



Diversity at Work: What's Working and What's Missing? Insights from a Labayh Business Survey

May 2025

لبيه أعمال
Labayh Business



Labayh Medical Care Company Why Labayh?

+1,000
Professionals

+3 Million
Active users

2017
Since

+89.7 Million
Minutes of appointments

+100
Employees

+2.69 Million
Minutes of social responsibility

+120
Countries

+498 Thousand
Rating Count in app

98%
Satisfaction rate

Worldwide toolset

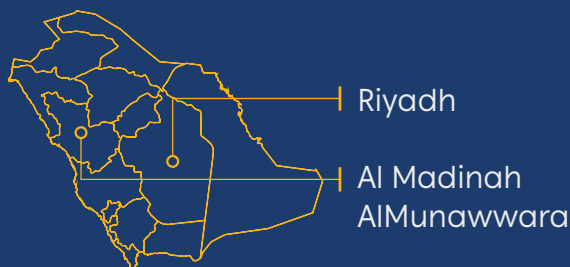
Based in Madinah & Riyadh with delivery capability throughout the Kingdom and across the globe.

Qualified and experienced

Saudi MOH approved platform. Management and delivery team with a wealth of experience in the region and beyond.

Bilingual Capability

- Design, delivery and support in Arabic and English and in some cases other languages.
- Tools for assessment, design and delivery from some of the best in the world used by accredited practitioners.



Labayh has two main branches in the Kingdom one in Al Madinah AlMunawwara and the other one in Riyadh.

A Saudi Company

Tools for assessment, design and delivery from some of the best in the world used by accredited practitioners.

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01 Executive Summary

This report examines the current state of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in the workplace, with a particular focus on the Saudi and Middle Eastern context. Drawing from global research and a small-scale pilot survey conducted by Labayh Business, the findings highlight both promising practices and critical gaps in how organizations approach inclusivity.

Globally, organizations have increasingly embraced DEI, recognizing its impact on innovation, decision-making, employee satisfaction, and market responsiveness. However, challenges remain, including structural biases, resistance to change, and inconsistent leadership commitment. These global patterns resonate with findings from the region.

In Saudi Arabia, women's participation at work has surpassed Vision 2030 targets, now standing at 36.2%, and 45% of SMEs are led by women. Persons with disabilities make up around 5.9% of the Saudi population. While the employment rate among this group has improved (from 7.7% in 2017 to 12% in 2020), high unemployment persists, especially for women with disabilities (75.3%).

Labayh business's internal DEI survey revealed a generally positive perception of diversity in the workplace, especially regarding visible diversity in leadership. However, issues emerged around equity in promotions, professional growth, task distribution, and awareness of reporting mechanisms for bias. Nearly 40% of respondents felt there was unequal access to growth opportunities, and many expressed uncertainty about whether DEI policies were clearly communicated or enforced.

The report concludes with actionable strategies to enhance DEI, emphasizing leadership accountability, inclusive hiring, structured evaluations, ongoing training, and support for Employee Resource Groups. While this was a pilot study with a limited sample, it provides a useful foundation for broader future research and reinforces the need for data-driven, inclusive organizational practices.

02 Introduction

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) refers to policies, practices, and organizational cultures aimed at creating a fair, respectful, and welcoming environment for all individuals, regardless of differences. Specifically

Diversity

encompasses the representation of varied identities, backgrounds, and perspectives, including but not limited to age, gender, ethnicity, physical ability, educational background, and socioeconomic status

Equity

involves ensuring fairness in access to resources, opportunities, and outcomes. It recognizes and actively addresses disparities and systemic barriers that disadvantage certain groups

Inclusion

is the deliberate cultivation of an environment where individuals from diverse backgrounds feel valued, respected, and empowered to contribute fully to the organization

Collectively, DEI forms the foundation for fostering a healthy, innovative, and socially responsible workplace

Significance of DEI in Organizational Effectiveness and Culture

Organizations that actively integrate DEI into their operational and cultural frameworks often experience higher levels of employee engagement, productivity, and overall organizational effectiveness. Diverse teams are more likely to generate innovative solutions and creative ideas due to the variety of perspectives and experiences available. Inclusive workplaces also foster enhanced communication, collaboration, and trust, resulting in reduced turnover, improved morale, and increased employee satisfaction

Additionally, prioritizing DEI aligns organizational practices with societal expectations and ethical standards, enhancing the organization's reputation and appeal to both customers and potential talent. Effective DEI practices not merely fulfill a corporate responsibility but create a meaningful competitive advantage by positioning organizations to better understand and respond to diverse markets and global challenges

03

Labayh Business's Survey on DEI



Labayh Business's Survey on DEI

Labayh Business recently conducted a pilot study to explore the state of diversity, equity, and inclusion within the Saudi labor market. This initiative aligns with Labayh's broader commitment to enhancing workplace wellbeing in the Kingdom. The study aimed to gather preliminary insights into how organizations in Saudi Arabia are addressing DEI, recognizing the growing importance of inclusive practices in fostering a thriving work environment.

This section presents the findings of our workplace diversity and inclusion survey, which aimed to assess employee perceptions across various aspects of organizational inclusivity. The survey gathered responses from 47 participants and provides valuable insights into the current state of diversity and inclusion within our organization. The survey collected demographic information related to job status, tenure, and gender

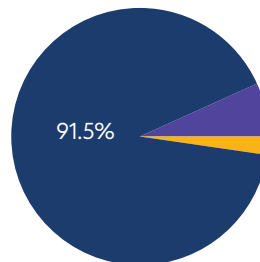
Demographics

Job Status

The majority of respondents identified as full-time employees. Specifically, 43 out of 47 participants reported being in (full-time) position, indicating a strong representation of this employment category in our survey. A smaller portion identified as (part-time), with 3 participants. One respondent selected (other)

What is your job status?

- Full Time
- Part Time
- temporary contract
- Remote work
- other



Tenure

Employee tenure varied, with several reporting different lengths of service at their current workplace. A notable portion had been with the organization for (1-3 years). Several respondents indicated (less than a year), and a smaller segment reported (4-7 years) or (more than 8 years). One respondent did not specify their tenure

How long have you been working at your current job?



Gender

Gender distribution revealed a relatively even split, with 24 male and 23 female respondents. This balance provides a robust dataset for understanding diverse perspectives

Gender



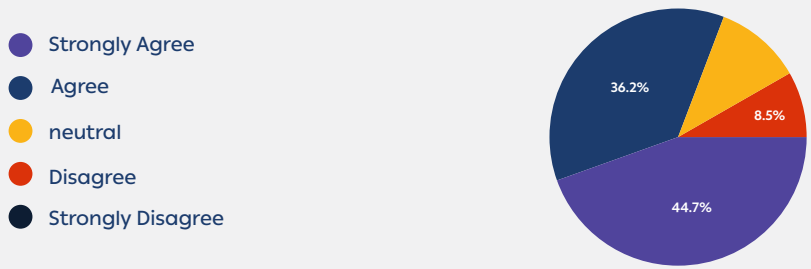
Key Insights and Statistical Highlights

The survey comprised several statements about workplace diversity and inclusion, with respondents indicating their level of agreement. Here are some of the most interesting insights and statistical highlights

Perception of Diversity

A strong positive sentiment emerged regarding the general presence of diversity. Many respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their workplace includes a diverse range of backgrounds and identities. This initial finding suggests a generally positive perception of diversity within Saudi workplaces

My workplace has a diverse workforce with different backgrounds and identities



Diversity in Leadership

One of the strongest signals in the data came from the question regarding diversity in leadership, A clear majority agreed; 22 respondents agreed, 15 agreed strongly, and only 4 were neutral, and 6 disagreed to any extent. This suggests that leadership diversity is visible and recognized by most staff members

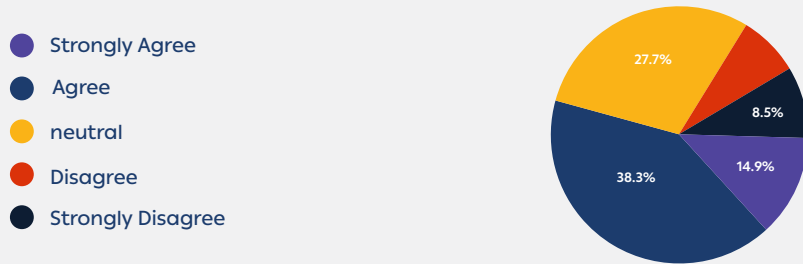
I see people in my workplace from diverse backgrounds represented in leadership positions



Inclusivity and Voice

While many employees felt their voices were heard and valued during decision-making, there was a notable spread in responses, with some indicating neutrality or disagreement. This variance suggests room for improvement in ensuring all voices are consistently heard

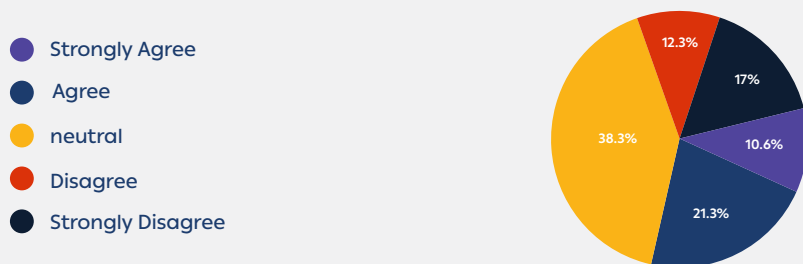
I feel that my voice is heard and valued when making decisions



Equity in Promotions and Tasks

Opinions on whether promotion decisions are based on competence and free from bias were mixed, indicating a potential area of concern. There were also varying opinions on the fair distribution of tasks, salaries, and benefits among employees from different backgrounds, suggesting perceived inconsistencies

Tasks are distributed fairly among employees



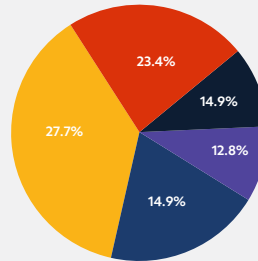
Professional Growth Opportunities

When asked about equal opportunities for professional growth for employees from all backgrounds, we can see that 18 people either selected "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree" indicating that a considerable portion feel there are not equal opportunities

Employees of all backgrounds have equal opportunities for professional growth in the workplace

47 Responses

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree



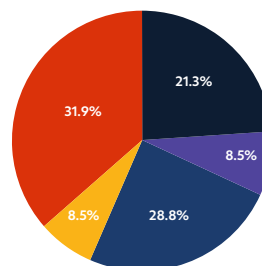
Training and Policies

A significant number of respondents indicated disagreement or neutrality regarding the adequacy of training provided to promote awareness of diversity and inclusion issues. Likewise, there were mixed opinions on the clarity and effectiveness of organizational policies aimed at promoting diversity, equality, and inclusion

My workplace provides adequate training to raise awareness about diversity and inclusion issues

47 Responses

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree



Reporting Mechanisms

When asked if the employees were aware of the reporting mechanisms of discrimination, or bias, majority of respondents selected strongly disagree, disagree or neutral, indicating they are not aware, or feel they are not adequate

Suggestions for Improvement

The open-ended question, "What is one thing that can be improved to create a more inclusive work environment?" garnered a range of responses. Common themes included

- 01 Need for enhanced training and awareness programs
- 02 Clearer and more effectively implemented policies
- 03 Increased transparency
- 04 Fair compensation and benefits
- 05 Improved management practices

Summary

The survey results paint a nuanced picture of diversity and inclusion within our workplace. While there are positive perceptions regarding the presence of diversity, clear areas for improvement exist. Addressing the concerns related to equity in promotions, task distribution, and professional growth opportunities, along with bolstering training initiatives and policies, will be crucial. The qualitative feedback provides valuable direction for targeted interventions to foster a more inclusive and equitable work environment. These findings will serve as a foundation for developing strategic initiatives aimed at enhancing diversity and inclusion across organizations

This survey served as a pilot study to explore perceptions of workplace inclusion across a small sample. While the findings offer valuable initial insights, the limited sample size and scope mean the results should be interpreted with caution and not generalized across broader populations. A more extensive study, with a larger and more diverse respondent base, would be essential to validate these patterns, uncover deeper trends, and provide a stronger evidence base to inform organizational practices and national benchmarks on workplace inclusion

04

Benefits of DEI in Organizations

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Organizations characterized by diversity, equity, and inclusion benefit significantly from heightened innovation and creativity. Teams composed of individuals with varied backgrounds, experiences, and viewpoints can approach problems from multiple angles, fostering more original solutions. Such teams are more likely to challenge conventional thinking and embrace novel ideas, contributing directly to the organization's innovation capacity. Research consistently demonstrates that diverse groups generate a wider array of creative options, helping organizations remain adaptable and competitive

Improved Decision-Making and Problem-Solving

When individuals from different cultures, genders, and life experiences come together, they collectively broaden the range of available perspectives, thereby enriching discussions and reducing the risk of groupthink. Diverse teams are more thorough in evaluating scenarios, identifying potential risks and opportunities, and consequently making well-rounded decisions. Organizations that prioritize DEI tend to outperform their peers by leveraging broader, more comprehensive insights in strategic planning and problem-solving

Increased Employee Satisfaction and Engagement

Employees who feel genuinely valued and included are likely to experience higher levels of motivation, loyalty, and commitment toward their organization. Inclusion creates a sense of belonging, reducing feelings of marginalization or exclusion. Equitable workplace practices promote fairness and transparency, enhancing employees' trust and psychological safety, resulting in lower turnover rates and higher retention of top talent

Better Market Understanding and Customer Alignment

Teams reflecting the diversity of the markets they serve can better anticipate customer needs, preferences, and challenges. By mirroring societal diversity, organizations are equipped to develop products, services, and marketing strategies that resonate authentically with various audience segments, increasing brand relevance, customer loyalty, and competitive advantage in diverse and global markets

05

Barriers to DEI Implementation

Barriers to DEI Implementation

01 Organizational Biases and Structural Barriers

These biases can be explicit or implicit and often affect recruitment, promotion, compensation, and professional development processes. Structural barriers, such as inequitable policies or outdated practices, frequently disadvantage certain groups and maintain existing inequalities within organizations

02 Limited Awareness or Misunderstanding of DEI Concepts

Employees and management may possess misconceptions, viewing diversity initiatives as merely compliance-driven or tokenistic rather than as important to organizational success. Misinterpretations of DEI objectives can lead to ineffective strategies, superficial implementation, or misguided efforts that fail to address the root issues

03 Resistance to Change

Employees may resist modifications in established practices, fearing loss of status, power, or resources. Such resistance can manifest through passive or active behaviors, including reluctance to engage in training or unwillingness to adopt inclusive practices

04 Lack of Leadership Commitment

Organizations without visible, consistent support from senior leadership face difficulty in embedding DEI into organizational culture and daily operations. Leaders who fail to advocate for or prioritize DEI send implicit messages about its perceived value, negatively influencing employee attitudes and engagement. Genuine progress requires leaders who model inclusive behaviors, allocate sufficient resources, establish accountability mechanisms, and clearly communicate DEI as an organizational priority

06

Effective DEI Strategies and Practices

Effective DEI Strategies and Practices

Leadership Accountability and Role Modeling

Successful implementation of DEI practices begins with accountable and committed leadership. Leaders who visibly champion diversity, equity, and inclusion signal their genuine commitment, establishing expectations for all members of the organization. **Accountability can be enhanced by incorporating DEI objectives into leadership performance evaluations,** ensuring that management consistently demonstrates inclusive behavior

Inclusive Recruitment and Hiring Processes

Organizations can adopt structured and transparent hiring methods, implement diverse interview panels, and use inclusive job descriptions free from biased or exclusionary language. Expanding outreach through diverse recruitment channels, proactively sourcing candidates from underrepresented backgrounds, and emphasizing skills-based evaluations further promote equity

Equitable Policies in Performance Reviews and Promotions

Organizations should implement structured performance reviews that minimize subjective biases, ensuring assessments are based on clearly defined, consistent criteria. Equitable promotion processes also require providing transparent information regarding eligibility, necessary competencies, and advancement opportunities

Employee Education, Training, and Awareness-building

such as unconscious bias, inclusive leadership practices, cultural competence, and equitable workplace interactions. Organizations benefit from ongoing educational initiatives rather than isolated, one-time sessions

Establishing and Supporting Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)

Groups ERGs provide platforms where employees from diverse backgrounds connect, share experiences, and advocate for inclusive practices. Organizations that support ERGs benefit from improved employee engagement, a stronger sense of community, and valuable insights into specific needs of underrepresented groups

07

Current State of DEI in the Workplace

Current State of DEI in the Workplace

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion have become integral components of organizational strategies worldwide. Companies are increasingly recognizing the importance of fostering diverse and inclusive workplaces to drive innovation, enhance employee engagement, and improve overall performance. Global trends indicate a growing emphasis on implementing DEI initiatives, with organizations adopting various practices to promote inclusivity and address systemic inequalities

Representation in Leadership

In 2023, over 10% of Fortune 500 companies were led by women, marking progress in gender representation at the highest corporate levels

Workplace Diversity

A substantial majority of job seekers (76%) consider a diverse workplace important when evaluating companies and job offers

DEI Strategies

Approximately 89% of U.S. companies either have a DEI strategy or plan to implement one, indicating widespread acknowledgment of DEI's importance

Gender Pay Gap

Globally, women earn approximately 83 cents for every dollar earned by men

Employee Perceptions

About 52% of U.S. workers view DEI initiatives positively, though this is a slight decline from previous years, suggesting a need for ongoing engagement and communication



DEI in the Middle East and Saudi Arabia

In the Middle East, and particularly in Saudi Arabia, DEI practices are gaining momentum, albeit at varying paces across different sectors and organizations



Female Work Participation

As of Q3 2024, Saudi Arabia's female labor force participation rate reached 36.2%, surpassing the Vision 2030 target of 30% ahead of schedule. The Kingdom now aims for a 40% participation rate by 2030



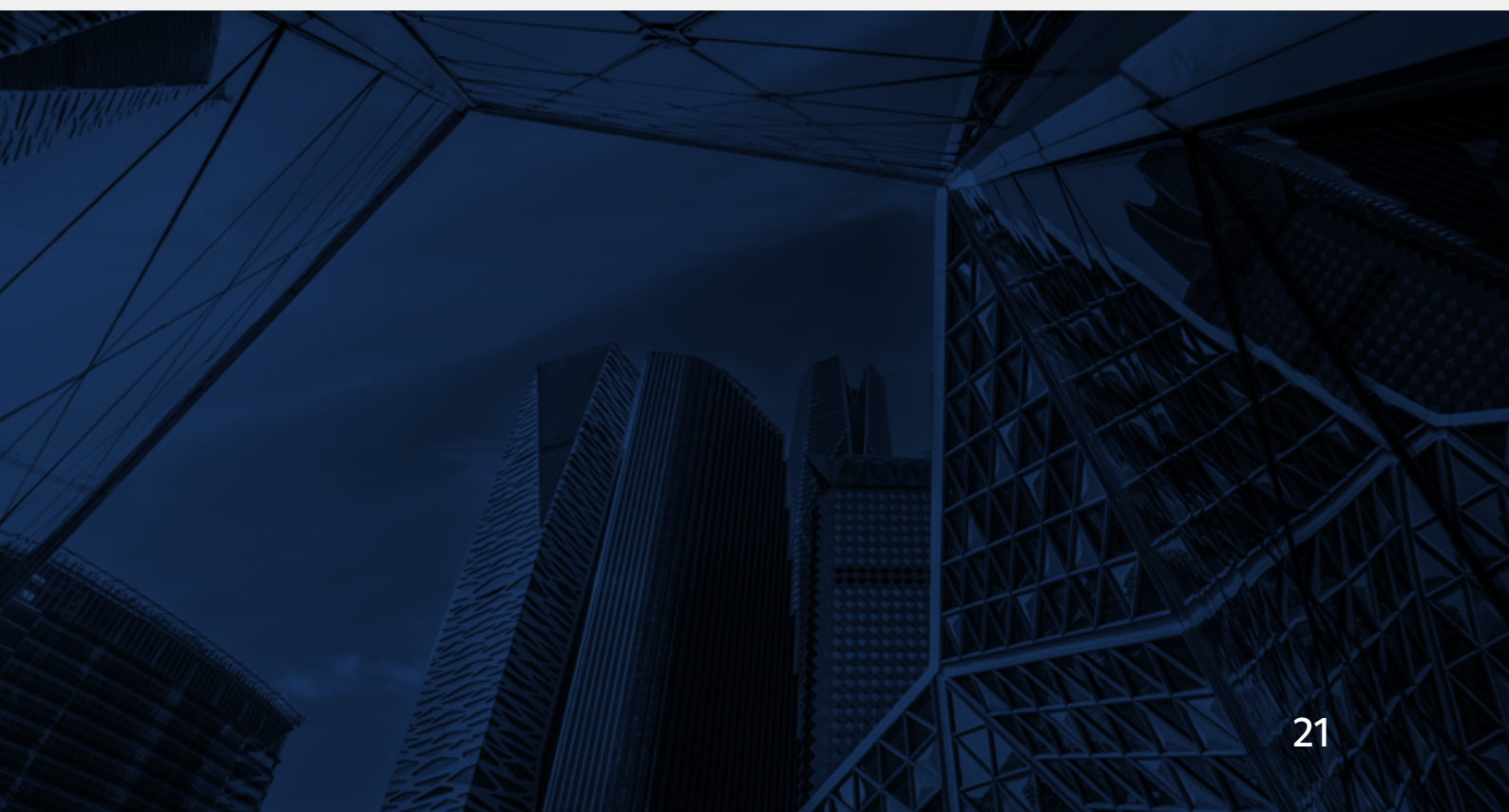
Youth Engagement

Among Saudi women aged 15–24, labor force participation increased to 18.0% in Q3 2024, indicating growing engagement of young women in the workplace



Entrepreneurship

Women lead 45% of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Saudi Arabia, highlighting their significant role in the nation's entrepreneurial landscape



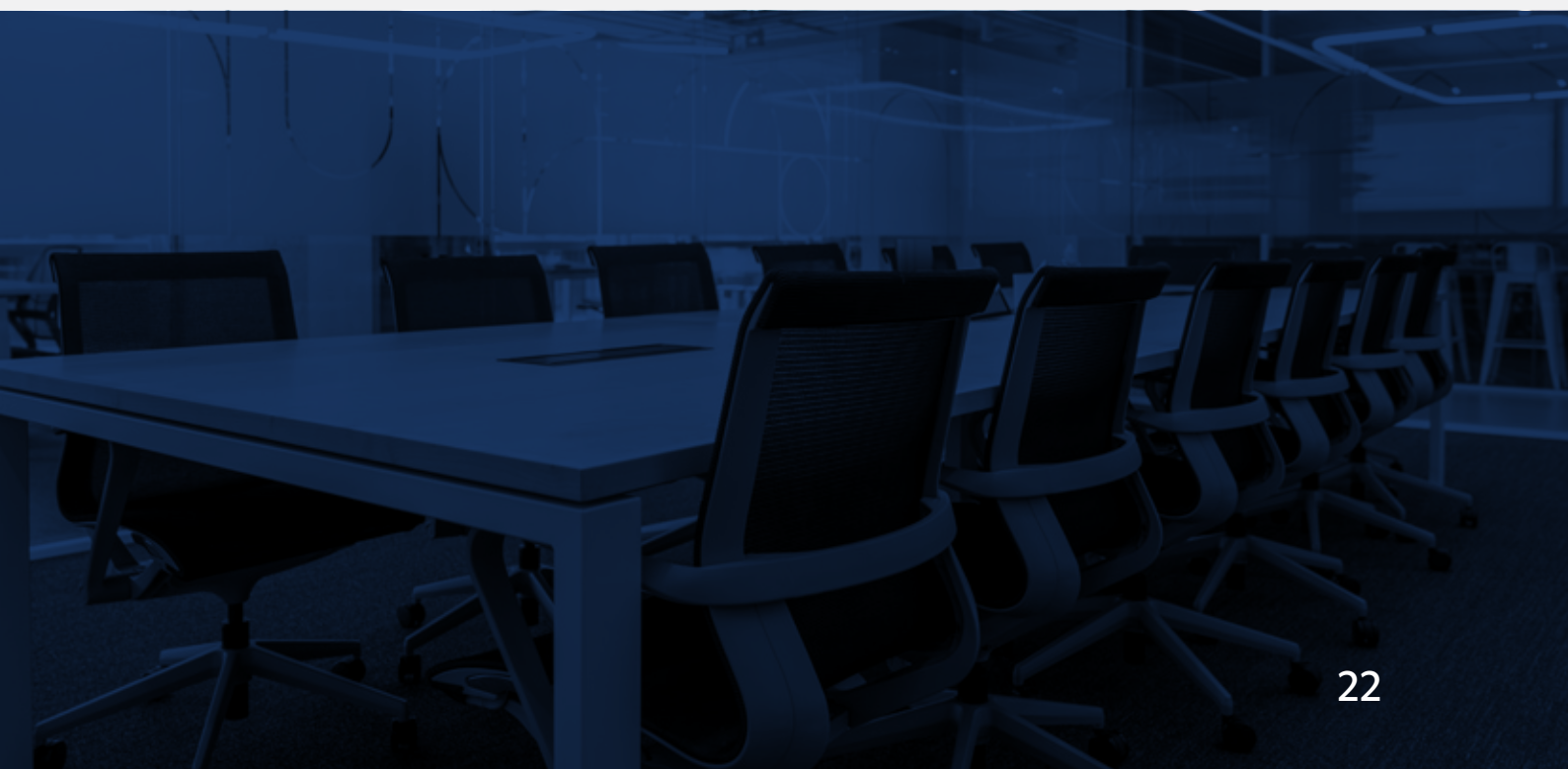
DEI & Disability in Saudi Arabia

As of 2022, individuals with disabilities constitute approximately 5.9% of Saudi Arabia's population, equating to around 1.35 million people out of a total population of 32.17 million, among these, 2.9% experience severe difficulties, with visual impairments being the most common single difficulty (46.02%), followed by physical disabilities (29.13%) among those with multiple difficulties.

The employment rate for individuals with disabilities has seen an increase from 7.7% in 2017 to 12% by the end of 2020, aligning with the objectives of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, despite this progress, unemployment rates remain high: 75.3% for women with disabilities, compared to 32.8% for women without disabilities. 48.6% for men with disabilities, compared to 11.5% for men without disabilities.

Saudi labor law mandates that companies with 25 or more employees allocate at least 4% of their positions to individuals with disabilities. The Authority for the Care of Persons with Disabilities (APD) has been instrumental in enhancing services, including:

- 01 1,340 beneficiaries from the Human Resources Development Fund.**
- 02 1,316 beneficiaries from Ministry of Housing programs.**
- 03 866 individuals trained by the Technical and Vocational Training Corporation.**



What Labayh Business Offers



Labayh Business provides a comprehensive suite of services designed to support organizations in building inclusive, equitable, and diverse workplaces. Our offerings are grounded in evidence-based practices and are adaptable to the unique needs of each client. These services include, but are not limited to



Workshops and Training Sessions

Interactive, scenario-based workshops on key DEI topics such as unconscious bias, inclusive leadership, cultural competence, and accessibility. These sessions are designed to build awareness, challenge assumptions, and equip employees and leaders with practical tools for inclusive action



Coaching and Advisory Services

One-on-one and group to strengthen inclusive practices, align values with behavior, and support culture change. Our coaches bring both subject-matter expertise and contextual sensitivity



Webinars and Awareness Campaigns

Regular virtual sessions open to all staff levels, covering emerging trends, legal frameworks, and practical steps for advancing inclusion. These can be integrated into organizational learning calendars or tailored for specific events or milestones



Policy Review and Development

Expert support in evaluating current workplace policies, identifying gaps, and co-developing inclusive policies and procedures. This includes reviewing recruitment frameworks, promotion criteria, complaint mechanisms, and accessibility standards



Customized DEI Consultations

In-depth consultations to assess organizational culture, collect internal insights, and co-create strategic action plans aligned with national benchmarks and global standards



Employee Engagement and Needs Assessments

Surveys, focus groups, and data analysis to better understand staff perceptions, measure inclusion levels, and guide future initiatives with reliable evidence

Through these services, Labayh Business partners with organizations to not only meet compliance standards, but to embed DEI meaningfully into daily operations, leadership practices, and long-term strategies



09

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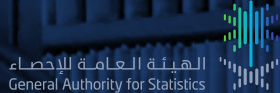
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