequality that may exist.

Coverage of DEI in exit interviews

Exit interviews are carried out when an employee is leaving the organization. Several companies such as FINCA Microfinance Bank Limited, Jazz, JS Bank conduct exit interviews to improve their policies, and to help and try retain the female employees who plan to leave.

Benchmarking for DEI

Benchmarking is the process of measuring key business metrics and practices, and comparing them within business areas or against a competitor, industry peers, or other companies to understand how and where the organization needs to change in order to improve performance. Bank Alfalah periodically sets DEI-related internal and external benchmarks to track progress on DEI. In some organizations, KPIs are set for the departmental heads to achieve an optimum number of women in their respective departments.

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### **CATEGORY 9: DEI COMMUNICATIONS**

#### **Industry Examples of Tools for DEI Communications**

Numerous communication mediums are being used by organizations to promote DEI internally as well as externally. The aim is to maintain an interactive environment, and to provide employees an easy access to DEI related information, and to communicate with external audiences about DEI related initiatives and issues.

###### **Internal communication channels**

Examples of internal communication channels being used by organizations are:

Internal web-spaces to promote DEI

DEI discussions in town hall meetings

DEI coverage in employee newsletters

Internal meeting sessions on DEI

Internal IVRs and SMSs for DEI

###### **External communication channels**

Examples of external communication channels being used by organizations are:

External DEI communication using social media

External DEI digital campaigns

##### **Internal web spaces used to promote DEI**

Table 10 provides examples of internal web spaces used to promote DEI.

###### **Table 10: Examples of internal web spaces used by organizations to promote dei**

Bank Alfalah has an email group "Women at Bank Alfalah" on which the bank sends its female employees women-centric articles. Internally, communications are rolled out through its learning management system, staff TV channel and HR portal.

FINCA Microfinance Bank Limited celebrates International Women’s month instead of celebrating it for a single day. They have podcasts, interviews and panel discussions to raise awareness. The bank also uploads the material regarding how it celebrated this month (including free health clinic, awareness sessions, trainings on financial literacy etc.) on the platform of FINCA Impact Finance, Yammer. Further, the bank has made a WhatsApp group to interact with its female employees. Regular refreshers are sent to all staff members throughout Pakistan via emails (in English as well as Urdu) regarding code of conduct, dress policy, and workplace harassment

Jazz has several platforms including an internal portal and mobile app “People Hub” where all the announcements, including DEI-related announcements are made. In addition to this information about DEI, initiatives and policies are also released on emails, flash messages as well as on Workplace by Meta. Jazz has also introduced an employee resource group for all women and is expanding it for PWDs, allies and other forms of diversity within the organization. Micro-learnings and small videos are shared on this channel for the purpose of raising awareness.

Employees of JS Bank have access to internet portals called Learning Management System and Decibel, where all important announcements are available for people who are part of the organization. Emails are another important source of communication, whereby the DEI team rolls out emails providing guide and information about DEI.

In MMBL, female employees from top management as well as female employees working in any far-off branch are part of a WhatsApp group. This group enables interaction and provides a platform to women to communicate their problems so that they can be facilitated accordingly. They can share their achievements, provide feedback, or ask for clarity on any matter of concern.

The platform Workplace is used in PTCL Group to run numerous awareness campaigns such as “Diversity at the PTCL Group”, to educate employees about D&I related terminology, and spread knowledge about diversity and inclusion across the company. Moreover, the Pink club at PTCL Group runs different campaigns for engagement purposes. The organization also ran a company-wide DEI awareness campaign in 2021 through HR news bulletin. In this campaign, a news bulletin that encapsulated DEI related efforts was released every Monday. It has also created a DEI work group on Workplace app which has about eight thousand and one hundred employees. Posts are shared with employees and news about sponsorships are also released so that all the employees and management staff remain aware of the organization’s preferred roadmap for DEI at all times.

Unilever has an Internal SharePoint portal that includes an entire module on DEI. The module shares information regarding Unilever’s DEI initiatives.

##### **DEI discussions in town hall meetings**

A town hall meeting is a company-wide event hosted by members of the upper management, with the intention to keep the workforce updated about business results, changes, and the general direction of the company. Several organizations use general town hall meetings to discuss DEI issues, or hold specific town hall meetings on DEI. In Teradata, the topic of values and DEI is included at every town hall meeting which is conducted to include all employees in broad DEI discussions. Similarly, S&P Global conducts town hall meetings to communicate the company’s DEI values and efforts.

##### **DEI coverage in employee newsletters**

An employee newsletter of a company is an electronic or printed communications piece that is used by an organization for its internal communication. Some organizations use it to inculcate the organization’s DEI orientation in the minds of all of its employees. For example, FINCA Microfinance Bank Limited publishes success stories (national and international) of female employees in its newsletter including the success stories of females who started their career as branch managers and are currently at the position of regional manager. S&P Global is another organization that uses newsletters to communicate the company’s DEI values and efforts.

##### **Internal meeting sessions on DEI**

A meeting session is a gathering of two or a limited number of people for the purpose of making decisions or discussing company objectives and operations including DEI-related issues. Meetings are generally conducted in person in an office; however, with the rise of video conferencing technologies, participants can join a business meeting from anywhere. The British Council conducted a series of internal meeting sessions on “Safe Space” in which male and female employees were invited in separate meetings that were moderated by the deputy director and area director (both top-level directors who are managing the operations in Pakistan). Employees shared different problems encountered at the workplace which helped the organization to devise interventions accordingly. Another series of sessions is being conducted by HR, called “Stronger Together,” to help staff open up about their thoughts and feelings about different topics in EDI.

##### **Internal IVRs and SMSs for DEI**

Interactive voice response (IVR) is an automated business phone system feature that interacts with callers and gathers information by giving them choices via a menu. It then performs actions based on the answers of the caller through the telephone keypad or their voice response. This system is also used by organizations to embrace DEI in their routine operations. Along with IVRs, SMSs also facilitate in disseminating specific tailored messages to different groups in PTCL Group, while adapting language (English for management and Urdu for non-management staff) for better understanding amongst employees

##### **External DEI communication using social media**

Businesses create their own social media marketing strategy to promote DEI externally. For example, Bank Alfalah has a "Women who Inspire" and “Women of Resilience” series that are used as a platform to empower women by sharing real life inspiring women's journey with external audiences. The Women who Inspire series is focused more on the top management, where women share messages and advice for the lower level female employees to grow in their career. The Women of Resilience series is focused more on the women in the lower hierarchal level, to understand their struggles. Posts are made which include the name, picture, designation, and message of the employee and are shared on LinkedIn. Jazz also runs public awareness ad campaigns on transgender rights, women rights and mental health issues on social media. Regular press releases are issued on various platforms for external communication, as well as for public disclosure of its DEI practices.

##### **External DEI digital campaigns**

A digital campaign involves raising awareness about DEI across all the digital channels where people engage with an organization. Some examples are presented in this sub-section.

###### **EPCL**

EPCL recently embarked on a gender inclusive journey targeted at breaking stereotypes that surround working women by communication tools and implementing the narrative of normalizing the presence of women at various positions in the petrochemicals industry. With a digitally driven campaign titled “Celebrating Our Women,” inspiring stories of female employees were launched. The main aim was to break stereotypes that surround working women, especially in the field of engineering. Four episodes were launched, with the following titles.

###### **TPL**

TPL Corp ran numerous engaging digital campaigns during the summer of 2021 for eight weeks. The focus of the campaign was to enlighten potential employees about how the company promotes women, directs constant efforts towards creating an inclusive culture, and the benefits of working with TPL Corp. Ghar sai itni dur, akeley kesey rahogi? (How will you live alone this far away from home?) Shaadi k baad, kesey manage kerogi? (How will you manage all of this after marriage?) Yeh larko ki field hoti hay, tum larki ho. (This field is for men, you’re a girl) Working mother ho? Bacho ko kesey time dogi? (You're a working mother? How will you make time for your kids?)

###### **Telenor**

Telenor ran campaigns such as: #SeeTheRealMe, debunking biases around females and communicating their true potential. “Myth Busting”, where male mangers advocated female employees as being equally hard working and competent by sharing the benefits of working with female colleagues, and how female's contributions allowed the organization to gain competitive advantage. The whole practice helped getting male leaders/managers on board, and demolishing the mental traps that become a barrier in hiring female employees. #SpeakUp, reminding employees about different types of harassment and reporting. #BreaktheBias, released on International Women’s Day where Telenor Pakistan's women narrated their stories on how they broke the biases in their workplace

### **CATEGORY 10: DEI LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

#### **Industry Examples of Tools for DEI Learning and Development**

Organizations conduct numerous trainings in an attempt to create a diverse, equitable and inclusive culture, so that all employees hold similar beliefs regarding gender DEI. Such trainings become a source of enlightenment for employees about the concept of gender DEI, and help them to take practical steps to embrace and enhance DEI in the workplace. These trainings are provided to all employees, including leaders, to foster an inclusive environment. Industry examples related to such trainings can be clubbed into two groups; Popular DEI trainings and additional DEI training and learning initiatives.

##### **Popular DEI trainings**

Popular DEI trainings that are offered by many organizations include:

Gender sensitization training

Unconscious bias training

Sexual harassment training

##### **Examples of popular DEI trainings**

Bank Alfalah launched an e-learning platform in 2021 to train and educate their employees on overcoming gender stereotypes and unconscious bias. The organization also carries out sessions for women on handling sexual harassment, in an attempt to give them the courage to speak up.

JS Bank conducts trainings on harassment and gender sensitization. Their gender sensitization training is run specifically for customer facing staff, and ensures that at least one person at one customer touchpoint serves as a 'Gender Champion'. It trains them on appropriate conduct, awareness on harassment, gender biases and the necessary considerations and etiquettes to follow while interacting with women.

HRSG has trained employees on social compliance policy i.e., prohibition of harassment and abuse, and there are further plans to introduce sensitivity trainings on DEI.

A gender audit was conducted by PPAF along with the training “Dignity At Workplace”. A renowned trainer was invited who generated the concept of D&I that eventually led to the creation of modules on gender sensitization. Apart from that, PPAF has been carrying out “16 Days of Activism” every year since 2014. The program enlightens employees on gender based violence by conducting campaigns.

TPL Corp provides training on harassment and makes sure that all employees go through this training as the organization has zero tolerance policy towards harassment.

Abacus recently dedicated an entire month to carry out trainings on unconscious bias, gender sensitivity, sexual harassment and code of conduct, which were mandatory for all employees.

In order to raise awareness about gender and workplace harassment for females at all organizational levels, FINCA Microfinance Bank Limited carries out online focus group sessions via Microsoft teams every month. Females are educated on organizational values, reporting channels and accessibility.

PTCL Group plans to develop portfolios and provide trainings around capacity building, gender sensitive vocabulary and gender stereotypes in the coming year.

The gender sensitization trainings held at Hashoo Group not only help raise awareness on the matter, but the idea is to unpack the concept in a manner that it pushes people to think critically, internalize it, own it, and connect with it. The group provides small nugget size organic training of 1-2 hours, four times a week or once a month, to a group of 10 to 12 individuals, on an on-going basis.

At Unilever, each and every function has focused training agendas on female capability. In 2022, the organization is carrying out gender sensitization trainings as a refresher.

British Council, Jazz and Telenor are also among the organizations which provide trainings on unconscious bias.

##### **Additional DEI training and learning initiatives**

Table 11 provides examples of a variety of DEI trainings and DEI initiatives offered by organizations.

###### **Table 11: Examples of additional dei trainings and learning initiatives**

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At Abacus, the corporate HR department runs bi-annual training programs with regards to aligning employees career development plans through classroom level soft skill trainings on D&I policies, programs and practices.

Bank Alfalah plans to start a series on e-learning for first-time mothers and their line managers. The transition of entering motherhood and having to come back to work is challenging and the organization acknowledges it. Educating line managers on how to be more supportive towards these mothers is likely to make the transition easier.

FINCA Microfinance Bank Limited conducts a mandatory 45-minute training every March on D&I covering several modules. A quiz is held afterwards, and an employee needs to score 50% or above to move forward. Moreover, a one-day training is conducted on stress management and team building. The company also deputes women champions which could be males or females at all of their touch-points. Their role is to provide a safe space for women, both staff and customers, to educate females about financial inclusion, and to extend their learnings to others.

Interloop conducts numerous trainings on promoting equality and diversity for the management staff, and the company also plans to extend these trainings for the non-management staff.

Jazz conducted a MCC campaign to get male managers/leaders on board so that they can show their support, and share facts on how females provide a competitive advantage and other benefits to their teams. The company has also conducted concentrated trainings with EY, which included trainings on inclusive leadership and becoming male champions of change. Jazz also provides other DEI related trainings which include micro aggressions and implicit bias trainings for all employees; inclusive management training for all people managers and leaders, and inclusive culture and everyday respect training for its leadership team. The organization also offers micro learning using e-learning platforms.

S&P Global has a regular educational webinar series, called "Courageous Conversations", in which leading experts, recognized advocates and authors in the DEI space speak on a variety of DEI topics, including anti racism, transgender equality, and colorism at both micro and macro-levels. Through these conversations, S&P Global aims for its people to go through the journey of learning together as an organization. A follow-up open forum debrief session, called "Brave Spaces" also provides the opportunity for people to share, ask questions, and have constructive discussions, conducted in a safe space for everyone.

The leadership D&I program at Telenor provides training on D&I to both senior and middle managers. The organization also conducted a female leadership program, which was a workshop to uplift senior female leaders. The aim was to better equip them to manage diversity within their teams while also managing their own and the biases of of their subordinates. The company also carries out the MCC campaign, focused on building male sponsorship for gender DEI.

Teradata conducts acknowledgment sessions called “Diversity Dialogues” to ensure an in-depth understanding about DEI and its challenges. External speakers are invited to share facts, stories, statistics, challenges and practices related to DEI, while also allowing internal volunteers to share their stories about discrimination and inequity. The activity creates sensitization of the matter, by allowing individuals who have gone through such experiences to talk about them, while allowing anonymity.

TPL Corp has conducted various training sessions. The sessions were for all management staff and aimed at teaching them the ways to enhance diversity, and be more inclusive in managing their teams. These se also focused on collaboration, transparency and removing unconscious bias.

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### **CATEGORY 11: CONNECTING DEI AND SUSTAINABILITY**

#### **Industry Examples of Tools for Connecting DEI and Sustainability**

Organizations extend their DEI believes and practices outside the workplace to play their part in creating a society that values its women as much as men. Gender DEI practices are extended and broadened to cater to sustainability and its multiple dimensions. Examples of such practices can be divided into two main categories; connecting DEI and sustainability externally and connecting DEI and sustainability internally.

##### **Connecting DEI and sustainability externally**

Gender DEI practices that fall under the theme of connecting DEI and sustainability externally are divided into trainings for female customers and clients, external scholarship programs for women, external DEI research and collaboration with DEI related NGOs.

###### **Trainings for female customers and clients**

FINCA Microfinance Bank Limited At FINCA Microfinance Bank Limited, the operations department along with the marketing and HR department, run a National Literacy Program (NLP) targeting financial literacy. The focus is to have as many females in the program as possible and ensure financial inclusion of women. This initiative is not just limited to employees at FINCA, but is extended to its female clients as well.

MMBL's strategy for women's empowerment includes a program a called Women Inspirational Network. This program facilitates female customers and borrowers (rural and urban females) who want to become entrepreneurs, by training and digitally equipping them so that they can achieve their desired goals.

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##### External DEI research

S&P Global Pakistan is working in close partnership with UN Pakistan Women's Council on the Future of Women and Work. A recent initiative explored the impact of the pandemic on women in Pakistan. A survey was designed by Texas A&M University, which was kept open for six months. Moreover, The U.S. Pakistan Women's Council, S&P Global, Texas A&M University, and the U.S. Pakistan Business Council will convene companies and private sector-led non-profit organizations to exchange lessons learned, for policy development and recommendations for the advancement of women.

##### External scholarship programs for women

British Council offers Scottish scholarships to female students from a lower socio-economic background. Hundred plus scholarships are offered for Bachelors and Masters. The company also offers STEM scholarships in which female students are sent to the UK for skill development.

##### Collaboration with DEI related NGOs

Feroze1888 considers it their responsibility to create job opportunities and raise awareness to encourage women to utilize their talent. One of their 14 sustainability goals is solely concerned with working towards the betterment of the society. The company actively interacts with foundations such as Meman foundation and Selaani. Such collaborations allow room for creating employment opportunities.

##### **Connecting DEI and sustainability internally**

Organizations that have DEI best practices also take initiatives which connect DEI with sustainability internally with an aim of embedding it deep into the organizational culture. The domestic violence support offered by Unilever is an example of such practices.

###### **Domestic violence support for women**

Unilever implements initiatives to provide domestic violence support for its female employees. A policy was devised in 2021 addressing "How to manage domestic violence beyond the workplace". It provided complete facilitation to the employee from a perspective of pulling them out of the dreadful situation. This includes giving them housing for a certain period of time, providing them with mental well-being support, arranging lawyers, and providing any other support or assistance they may need. Unilever also launched a campaign which was reflected in their advertisements. A small ad which revolved around becoming "unmute" was made, empowering victims to speak up. A phone line was also attached with the Ministry of Human Rights, encouraging women to report domestic violence cases.

### **CATEGORY 12: COMMUNITY, GOVERNMENT RELATIONS AND PHILANTHROPY**

#### **Industry Examples of Tools for Community, Government Relations and Philanthropy**

Organizations committed to DEI realize that their responsibilities are not limited to the workplace. Therefore, they partner and collaborate with external parties, or take initiatives for women in the external community to provide these women with opportunities they would otherwise remain deprived of. Examples of initiatives under this category can be divided under two themes; support for women-led businesses and community-based capacity development programs for women.

##### **Support for women-led businesses**

Table 12 presents examples of steps taken by various organizations to extend their help for small women-owned businesses, and encourage and empower women to become successful entrepreneurs.

###### **Table 12: Examples of organizations providing support for women-led businesses**

Bank Alfalah has a toolkit for the SME sector which can be used by women to further enhance their businesses. Visits are made by Bank Alfalah to organizations created and led by women to address ways their businesses can be expanded. Bank Alfalah was also actively involved in the Kamyaab Jawaan scheme introduced by the ex Prime minister, to help several women.

Jazz has programs in place to enhance digital literacy among girls, maximize female-led enterprises in the start-up ecosystem and enhance the representation of women across ICT.

PPAF conducted an event called Women’s Jamboree in which women who had won Amtul Raqeeb award (acknowledgement for women who had been change makers) over the years were gathered with the purpose of networking. They shared the initiatives they had taken, and how they had supported their businesses using the money they had won.

PTCL Group believes in empowering women, and has provided business to small scale women-owned firms on several occasions in order to give them the opportunity to create industry links.

TPL Corp makes continuous efforts to support women in all spheres of life. The company partnered with a women led organization of under privileged females in 2021 which makes artifacts. The organization was given TPL Corp's posters of nearly 50 by 50 feet to recycle and convert them into beautiful artifacts, which were presented to employees on international women’s day.

##### **Community-based capacity development programs for women**

Organizations that have embraced DEI partner with different institutes to provide community-based capacity development programs for women to prepare them for starting their professional careers. These programs provide opportunities to many women and equip them with the skills required to join the workforce. Examples under this theme include trainings for budding female entrepreneurs, community-based leadership development programs for women, community-based mentorship programs for women, partnerships with other organizations and external awareness campaigns. Table 13 presents examples of industry practices which come under this theme.

###### **Table 13: Examples of community-based capacity development programs for women**

Bank Alfalah’s SME team has a dedicated department that initiates awareness campaigns on financial inclusion of women. Partnerships with organizations such as Sameera and Ladies fund are formed to educate women on financial, as well as non-financial literacy.

EPCL partnered with a training institute that aids the company in imparting technical skills in the communities it works with; this includes the Gul Shane Hadid community, and people living around port Qasim. The company is also engaged in talks with WE power, Women Engineers (Pakistani non-profit organization) and Million mentors (international organization working to increase women representation in STEM) to enhance their efforts for the community.

Interloop’s HULT Prize Entrepreneurial program promotes entrepreneurial mindset amongst women in the society. This event took place in collaboration with the Government College Women University Faisalabad (GCWUF) entrepreneurial society and University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF). Interloop also sponsored a fashion design course for females in which an MOU was signed with the Pakistan Network Training Institute Lahore to support deserving female students for a 2-years BA fashion designing course. Interloop also sponsored the IBA-CED program. The aim was to promote entrepreneurship in women and around 300 participants (males/females/families) benefited from the program.

Hashoo Group established a non-profit organization called Hashoo Foundation to enable the underprivileged to become self-reliant through various humanitarian and capacity building approaches. The Foundation further established, a social enterprise called Hashoo Hunar (HH) over the last few decades of its service to the development sector. HH works to alleviate poverty through human resource development initatives, such as youth development centers, sustainable livelihoods, education and health and nutrition programs, with a gender equitable focus

Jazz conducted a bootcamp with the National Incubation Center (NIC) team, in which female entrepreneurs presented their business pitch and were also provided entrepreneurial trainings to support their ideas. The company is also assisting the safe transition of women to the digital world, and as part of GSMA Connected Women Commitment Initiative, it has committed to increase the proportion of women in its mobile internet customer base by 8 percent by 2023 with a dedicated focus on female smart phone ownership. Also, Jazz and Chughtai Lab collaborate to offer discounts on female specific medical tests. Jazz has also introduced Pink Card though which women can avail 50% discounts on various female related medical tests. The cards are issued free of cost, and women can add five more family members on the card, regardless of their dependency or insurance coverage.

Partnerships with CIP, DARAZ, NIC & GDG are formed by MMBL for capacity building activities for women borrowers and entrepreneurs.

PPAF carried out a leadership training program called "Irada". It was a two days’ event. On the first day, community women met donors and narrated their experiences to them. The second day was focused on their capacity building, which highlighted and worked on strengthening areas such as confidence building, leadership, team management and teamwork.

Inclusion is one of the five focus areas of the CSR Policy at PTCL Group. The organization designs and executes interventions that help different population groups especially w.r.t. gender and disability. The organization believes in creating sustainable partnerships with the development sector so that implementation of the CSR projects can be done by organizations that have good penetration in impoverished community groups.

S&P Global, in collaboration with U.S.-Pakistan Women's Council (USPWC), has pledged to mentor 20,000 girls and women in Pakistan over a period of 3 years through the "Million Women Mentor" program. Million Women Mentors is a movement to spark the interest and confidence of girls and women to pursue and succeed in STEM careers, and pursue leadership opportunities through the power of mentoring. Through this pledge, S&P Global wants to play a role in bridging the global skills gap, and create an inclusive economy.

### **CATEGORY 13: SERVICES AND PRODUCTS, MARKETING AND RESPONSIBLE SOURCING**

#### **Industry Examples of Tools for Services and Products, Marketing and Responsible Sourcing**

There were limited industry examples under the categories of services and products, marketing and responsible sourcing. Overall, these areas need considerable attention. The GDEIB 2021 standards provide guidance about the impact of these categories. The standards explain that it is vital for organizations to embed DEI considerations in service and product development. Customers tend to be the most crucial stakeholders for an organization, thus addressing their perceptions and needs sets the tone for how they will engage with the company going forward. It is also integral to ensure that biasness towards females is not reflected in any form in the products or services offered by an organization. Marketing and customer service strategies attract and retain the customer base. The impact that marketing strategies can have on creating an image of the organization in the consumers’ mind is significant. Truly diverse and inclusive marketing strategies require that a message resonate consciously and subconsciously with the audience, connecting with them on a deeper level. If the customers cannot identify with the message the organization is advertising in its marketing campaigns, retaining them is going to be a challenge. Customer service reflects brand image, mission and core values. All these elements are interconnected. Thus authentic efforts of embedding DEI in customer service are critical. Responsible and ethical sourcing refers to a commitment to purchase a significant percentage of goods and services from organizations committed to high standards in DEI, sustainability, ethical behavior, and Fair Trade. Further, the organization supports its current and potential suppliers in maintaining high standards through education and systems that enable them to compete equitably with other suppliers, the ultimate goal being the creation of sustainable, successful, and prosperous societies.

##### **Gender awareness in services and products development**

Organizations are taking steps to elevate the economic condition of women in an attempt to reduce inequities, especially those encountered by women. For this purpose, they make conscious efforts to offer products and services which equitably cater to the needs and wants of both genders. Some industry examples are presented below

· PPAF has had several poverty graduation initiatives that aim to reduce poverty from the lowest levels and bring economic and social prosperity. These initiatives have been implemented in over 100 districts and have influenced 16.28 million people with 50% women. The organization also ensures that there is no discrimination when it comes to the company’s interventions. For example, borrowers of microfinance loans are 50 percent females. Another initiative taken by PPAF is their “Art Residency” project, which was a musical journey out of poverty for indigenous musicians, with a focus on the marginalization of musicians within society, preserving endangered indigenous musical instruments and folk economy. Diversity was a core component of the Art Residency in Islamabad as a female vocalist and apprentice duo was added as part of the residency to achieve more gender balance.

· Under the prime minister’s Kamyaab Jawaan scheme, Bank Alfalah specifically designs its services and products for women and has been lending to women entrepreneurs in both the SME and Agri fields.

· JS bank has a specific product umbrella, "JS Her" which represents all the products specifically designed for women. Additionally, the bank has separate loan products for women who want to start their own business, namely JS Khud Mukhtar.

##### **Gender sensitivity in marketing and customer service**

Bank Alfalah is developing gender champions at customer touchpoints bank wide. These champions can either be male or female, and receive a sensitization training, along with the detail about every facility that is available for women in the bank.

##### **Gender equity in sourcing**

Organizations make a conscious effort to have ethical companies on board while conducting business. For instance, Teradata’s code of corporate governance mandates them to ensure that the company they are doing business with, is not unethical or involved in practices that by any means maybe regarded as unethical, immoral or against the cultural norms of that country and its corporate sector.

## **SECTION 3 : Conclusion**

### **Other Diversities**

The purpose of this toolkit was to provide examples of gender DEI best practices and to encourage organizations in Pakistan to increase the adoption of such practices. However, many forms of diversity co-exist, and organizations are tapping into these dimensions in order to fully embrace DEI in its true essence. Examples of other diversities for which organizations in Pakistan are taking initiatives includes religiously and culturally diverse individuals, persons with disabilities and transgenders

### **Industry Examples of initiatives for other diversities**

##### **Religious and cultural diversity**

Organizations that have embraced DEI are making efforts to inculcate religious and cultural diversity in their workforce, by prioritizing individuals from different backgrounds. A few industry examples are discussed in this subsection.

###### **MMBL**

At MMBL, religious minorities have been facilitated through the introduction of minority leaves. All the religious minorities (Hindus, Christians etc.) are allowed to take a day off on their respective religious occasions and on the next day as well. Minorities get holidays on Muslim festivals, as well as their own religious festivals. Their religious festivities are celebrated in the organization as well. MMBL also wishes and sends gifts to its non-Muslim employees on their religious occasions.

###### **PTCL Group**

At PTCL Group, Talent Acquisition teams are encouraged to share analytics on the kind of candidates they are attracting for each category (gender, religious, cultural) and whether there is a need to explore other forums for job advertisements. Talent Management teams are asked to share growth patterns for each category to gauge a pattern of exclusion (if any) exists. Performance Management teams are also asked to share data on the same lines and are encouraged to address grievances of population groups who may feel they are being excluded due to their demographical background. PTCL Group has offices located in all five provinces and cherishes the cultural and religious diversity that their employees bring to the organization. All employees are entitled to take leaves based on their religious and cultural commitments. Line managers are encouraged to adjust their schedules around festive times of the year. Close-knit teams get together to celebrate religious occasions with their colleagues at the regional level.

###### **Abacus**

Abacus is an organization which not only has an inclusive environment for religious minorities, but also promotes them to leadership positions. Their business process outsourcing practice area is led by a Christian, while another area is led by a Hindu.

###### **Teradata and British Council**

Teradata has held online cultural sensitivity workshops for all its employees. British Council also carried out trainings on anti-racism for all its employees in Pakistan after the George Floyd occurred incident.

###### **PPAF**

PPAF had a two-week internship program in which people from various national and international universities were selected. The organization was able attract individuals from all across the country, including Balochistan, Sindh, Interior Sindh and other far-flung areas. Students from all backgrounds were encouraged to apply, and their finances were also covered.

###### **Jazz**

Jazz celebrates its diverse workforce in the form of various events, such as Holi for Hindu colleagues with leave for them on their special day, Christmas leave and celebration for Christian staff, and festivities for Muslim holidays. To support low-income Muslim colleagues, Jazz also arranges ration packs and iftar packs during Ramadan.

##### **Persons with disabilities (PWDs)**

Organizations that have embraced DEI are very actively involved in creating a space for those with disabilities. Some examples of these initiatives are presented in this sub-section.

HRSG partnered with NOWPDP to support PWD’s. The organization was part of the "100 Days’ 100 Lives" campaign, where individuals from NOWPDP were mentored by HRSG employees, post which the said individuals are placed within HRSG or with its partners. Last year the company hired and mentored two individuals internally.

PTCL Group's most prized intervention for PWDs is their "Justuju" internship program. It is a structured 6-week paid internship program. PTCL Group partners with organizations such as Deaf Talk and NOWPDP to carry out this program. Every intern has a mentor assigned to them from PTCL or Ufone. The program aims at helping persons with disabilities kick start their corporate careers. Before the program was implemented, PTCL headquarter’s building was assessed in to order to ensure accessibility for all. Currently, the headquarters of PTCL, Ufone tower, Karachi zonal headquarter, and Lahore zonal headquarter are all accessible for PWDs. The industry hiring rate of interns under the Justuju Internship program is 30%.

MMBL has incorporated differently-abled persons in its workforce through its program “Hum Qadam” and provides them with suitable infrastructure in the head office. This practice is being expanded in other branches as well.

Telenor has a flagship program called the "Open Mind Trainee" (OMT) through which the company is empowering differently abled persons. This is also a yearly program in which people with different needs are hired, trained and given the exposure which is needed from a multi-national perspective. The whole office facility of Telenor is designed in a way that facilitates PWDs.

JS Bank established a partnership with Careem that offers convenient, affordable and safe transport to PWDs with certain discounts in a month on the rides.

Jazz has enabled infrastructure provision in the organization such as ramps, lifts and specialized lavatories to support PWDs in its workforce. Persons with disabilities are provided transport facility for work travel. Awareness training for line managers and colleagues was arranged to make sure that PWDs are supported in the workplace, and feel a sense of belonging. Jazz is also launching a focused internship program for PWDs, "Spectrum", which is aimed at providing internship for persons with visible and invisible disabilities.

British Council provides disability sensitization trainings, to make the organization more inclusive for disabled people.

##### **Transgenders**

Transgenders of Pakistan are often left ignored in Pakistan. Not many organizations are taking into account this group of people, organizations implementing best practices of DEI are planning to include them in their workforce in the near future. MMBL is one such organization that is aiming to take specific steps to include transgenders in their workforce. Unilever is already quite progressive in this regard. Trainings are provided under the trans-programme in order to sensitize employees before the induction of trans individuals in Unilever’s ecosystem. Jazz has an inclusive culture with transgenders already in its workforce. Recently, Jazz has run a massive campaign, "Super for Change", for transgender rights. The campaign included television commercials, social media campaigns, storytelling events and internal story sharing competition with their transgender community, and special packages for supporting the transgender community

#### **The way forward**

This toolkit focuses primarily on gender diversity and identifies tools that organizations may adopt to support their gender DEI strategies. These tools can be used by both the participating organizations to further enhance their DEI efforts into untapped areas, and also by other organizations to better understand the kind of initiatives that can be taken. The toolkit also briefly sheds light on organizational practices catering to other forms of diversities in Pakistan i.e. cultural and religious diversity, PWDs and transgenders. While some organizations are actively working to include other forms of diversities in their workforce, this notion still requires wider application and acceptance. This can be done in multiple ways. For instance, the existing practices should be communicated via an accessible medium, such as a toolkit dedicated to other diversities, to motivate organizations to implement them. Moreover, detailed research should be conducted on the benefits associated with creating more inclusive workplaces, including but not limited to increased employee engagement, innovative behavior at work and better connection with customers. Indigenous material covering other related areas, such as the frequent challenges encountered by organizations in implementing DEI practices, and practical steps to overcome them, also needs to be developed. Additionally, there should be more training and peer-to-peer learning sessions to share best practices and challenges in implementing these practices. Such sessions can be arranged within organizations, at various organizational levels, to create awareness amongst all employees. Targeted training can ensure that employees, irrespective of their position/level hold a shared meaning of DEI, understand the organization's commitment towards it, and ultimately play their part in fulfilling the DEI goals. Professionals interested in DEI topics should be brought together at various forums to share learnings and have topical discussions about the state of DEI in their respective workplaces. Such events could lead to valuable discussions and learnings on how to advance DEI and foster a sense of belonging in organizations. Furthermore, indigenous case studies and success stories relating to various forms of diversities should be written and then discussed in universities, to form a linkage between industry and academia in this area. All these efforts can collectively create a ripple effect in improving DEI in the workplaces across Pakistan. This will give rise to a fair society where everyone feels appreciated and uplifted based on competence, rather than being treated inequitably because of personal characteristics.

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# **Gender DEI Toolkit 2: A Guide to Resolve Implementation Challenges**

## **Background**

Organizations need to focus on gender DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) practices to utilize the skills and experience of women effectively. While many Pakistani organizations recognize the importance of this change and are making efforts to foster an inclusive environment, numerous others still face significant challenges. The country is ranked among the worst in gender gap statistics (World Economic Forum, 2022), primarily due to factors such as a patriarchal mindset, cultural norms, and societal expectations. Thus, there is a strong need to analyze these challenges, identify steps organizations can take to overcome them, and develop practical solutions. This toolkit is designed to provide a foundation for addressing these challenges.

## **Purpose of the Toolkit**

The Gender DEI Toolkit Volume II aims to assist organizations in identifying and overcoming challenges faced during the implementation of gender DEI practices in Pakistan. Building on the foundation set by Gender DEI Toolkit Volume I, launched in October 2022, which introduced 47 tools to advance gender diversity in the workplace, Volume II specifically addresses the challenges encountered when applying these best practices.

### **Objectives of the Toolkit**

1. To serve as a practical guide for the effective implementation of gender DEI initiatives.

2. To identify the challenges organizations face during the execution of gender DEI initiatives.

3. To investigate the underlying causes behind specific challenges that impede the successful implementation of DEI initiatives.

4. To assist organizations in developing effective solutions to reduce and eventually eradicate gender disparity in the workplace.

5. To contribute to nation-building by supporting and empowering females in the workplace, aligning with the 5th Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) on gender equality developed by the UN.

## **The Foundation Group: Drive the Strategy**

The Foundation group emphasizes the importance of a solid DEI base, focusing on three pivotal categories:

**1. DEI Vision and Strategy**: Establishing a clear DEI vision and strategy, and understanding the business impact of DEI for organizational growth and success.

**2. Leadership Accountability**: Ensuring leadership is accountable, acts as DEI role models, and embeds DEI into management and oversight responsibilities.

**3. Organizational Structure**: Having dedicated DEI experts with sufficient authority, access, and resources to champion and implement DEI initiatives effectively.

These foundational categories are essential for building a strong DEI initiative and are necessary for the effective operation of all other DEI aspects (GDEIB, 2021).

## **Challenges**

### **Challenge 1: Lack of Ownership of DEI Mission/Vision Statement by the Majority of Stakeholders**

#### **Causes**

· DEI is used as mere representation, with more emphasis on its depiction than its execution.

· Executives fail to understand the importance of DEI due to a lack of tools to measure its impact.

· The organizational culture does not support the DEI vision and mission statements.

· People leaders are unaware of or do not prioritize the DEI vision/mission statements.

· Resources are not allocated to support the DEI vision and mission statements.

#### **Solutions**

· Implement a robust framework for addressing diversity and inclusion.

· Work on changing mindsets to foster an inclusive and harmonious workplace.

· Organize regular training sessions and workshops to educate employees on the benefits of DEI and its importance.

· Senior leaders should set DEI targets for themselves and their teams to drive organizational change.

· Reward and recognize teams or individuals who achieve DEI targets.

· Incorporate DEI metrics into performance evaluations and appraisals.

· Allocate a specific budget to DEI initiatives, which can significantly impact the business environment.

### **Challenge 2: Absence of an Organizational Culture Promoting DEI**

#### **Causes**

· Stereotypical beliefs or actions make women feel devalued and deter them from staying in the organization.

· Unconscious bias against women due to patriarchal business models.

· Biased language and a hostile environment during DEI implementation.

· Lack of accountability in DEI implementation.

#### **Solutions**

· Create a “Speak Up” culture and encourage reporting issues to DEI committees, managers, or HR.

· Introduce a robust mechanism for accountability or conduct equity audits.

· Include DEI-related content in meetings attended by the entire workforce and engage less inclined team members.

· Highlight the company's diversity statement on various platforms, including the website, job advertisements, and marketing materials.

· Broaden recruitment efforts and reduce bias in the selection process.

· Conduct focused group discussions involving individuals from all levels of the organization to discuss DEI.

#### **Additional Issues**

· Organizational leaders may violate DEI principles through their attitudes despite their commitment.

· Disconnect between ideas and execution, with bottom-line employees excluded from decision-making.

· Issues in implementing DEI policies are not reported frequently.

#### **Additional Solutions**

· Introduce female success stories to inspire change.

· Display posters and wall art to show dedication to diversity.

· Design training programs that educate women about their legal rights and relevant institutions.

### **Challenge 3: Lack of Ownership of DEI Throughout the Organization**

#### **Causes**

· Responsibility for DEI initiatives is assigned solely to HR or DEI departments.

· Lack of commitment from senior leadership.

· Resistance to change due to comfort with existing systems.

#### **Solutions**

· Establish a transparently monitored DEI policy that is easily understood and demonstrates commitment to DEI and gender equality.

· Include DEI-related content in CEO and executive presentations at major meetings.

· Highlight the company’s diversity statement on the website, job advertisements, and marketing materials.

· Support and endorse formal Female Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) to engage employees and provide resources for women's advancement.

· Design and offer DEI-inclusive mentorship and sponsorship programs through HR.

### **Challenge 4: Lack of Awareness About the Business Impact of DEI**

#### **Causes**

· Lack of information, analytics, technology, and research linking gender representation to profitability.

· No clear link between DEI metrics and organizational profitability.

· Limited visibility into the information-sharing aspect of DEI and its impact.

· Over-reliance on profit margins and stock charts to support diversity.

#### **Solutions**

· Incorporate DEI into the financial baseline to integrate it into business analytics and increase visibility.

· Incentivize leaders to prioritize and promote DEI by using statistics to demonstrate its impact on profitability and productivity.

· Increase accountability and bring DEI to the forefront by hiring invested staff and promoting allyship.

· Share intersectional information and benchmark data through think tanks and DEI consultants in the form of manuals, toolkits, or booklets.

### **Challenge 5: Lack of DEI Awareness Among People Leaders**

#### **Causes**

· Common assumption that individuals at various levels are aware of the issues faced by females, which is often not the case.

#### **Solutions**

· Drive the DEI agenda more from the perspective of people leaders.

· Align DEI strategies with the goals of line managers.

· Arrange training sessions, including unconscious bias training, for people leaders.

· Provide opportunities for both males and females to enhance their awareness of challenges faced by women.

### **Challenge 6: Lack of Executive Involvement in DEI Initiatives**

**Causes**

· Executives fail to understand the importance of DEI due to a lack of available tools to measure its long-term impact.

· Lack of women in top management positions negatively affects executive involvement in DEI.

· A misconception exists among top leadership that a favorable and inclusive company culture already exists.

· There is a lack of accountability for the executive’s involvement in DEI initiatives.

· Leaders assume they are already doing enough for DEI.

**Solutions**

· Encourage leadership attendance at DEI events and highlight DEI achievements within each leader's team.

· Increase the number of females in top management to enhance executive involvement in DEI.

· Emphasize the potential harm of inactivity in DEI efforts on talent attraction and retention.

· Implement accountability metrics for top leadership.

· Demonstrate to business leaders how gender DEI positively impacts crucial business challenges.

### **Challenge 7: Budgetary Constraints for Implementation of DEI Strategies**

**Causes**

· Budget constraints due to current economic conditions limit spending on DEI initiatives.

· Financial constraints force companies to cut DEI spending.

· Leaders are skeptical about the benefits of DEI initiatives.

· Focus shifts from DEI to cost control.

· DEI budget is often overlooked in favor of other ongoing projects.

· Budget for DEI initiatives may be misallocated to fund large events.

· The impact of DEI initiatives is not highlighted to top management.

· Lack of expertise to develop a business case aligned with organizational principles.

**Solutions**

· Create awareness about the importance of DEI and its value to the organization.

· Develop a business case showing how DEI programs offer quantifiable benefits, such as cost reductions and growth opportunities.

· Align the business case for DEI with organizational or executive values to address budgetary constraints.

· Emphasize the risk of harming talent attraction and retention due to lack of DEI investment.

· Ensure leaders understand their role in the DEI landscape and the necessary investment to achieve DEI strategies.

### **Challenge 8: Limited Number of Female Applicants in Response to Job Advertisements**

**Causes**

· Lack of education limits women’s opportunities to work.

· Cultural barriers and family restrictions limit females from working alongside men.

· Employer branding is not inclusive or attractive enough for women.

· Women are not seen as financially responsible, reducing their motivation to apply for jobs.

· Women interested in working often lack knowledge of the job market.

· Limited access to networks and referrals affects women's job search.

· Household responsibilities reduce the time available for job searches.

· Difficulty in commuting due to inadequate transportation facilities deters women from applying.

**Solutions**

· Collaborate with government and society to reform education and skills development for girls and reduce cultural barriers.

· Foster a sense of financial independence among women.

· Encourage sharing of job postings outside existing networks.

· Increase visibility of women on social and professional forums like LinkedIn.

· Implement policies that reduce barriers faced by women during job searches.

· Provide safe transport, public spaces, and a conducive work environment for females.

### **Challenge 9: Limited Number of Female Applicants for Technical/STEM Jobs**

**Causes**

· Stereotypes suggest that certain roles are more suited for males.

· Cultural barriers and unfamiliarity with women in technical roles deter female participation.

· Low supply of females in STEM fields due to fewer women entering these areas.

· Job advertisements may favor male candidates with biased traits and characteristics.

**Solutions**

· Increase the supply of female talent in STEM by partnering with universities to provide more female graduates.

· Hire and develop fresh female graduates for technical roles.

· Ensure job advertisements are gender-neutral and avoid biased language.

· Provide a safe and supportive workplace environment for females in STEM roles.

· Advocate for government reforms that promote girls' education and skills development in STEM.

### **Challenge 10: Perception That Females Are Unsuitable for Outdoor and Fieldwork Job Roles**

**Causes**

· Stereotyping that certain roles are male-defined.

· Benevolence bias leads to beliefs that women are unsuitable for fieldwork.

· Safety concerns and challenging conditions in fieldwork deter women.

· High cost of providing support for women in outdoor roles.

· Some women are uncomfortable with outdoor and fieldwork jobs.

**Solutions**

· Identify outdoor and fieldwork positions suitable for women and provide a level playing field for their application.

· Hire and train fresh female graduates to promote long-term career growth in these roles.

· Conduct gender sensitization training for all employees to increase awareness and reduce stereotypes.

· Create an inclusive workplace culture that supports and encourages female participation in fieldwork roles.

### **Challenge 11: Inadequate Number of Female Applicants for Panel Interviews**

**Causes**

· Insufficient number of females in the workforce leads to fewer available candidates for panel interviews.

· Limited female managers make it difficult to form diverse interview panels.

· Unconscious bias favors male interviewers, reinforcing gender stereotypes.

· Workplace culture may discourage female participation in leadership and interview roles.

**Solutions**

· Promote a healthy organizational culture to attract and retain more females.

· Continuously develop females for managerial positions to increase panel representation.

· Implement unconscious bias training to mitigate favoritism towards male interviewers.

· Cultivate an inclusive culture that encourages and supports female participation in panel interviews and leadership roles.

### **Challenge 12: Insufficient Number of Female Applicants for Returnship Programs**

**Causes**

· Self-limiting beliefs among women hinder their return to the workforce.

· Cultural barriers and family responsibilities prevent women from applying for returnship programs.

· Perception that women are not responsible for household income reduces their motivation to apply.

· Lack of promotion of returnship programs through appropriate channels.

**Solutions**

· Launch awareness programs to inform women about the benefits of returnship programs.

· Promote returnship programs through targeted channels to reach women who have taken career breaks.

· Design returnship programs with flexible hours and remote work options to accommodate women’s needs.

· Train recruiters and hiring managers to recognize and eliminate biases for fair candidate evaluation.

### **Challenge 13: Persistence of the ‘Family Comes First’ Mindset**

**Causes:**

· Women are often expected to be primary caretakers, impacting their work priorities.

· Lack of support from spouses or extended family.

· Beliefs that working women will impact family life negatively.

**Solutions:**

· Launch campaigns to promote gender equality and challenge traditional roles.

· Encourage shared responsibilities between partners.

· Involve religious and community leaders to shift perspectives on women’s roles.

### **Challenge 14: Reluctance Among Women to Pursue Top Management Positions**

**Causes:**

· Self-limiting beliefs due to upbringing and cultural norms.

· Underestimation of capabilities and avoidance of high-responsibility roles.

· Male colleagues’ undermining behaviors and lack of female role models.

· Patriarchal influences affecting women’s self-perception.

**Solutions:**

· Publicly celebrate and support women’s achievements to build confidence.

· Develop and mentor women for leadership roles through targeted programs.

· Promote international leadership roles and share success stories from female leaders.

· Increase awareness of the benefits of diversity and inclusion.

### **Challenge 15: Limited Opportunities for Professional Advancement of Women**

**Causes:**

· Perception that women will leave their jobs eventually, leading to limited investment.

· Unconscious bias favoring male leaders.

· Exclusion from informal networking opportunities.

**Solutions:**

· Implement leadership and development programs specifically for women.

· Demonstrate the value women bring to the organization.

· Promote female networks and highlight their importance.

· Create flexible work environments to support women in taking on more responsibilities.

### **Challenge 16: Scarcity of Women in Leadership Roles**

**Causes:**

· Societal norms favoring caregiving over career advancement.

· Discriminatory behavior and limited access to education and resources.

· Lack of transparency in promotion processes and leadership training.

**Solutions:**

· Provide equal opportunities and highlight female role models.

· Encourage women to take on prominent roles and participate in decision-making.

· Offer flexible and remote work options.

· Introduce training to address unconscious bias in leadership styles.

### **Challenge 17: Stereotyping That Women Cannot Fulfill Professional Commitments**

**Causes:**

· Assumptions that women will face family issues or get married and take leave.

· Perception that women are less serious about leadership roles.

· Inflexible work hours and stereotyping about commitment.

**Solutions:**

· Provide sensitization training to address gender biases.

· Create a female-friendly work environment.

· Share success stories of women in leadership roles.

· Introduce quota systems to increase women’s visibility and participation.

### **Challenge 18: Challenges in Retaining Female Talent Amid Changes**

**Causes:**

· Perception that earning is not a female responsibility.

· Relocation due to marriage and lack of career planning.

· Unfriendly maternity leave policies and biases about women’s job commitments.

**Solutions:**

· Offer remote work flexibility and job guidance for relocated women.

· Build family support by inviting family members to organizational events.

· Create daycare centers and provide nanny allowances.

· Set KPI-driven goals to reduce the emphasis on presenteeism.

### **Challenge 19: Gender Pay Gap Due to Less Assertiveness in Salary Negotiations**

**Causes:**

· Women often accept initial salary offers without negotiation.

· Lack of knowledge about their market value and fear of negotiating.

· Bias and lower pay in female-dominated industries.

**Solutions:**

· Ensure equal pay through comprehensive compensation formulas.

· Mentor women to recognize their worth and negotiate effectively.

· Promote women to significant roles and decision-making forums to build confidence.

### **Challenge 20: Difficulty in Finding Replacements for Females on Maternity or Sabbatical Leave**

**Causes:**

· Organizations avoid the costs of wage replacement during maternity leave.

· Insufficient resources allocated for finding suitable replacements.

· Poor planning for maternity leave replacements.

· Reluctance of employees to take on short-term roles.

**Solutions:**

· Raise awareness about the benefits of retaining women during and after maternity leave and allocate resources for this purpose.

· HR should collaborate with managers to restructure teams to distribute tasks effectively during an employee’s leave.

· Encourage fathers to take paternity leave to normalize the concept of parental leave.

· Develop a pool of former employees who can step in temporarily and are familiar with the company.

### **Challenge 21: Negative Impact of Maternity Leave on Performance Evaluations**

**Causes:**

· Perception that women on maternity leave are less committed to their careers.

· Reassignment of projects during maternity leave negatively impacting career growth.

· Comparison of performance targets across the whole year, regardless of leave.

· Stereotypes about women's priorities post-maternity leave leading to biased evaluations.

· Pressure to return quickly impacting performance.

**Solutions:**

· Train and support managers to handle female employees returning from maternity leave and ensure fair workload and opportunities.

· Implement a transparent performance rating system that adjusts targets based on time worked.

· Establish "keep-in-touch" programs for employees on maternity leave.

· Promote and normalize paternity leave for men to balance time off work.

· Create supportive policies for both men and women taking time off to care for children.

### **Challenge 22: Perception of Unfairness Among Males Due to Greater Flexibility for Females**

**Causes:**

· Lack of understanding among men about the reasons for greater flexibility for women.

· Limited realization of women’s additional caregiving responsibilities.

· Inadequate availability of flexible work options and daycare facilities for men.

· Bias against women in the workplace.

**Solutions:**

· Set clear goals and measure performance based on achievement rather than hours spent at the desk.

· Introduce gender-neutral DEI initiatives, such as flexible working and daycare facilities for all employees.

· Provide training to employees on equity and inclusion to overcome biases.

### **Challenge 23: Reluctance of Men to Take Paternity Leave Due to Macho Culture**

**Causes:**

· Perception that child-rearing is solely a woman’s responsibility.

· Stereotypes about men’s caregiving abilities.

· Fear of negative evaluation or career impact for taking paternity leave.

· Social stigmas associated with men taking parental leave.

**Solutions:**

· Train managers to support employees taking paternity leave and ensure fair opportunities for career growth.

· Implement transparent performance systems that account for time worked.

· Encourage and normalize paternity leave, treating it as equally important as maternity leave.

· Support policies that allow both parents to take time off for child-rearing.

### **Challenge 24: Limited Expertise in Identifying DEI Issues Through Analytics**

**Causes:**

· Lack of concrete tools for analyzing DEI policies.

· Limited time and resources invested in data analysis.

· DEI champions’ limited understanding of analytics.

**Solutions:**

· Develop frameworks with clear measurements to assess DEI impact.

· Integrate DEI into annual financial audits to emphasize its relevance.

· Train HR professionals to use data and analytics for DEI initiatives.

· Conduct employee engagement surveys with a focus on DEI.

### **Challenge 25: DEI-Related Internal Communications Often Ignored**

**Causes:**

· Scattered internal communication channels.

· Information overload and difficulty accessing DEI communications.

· Ineffective communication from managers.

**Solutions:**

· Measure and adjust internal communication strategies based on effectiveness.

· Solicit employee feedback to improve communication channels.

· Use infographics to convey DEI information and shift from top-down to horizontal communication.

· Allow managers to deliver DEI messages in their own words for better understanding.

### **Challenge 26: Perceived Lack of Credibility in External DEI Communications**

**Causes:**

· Focus on creating hype rather than investing in concrete DEI initiatives.

**Solutions:**

· Maintain a realistic and positive image by being open about both successes and failures.

· Use employees rather than managers as spokespersons for external DEI communications to enhance credibility.

### **Challenge 27: Limited Availability of Trainers Specializing in DEI Training**

**Causes:**

· Lack of regulatory authority and benchmarks for DEI trainers.

· High demand for DEI specialists and limited expertise in the field.

**Solutions:**

· Introduce DEI as a subject in universities with a comprehensive curriculum.

· Create internal programs to develop DEI expertise among employees.

· Implement "train the trainer" programs with diversity champions.

### **Challenge 28: Non-Serious Attitude During Mandatory DEI Training**

**Causes:**

· DEI training is not taken seriously by employees.

· Training is often seen as a legal requirement or reactionary measure.

· Limited availability of high-quality DEI trainers.

**Solutions:**

· Incentivize participation in DEI training and ensure visible support from senior leadership.

· Develop voluntary DEI training programs and use assessment tools to highlight the need for training.

· Gather feedback to evaluate the effectiveness of training and its impact.

### **Challenge 29: National Culture Limiting Female Workforce Participation**

**Causes:**

· Cultural stereotypes and lack of financial independence for women.

· Societal views that deem women working as less respectable.

· Insufficient support from employers and government policies.

**Solutions:**

· Collaborate with multiple stakeholders to shift cultural attitudes towards women in the workforce.

· Use successful international examples to influence national policies and attitudes.

### **Challenge 30: Limited Government Policy Initiatives to Promote Gender DEI**

**Causes:**

· Absence of gender-sensitive policies and representation in decision-making roles.

**Solutions:**

· Advocate for government policies that foster a supportive environment for gender DEI.

· Work with policymakers to introduce reforms that enhance gender diversity and equity in the workforce.

### **The Way Forward: Let’s Work Together**

**Overview:**

· The Gender DEI Toolkit Volume II aims to assist organizations in addressing common DEI challenges, particularly within the context of Pakistani culture and values.

· It encourages organizations to reflect on existing DEI practices and consider the broader scope of diversity beyond gender.

· The toolkit emphasizes the importance of research, training programs, and workshops to overcome DEI implementation challenges and foster a fair and inclusive environment.

**Next Steps for Organizations:**

**Broaden DEI Focus:**

o Extend efforts from gender diversity to include other forms of diversity.

o Develop toolkits and research to address challenges faced by different minority groups.

**Training and Workshops:**

o Create training programs that focus on designing effective DEI programs and addressing implementation challenges.

**Fostering an Inclusive Environment:**

o Actively contribute to a fair society in Pakistan through the advancement of DEI.

### **Methodology: An Overview**

**Data Collection and Analysis:**

**Initial Findings:**

o Data was gathered from industry professionals in Pakistan. A preliminary list of 57 challenges was created based on responses from the Gender DEI Toolkit Launch event.

**Refinement Process:**

o Over five months, 25 interviews were conducted with DEI specialists. Participants provided feedback on the initial challenges and added new ones.

o The information was analyzed using NVivo software, leading to the creation of 54 nodes with causes and solutions.

**Categorization and Finalization:**

o Challenges were categorized under the GDEIB 2021 standards (Foundation, Internal, Bridging, and External).

o Additional causes and solutions were identified from secondary literature, but no new challenges were added.

o The final list of 30 challenges was reviewed and refined by multiple readers before being included in Volume II.

# **GENDER DEI TOOLS: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS OF VOLUME I**

## **Common Tools Used by Organizations in Pakistan**

### **Category 1: Vision, Strategy, and Business Impact**

· A DEI vision and mission statement

· A DEI strategy

· Organizational values that promote DEI

· A DEI motto

### **Category 2: Leadership and Accountability**

· Leadership’s commitment to DEI

· Executives’ involvement in DEI

· Role modelling by male leaders

### **Category 3: DEI Structure and Implementation**

· A suitable DEI structure

o Management sub-committee on DEI

o Diversity champions

o Diversity council

o Diversity unit

o DEI working group

o Cross-functional DEI teams

o Gender committee

o Department of DEI

· Budget and resource allocation to DEI

### **Category 4: Recruitment**

· Gender neutral job advertisements

· Gender balanced interview panels

· Equitable recruitment process

o Targets for female applicants per job posting

o Targets for short-listing females

o Bias-free short-listing

o Aggressively headhunting for females

o Pre-employment training for females

o Targeted recruitment drives for females

o Monitoring gender ratios at all stages of recruitment

· Returnship programs

### **Category 5: Advancement and Retention**

· Equitable promotion process

o Equitable succession planning

o Equitable talent reviews

· Women’s leadership development programs

· Confidence building initiatives for women

o DEI networks and clubs

o Mentorship and sponsorship for women

o Support to overcome psychological barriers

### **Category 6: Job Design, Classification, and Compensation**

· Gender pay parity

· Flexible job design

### **Category 7: Work-life Integration, Flexibility, and Benefits**

· Maternity leave

· Flexible working hours

· Transport facility/allowance for women

· Paternity leave

· Daycare or daycare/nanny allowance

· Sabbatical leave

· Additional DEI benefits

o Iddat leave

o Secure on-site residences or guest houses

o Enclosure for niqab-wearing women during lunch

o Scooty loans for women

o Adoption leave

o New mothers’ adjustment program

o Priority parking for women

# **The Biases That Punish Racially Diverse Teams**

## **Introduction**

Tech companies, banks, consulting firms, and various other organizations are scrambling to create diverse and inclusive environments. Despite investing millions of dollars annually into diversity efforts, many organizations struggle to realize the full benefits that diverse teams reportedly offer.

## **The Challenge of Implementing Diversity**

### **Persistent Biases**

One major challenge in achieving the benefits of diverse teams is the persistent presence of biases that can undermine the effectiveness of diversity initiatives. Biases can manifest in various ways, including:

**Implicit Bias**: Subconscious attitudes or stereotypes that affect decisions and interactions. For example, a hiring manager may unconsciously favor candidates who share their own background or characteristics.

**Confirmation Bias**: The tendency to interpret new information in a way that confirms preexisting beliefs. This can lead to overlooking the contributions of team members from diverse backgrounds or assuming they will not fit well within the existing team culture.

### **Impact on Team Dynamics**

Diverse teams can face unique challenges that impact their overall effectiveness:

**Communication Barriers**: Cultural and linguistic differences may lead to misunderstandings or communication breakdowns, affecting team cohesion and productivity.

**Inclusion Challenges**: Even with diverse hiring practices, team members from underrepresented backgrounds may experience difficulties in fully integrating and feeling valued within the team.

## **Data and Insights**

### **Global Perspective**

Research has shown that while diverse teams often outperform homogenous teams in creativity and problem-solving, they also face greater challenges in collaboration and decision-making. For instance, a study by McKinsey & Company found that teams with higher diversity are 35% more likely to experience above-average financial returns, but only if the diversity is well-managed and supported by inclusive practices.

### **Pakistan Context**

In Pakistan, efforts to enhance workplace diversity are relatively new, and challenges are compounded by socio-cultural factors:

**Cultural Norms**: Traditional norms and values can influence the acceptance and integration of diverse team members. For example, gender diversity in tech and engineering sectors faces resistance due to entrenched societal roles.

**Education and Training**: There is a lack of widespread education and training on the benefits of diversity and inclusion. As a result, many organizations may implement diversity policies without fully understanding or addressing underlying biases.

### **Case Study: Pakistani Tech Industry**

In the Pakistani tech industry, companies are increasingly recognizing the value of diversity but often struggle with biases that hinder progress. For example:

**Hiring Practices**: Despite efforts to recruit more women and minorities, biases in recruitment and promotion processes can result in lower retention rates for these groups.

**Workplace Culture**: Diverse teams may face challenges in workplace culture integration, with some employees experiencing exclusion or lack of support.

## **Strategies for Overcoming Bias**

### **Enhancing Awareness and Training**

Organizations should invest in training programs that focus on understanding and mitigating biases:

**Bias Training**: Programs designed to raise awareness about implicit biases and provide strategies for overcoming them can help reduce their impact on team dynamics.

**Cultural Competency Training**: Training that enhances understanding of different cultural backgrounds and promotes effective communication can improve collaboration within diverse teams.

### **Fostering Inclusive Environments**

Creating an inclusive environment involves more than just diverse hiring:

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**Inclusive Policies**: Implementing policies that support diversity, such as flexible work arrangements and equitable pay, can help create a more inclusive workplace.

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**Employee Resource Groups**: Supporting employee resource groups (ERGs) for underrepresented groups can provide a sense of community and offer support for navigating workplace challenges.

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### **Measuring and Addressing Challenges**

Organizations should regularly assess the effectiveness of their diversity initiatives:

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**Feedback Mechanisms**: Implementing feedback mechanisms such as surveys and focus groups can provide insights into the experiences of diverse team members and identify areas for improvement.

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**Data Analysis**: Analyzing data on team performance and employee satisfaction can help organizations understand the impact of their diversity efforts and make necessary adjustments.

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## **Conclusion**

While diverse teams offer significant potential benefits, realizing these benefits requires addressing the biases that can undermine their effectiveness. By enhancing awareness, fostering inclusive environments, and measuring the impact of diversity initiatives, organizations can better harness the strengths of their diverse teams and overcome the challenges that come with them. In Pakistan, where diversity efforts are still evolving, focusing on these strategies can help improve outcomes and create more inclusive workplaces.