**CONCEPT NOTE**

**Evaluating Effectiveness of Analytics In Bringing Transparency To Early Stage Recruitment In Pakistani Corporations**

**Background**

The idea of conducting an M&E session on early stage recruitment analytics is borne out of a single purpose: To make workplaces fairer, transparent places that prize individual wellbeing and productivity.

Contrary to popular belief, human wellbeing is not a casualty of enhanced productivity. Both are “co-victims” of entrenched, toxic systems built on power games and opacity. It is not the absence of corporate policies, but the **spurious design, selective application and manipulation of such policies** that results in these toxic systems. Human wellbeing is certainly the first to be affected by these policies. Mid- to long-term productivity, profitability and business reputation follow suit. Corporate fraud and toxic cultures are correlated.

With the economic slowdown following COVID-19, we expect issues highlighted in our event to gain immediacy across the world. Although primarily aimed at Pakistani stakeholders, we expect that with over **22 million unemployment claims currently** in the USA, the issues we discuss will resonate with audiences across the world.

**Issues Uncovered By M & E Interventions**

Our findings suggest that early-stage professionals are disproportionately at risk of being affected by the prevalence of toxic cultures. They are most vulnerable to:

* Underemployment
* Underpayment and the absence of economic safety nets
* Misrepresentation in case of conflict
* No recourse in case of harassment, abuse or other mistreatment
* Scapegoating and
* Being forced into silence with threats and intimidation

In Pakistan where legal mechanisms impose a greater implicit cost on the financially vulnerable, these issues go undocumented and unresolved. Further, the dominance of:

* Nepotism
* Discriminatory hiring and career management,
* Gender, ethnic, and social glass ceilings and
* Policies designed to favor designated economic classes

In Pakistan’s recruitment culture make it almost impossible for corporations to become agents of socio-economic mobility for talented, educated, but underprivileged individuals.

**Importance Vis-à-vis Monitoring & Evaluation**

**Evaluation Capacity Development:** Currently, Pakistan has no institution or documentation that presents the state of recruitment practices across the various corporate structures that exist in the country. **This** event builds on the recruitment issues identified by human resource practitioners, new graduates and early-stage professionals across Pakistan. **It will be the first published source of acceptable and non-acceptable recruitment practices**.

For instance, even today, female candidates are asked their marital status and plans during interviews, and their responses are cited as justifications for unfair pay. Although the female candidates know they are not obliged to answer such questions, they do. Because as documented research elsewhere suggests, refusing to answer the question prejudices the interviewer against them.

The event will also facilitate capacity development by **standardizing recruitment analytics** with a heat-map based approach, i.e. what are the most problematic recruitment areas to the least.

It will create a virtual cycle where human resource interventions from a wellbeing perspective are regularly measured and controlled. For instance, a leading consumer goods organization in Pakistan recently introduced a “back to work” program for young mothers. Positive, at least on the surface. But the women in the program are not selected meritoriously, or even competitively, but on the basis of personal networks and linkages with people inside the organization. Their pay scale actually puts them at a disadvantage—more than if they were not part of the program. Finally, none of the program participants are offered job security or benefits. The only advantage they have is the addition of the employer’s brand name on their resumes.

Another organization—one that has pioneered whistleblowing in Pakistan’s financial services, admitted that their whistleblowing mechanism has been used as a lobbying tool against members of middle management.

This event puts the **numbers** back into evaluation. It separates cause related marketing from actual efforts.

**Evaluation Communication and Use:** Experience indicates two dominant factors encourage a corporate culture of impunity and silence. The:

* 1. Absence of a “psychologically safe” space/mechanisms for early stage professionals to voice grievances and attain fair, action-oriented solutions.
	2. Lack of visibility of consequences of malpractice in recruitment.

Our M&E event will result in the following output:

1. Development of a **whistleblower app**, which will allow respondents to anonymously communicate grievances or complaints. (Data validation and data aggregation mechanisms within the app will flag app abuse like fictitious complaints, lobbying behavior, and/or competitor baiting)
2. Publication of an annual “**Ethical Company Report,**” assigning **ethical ratings** to compliant companies, similar to credit ratings
3. Publication of a periodic “**State Of Industry Ethics”** infographic
4. The event is expected to popularize use our existing social media channels that already publish popular, anonymized grievances. (Sentiment analysis of the posts further facilitates evaluation capacity).

**Evaluation Methods:** Our event will make use of a systems approach to highlight every aspect of the traditional recruitment process. The purpose is not to ‘victimize’ early-stage professionals, but to highlight capabilities, limitations and opportunities present with each stakeholder. Further, these will be compared against first-level recruitment analytics already collected by HR departments. E.g.

1. Candidate onboarding costs
2. Attrition rate
3. Resume-Selection ratio
4. Position closing time and more

The result will be more transparency in the hiring effort—and identification of miscreants in the process.

**The 2030 Development Agenda And SDGs**

Our event maps on the objectives of **SDG #8 Decent Work And Economic Growth**. It contributes to**:**

* **Sustained livelihoods** by monitoring figures for controlled attrition, i.e. calculating the relationship between early stage recruitment and elements like downsizing, compensation values, COLA disbursement (Cost of Living Allowance, as mandated by the Labor Law of Pakistan) etc.
* **Inclusion** by measuring and highlighting discriminatory hiring practices, in terms of gender, ethnicity, marital status, ageism, ability and even location. i.e. the inclusion of a clause like “candidate must own a motorcycle”) in a job ad discriminates against both women and people of disability in Pakistan. Similarly, it will measure how seemingly affirmative action in the hiring process can backfire on stated objectives, and how to prevent that.
* **Sustainable economic growth:** As a 2019 UN Women workshop in Pakistan highlighted, diversity measures fail to close the “cognitive diversity” gap by focusing exclusively on graduates from specific universities, or those who belong to certain socioeconomic classes. Those in “outgroups” are trapped in vicious circles via contractual clauses that prevent them from moving from one employment class to another—by restricting tenure per department, coercive rotations etc. Our findings will highlight this and recommend solutions.
* **Full Employment:** While our findings cannot guarantee 100% employment, they do examine causes for unfair dismissal, compensation programs and the structure of compensation programs across organization tiers. They bring individuals closer to developing economic safety nets for themselves.
* **Productive Employment and Decent Work:** We are driven by a mission to **return dignity and individual wellbeing to the workplace.** Our research uncovers the extent to which early-stage individuals are forced into accepting work that offers lower career progress and growth than their qualifications deserve. Further it highlights discrimination in the allocation of projects, rotation rosters due to ethnic affiliation, nepotism and cronyism. Increasingly, as corporations blur the lines between FTEs (Full Time Employees), contractual employees and gig workers, the line between dignified work, and its opposite also gets blurred, without any legal recourse.

**Note: We understand that this concept note covers a ‘tall order’. We will be condensing our objectives to focus on inclusion and decent work.**