



MANAGING REDUNDANCIES IN HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT; A COMPLEX NEXUS OF CONVERGENCE AND DIVERGENCE IN GLOBAL ORGANISATIONS

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Abstract:

Rain or shine, in good or bad times, redundancy is a sensitive management decision in the legal aspect of human resources management. It evokes a lot of tension and requires operational excellence at each stage of the process. Redundancy management is multi-dimensional and encompasses key variables such as organisational justice, legal aspects of human resources management and situational leadership. Using a comparative HR practices social science research approach, the study examined a redundancy process for a global organisation that affected 55 staff in 14 countries across all the 4 global geographic regions of Asia, Europe, Africa and the Americas. It concludes that there are key redundancy execution standards to ensure a fair process and outcome. The study posits that an organisation's redundancy process is inherently a complex process that requires an organisational design approach anchored on principles, an organisational model that clarifies roles and responsibilities, data and insights-driven legal aspects of human resources management and is characterised by interests-based bargaining, which underpins the engagement between senior leadership and works councils/staff representatives.

Keywords: organisational justice, labour laws, redundancy, employee engagement, equity

1. Introduction

Redundancy can be defined as *“the involuntary termination of employment, occupation, or job by the employer through no fault of the employee”* (Nyaberi & Kiriago, 2013, p. 17). In times of crisis, organisations implement cost-cutting measures, including redundancies. Bruno (2008). Capelli *et al.* (1997) have argued that the widespread restructuring of organizations usually resulting in a reduction of the workforce to cut costs, has a

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profound impact on the lives of workers. Planned redundancies are part of organisational change, and much of the research in this area has been based on the work of Kurt Lewin (1947a, 1947b, 1947c). During redundancy processes, redundancy messages can influence employees' judgements of fairness and feelings of negativity towards a former employer (Richter *et al.*, 2018). This study analyses how a global organisation in the international development sector with operations in 45 countries managed a redundancy process.

2. Background

2.1 Financial

Firstly, the organisation had experienced economic difficulties and a significant decline in funding over two years in the implementation of its programmes. In the business year under review, it had seen lower-than-budgeted revenues. Even after executing reductions in operational budgets, the organisation continued to face a deficit of approximately **USD 25 million out of a global budget of USD 80 million**. Due to its resource acquisition and management model, which was provisioned per technical programmes, the projected programmes for the ensuing year were going to be affected.

2.2 Technological Changes

Secondly, the introduction of artificial intelligence as the main source of online information search on the Internet had radically transformed how the organisation's key external stakeholders accessed development education information. At the same time, advances in social networks have profoundly altered global development communications. The organisation's development communication and development education toolkit, including its technologically driven digital platforms, was no longer as impactful as it once was. Some of the models deployed so far to achieve the organisation's development educational programmes, and strategic priorities had increasingly limited value in reaching key stakeholders in certain contexts. It therefore needed to rightsize and upskill for the next stage of its strategy execution. These changes required a nimble adaptation of new technical approaches and development education models to keep pace with the different regional and national contexts in which it implemented its development programmes. A reorganization of the organisation's operations became imperative to maintain its capacity to achieve its strategic priorities and meet stakeholders' expectations. New structures would be required to align with tighter budgets and evolving strategic priorities.

The purpose of the restructuring initiative was to ensure a focus on program outputs and technical approaches with the right project models that have realistic pathways to clear outcomes by prioritising activities that deploy country or thematic expertise and by reorganising the working approach with key program stakeholders. In addition, the restructure was intended to significantly ameliorate duplication of distributed development programming and development education communication skill sets across the organisation to consolidate teams with specialist functions with the aim to

achieve efficiency of resource distribution. This includes reorganising teams to better align with and support regional, country and thematic activities and a focus on specialised functions and skills in the Learning Centers around regional, country and thematic development education and development communications. This required a pivot towards a focus on external strategic alliances, partnership and engagement with experts who can influence key stakeholders' spaces and reach high-impact stakeholders, adapting engagement strategies as required. Senior leadership made a decision to lay off staff and implement a redundancy process. Having provided the background to the case study organisation, we will now examine the literature review to guide the research analysis of how the redundancy process was designed and implemented.

3. Literature Review

In times of crisis, organisations implement cost-cutting measures, including redundancies. Bruno (2008). Capelli *et al.* (1997) have argued that the widespread restructuring of organizations usually resulting in a reduction of the workforce to cut cost has a profound impact on the lives of workers. Labour costs are one of the largest expenses for any organisation, often accounting for a significant portion of total business costs. Reducing labour costs is one strategy firms can implement as they grapple with the impact of economic crisis or set themselves up for long-term success. This has certainly been the case during the pandemic, with large numbers of employees being made redundant or furloughed as a result of the severe economic downturn faced by many companies (World Economic Forum, 2021).

Redundancy can be defined as *"the involuntary termination of employment, occupation, or job by the employer through no fault of the employee"* (Nyaberi & Kiriago, 2013, p. 17). While employees are protected by employment law and are usually provided with financial and emotional support from their employer, employee dignity is something the organisation needs to consider when enacting redundancy. Doing so may reduce intra-organisational conflict and external reputational damage, even to the point of a positive outcome

Labour costs are one of the largest expenses for any organisation, often accounting for a significant portion of total business costs. Reducing labour costs is one strategy firms can implement as they grapple with the impact of economic crisis or set themselves up for long-term success. Large numbers of employees are being made redundant or furloughed as a result of the severe economic downturn faced by many companies (World Economic Forum, 2021). Redundancy (or retrenchment) can be defined as *"the involuntary termination of employment, occupation, or job by the employer through no fault of the employee"* (Nyaberi & Kiriago, 2013, p. 17). Planned redundancies are part of organisational change, and much of the research in this area has been based on the work of Kurt Lewin (1947a, 1947b, 1947c) and his three-step process of change. While Lewin's research is dated, Burnes and Bargal (2017) argue that Lewin's model is still strongly relevant today. Lewin's (refer 1947a, 1947b, 1947c) psychological Field Theory examined

how individuals interact with their environment and finds that their behaviour is contextual; and is underpinned by the five principles - the psychological approach, emphasis on the total situation, the classificatory versus the constructive approach, present time versus historical causation, and the dynamic approach (Burnes & Bargal, 2017).

Recent research on redundancy has examined the phenomena from several perspectives, including the best ways to conduct the process (see Cameron *et al.*, 1991; Kinnie *et al.*, 1997; Kleiman & Denton, 2000), Berchick *et al.*, 2012; Kanfer *et al.*, 2001; Leana & Feldman, 1998; Macky, 2004; Zikic & Klehe, 2006); Brandes *et al.*, 2008; Brockner *et al.*, 1989; Macky, 2004) and the perceptions and experiences of those who implement the redundancy plans (Gandolfi, 2009; Gandolfi & Hansson, 2011).

Cutting jobs is a quick way to cut costs – including salaries and benefits, but layoffs by themselves can be expensive since many companies pay for severance and outplacement services. Involuntary job loss through redundancy not only has serious economic impacts on employees but can also negatively affect their health and well-being (Berchick *et al.*, 2012; Olesen *et al.*, 2013). The loss of a job will see the conclusion of the relationship between an employee, their workplace, and their employer. Nyasha (2016) argues that redundancy has an impact on organizational performance and suggests organizations must consider alternatives to redundancy, including manpower planning, redeployment, loaning out and pay cuts. When a redundancy process is handled badly, it could negatively affect any remaining sense of workplace dignity an employee may have, leading them to have a completely negative image of their association with the organisation (Macky, 2004), which they may share with others, resulting in damage to the organisation's overall reputation. Should this process be handled in an informed and professional manner, the employee may be able to depart their workplace with dignity and confidence as they go to market for their next job. This would also allow an organisation to 'keep face' in a time of potential negative media exposure (Abimbola & Vallaster, 2007; Macpherson & Ashwell, 2023).

The organisational justice concepts of interpersonal and informational justice can provide an organisation with a roadmap for delivering the messaging of impending redundancy, which may be perceived as fair and equitable by employees. Greenberg's (1987) organizational justice theory shows how an employee judges the behaviour of the organization and the employee's resulting attitude and behavior. Satpute and Lieberman (2008) define justice as an action or decision which is morally right. They further state that an individual's perceptions of these decisions as fair or unfair can influence the individual's subsequent attitudes and behaviors. Additionally, they postulate that fairness is often of central interest to organizations because the implications of perceptions of injustice can impact job attitudes and behaviors at work.

Greenberg (1987) suggests that there are three main forms of organizational justice: distributive, procedural and interactional. Adams (1965) defines distributive justice as fairness associated with decision outcomes and the distribution of resources. He further states that perceptions of distributive justice can be fostered when outcomes

are perceived to be equally applied. Leventhal (1980) defines procedural justice as the fairness of the processes that lead to outcomes. When individuals feel that they have a voice in the process or that the process involves characteristics such as consistency, accuracy, ethicality, and lack of bias, then procedural justice is enhanced (Leventhal, 1980). Bies and Moag (1986) simply define interactional justice as the treatment that an individual receives as decisions are made. In addition, a validation study by Colquitt (2001) suggests that interactional justice has two components: interpersonal and informational justice. He defines interpersonal justice as perceptions of respect and propriety in one's treatment and informational justice as the adequacy of the explanations given in terms of their timeliness, specificity, and truthfulness. The theory suggests that there is a potential link between the way in which redundancies are managed and justice theory. Martin (1982) defines redundancy as a process of dismissing someone because he/she can no longer be usefully employed. Cushway (2005) simply defines redundancy as the termination of employment that is caused by an inadequate level of work. He further states that redundancy occurs when there is surplus labour.

Filatotchev (2000) argues that redundancy can cause survivor syndrome, and this goes a long way in affecting the morale and commitment of survivors. Once morale and commitment are affected, it means organizational performance will be compromised. Marshal (2011) states that redundancy causes organizational unrest, and employees tend to resist change.

Colquitt *et al.* (2001) note that the individual employee's perception of fairness of the decision being made will affect their future behaviour where interpersonal justice "*reflects the degree people are treated with politeness, dignity, and respect by authorities*" (p. 427) and informational justice ensures "*explanations that convey information about why procedures were used in a certain way or why outcomes were distributed in a certain fashion*" (p. 427). Bies and Moag (1986) note that interpersonal justice perceptions can drive employees' reactions to senior individuals, and informational justice perceptions can drive reactions to the organisation. In a similar vein, Colquitt *et al.* (2001) explain that interpersonal justice acts primarily to alter reactions to decision outcomes and "*informational justice acts primarily to alter reactions to procedures*" (p. 427).

Redundancy messages can influence employees' judgements of fairness and feelings of negativity towards a former employer (Richter *et al.*, 2018). Richter *et al.* (2018) found that employees who felt they had been treated well by their employers at the time of being made redundant experienced respectful treatment shown through the interpersonal behaviour displayed by the message giver, were provided with an adequate explanation, and were given the message by an authority figure they respected. In contrast, employees felt less respected and reported increased feelings of anger towards the organisation if they were given an inadequate explanation and the message was delivered by an external agent (Richter *et al.*, 2018). In these situations, employees felt the psychological contract between the organisation and themselves had been broken (Richter *et al.*, 2018). These aspects of employee judgements correspond directly with those of interpersonal organisational justice. Bies and Moag (1986) suggest that employee

perceptions of fairness are impacted by their interpersonal and informational justice perceptions created by the manner and tone in which signals are given by the bearer of news. When planned organizational change initiatives that result in employee lay-offs are facilitated fairly, the outcomes are perceived with satisfaction by affected staff. (Coleman, 2022). White (2007) also explored aspects of redundancy from the standpoints of employers and employees.

Our summary of the literature review confirms that conducting a redundancy initiative requires transparent information and due process in line with organisational, informational equity and justice principles. The key stakeholders, namely organisation and employees and their representative, ought to be guided by those key content, process and outcomes standards which can determine the success or failure of the redundancy process.

3. Hypothesis

- If a redundancy process is governed by substantive and procedural standards grounded on organisation, information, and interaction justice, then it enables a fair process outcome and potentially reduces the risk of litigation.
- If the execution of a redundancy process is characterized by Human Resources (HR) operational excellence and Senior Leadership accountability, then it enables a fair outcome and reduces the risk of litigation.

4. Methodology

Many social science research methodologies exist for conducting a review of an organisation's HR redundancy initiatives, each offering merits and demerits depending on the specific objectives and organizational context. We used purposive sampling for the study. These were 55 staff across the organisation who were affected by the redundancy process. The overall methodology used to generate data to inform the management of the process before, during and after the process included interviews with affected staff, analysis of questionnaires, testing of evidence of each phase of the process and review of documents. A total of 55 staff were laid off in the 14 countries across the 4 geographical hemispheres of Europe, Africa, the Americas and Asia. In order to assess staff perceptions of the fairness of the redundancy processes, a survey was conducted before and after the process. 48 affected staff completed the survey, and this represents 87% response rate. The key areas surveyed were organisational justice, information justice, interaction justice and redundancy plan. A 87% response rate is a strong statistical sample for generalising from purposively sampled staff perceptions on the research questions asked to facilitate in-depth analysis.

Regarding staff gender diversity, 55% were male, and 45% were female.

4.1 Questionnaires

The data were gathered using an online questionnaire addressed to the respondents through the SurveyMonkey platform. The survey took place in April 2025 and resulted in 48 complete responses. We used diagnostic questionnaires as quantitative tools to collect data from affected staff across all the geographic hemispheres in which the case study organisation operated. This was to ensure we had data that could be compared across countries and also tracked over time. It served as a survey-feedback instrument to determine areas that would benefit from the organisation's redundancy principles, practices and processes.

4.2 Interviews

In addition to the questionnaires, we also conducted remote interviews using Teams, Google Meet and Zoom to reveal data and insights that quantitative data alone cannot capture. In view of the different redundancy information and consultation time frame standards, we could only analyse post redundancy off boarding survey feedback as and when they were individually completed. We used structured interviews following predetermined questions, which were aligned with the SurveyMonkey tool questionnaires but varied slightly to guide conversations.

4.3 Secondary Documentary Analysis

We examined the organisation's HR policies on separation, offboarding, redundancy, financial and grants management reports, and internal communications documents. We also researched the labour laws and related redundancy provisions in each of the 14 countries where affected staff were located. We also reviewed relevant International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions and documents relevant to the study.

This approach provided the research with data about key convergence and divergence factors inherent in conducting the redundancy process in multiple countries across geographic hemispheres.

4.4 Sampling

The study was conducted remotely and covered Costa Rica, the USA, representing the Americas, the Philippines and Thailand, representing Asia, Egypt, South Africa and Kenya, representing Africa, the Netherlands, Spain, Italy, Germany, France, Belgium, representing the European Union (EU) and the United Kingdom. The level of analysis was done by comparing data across staff in affected countries. This also gave a comparative human resources and industrial relations level of analysis and offered an opportunity to compare and contrast various redundancy laws and standards across the world. The study was empirical in nature and combined an inductive and deductive approach to examine all phases of the redundancy process in one global organisation with affected staff in 14 countries across different hemispheres in the world. The deductive approach involved reviewing literature and documents available at the organization, whereas the inductive approach was based on empirical data obtained from

interviews and questionnaires administered to the respondents. We also focused on one global organisation in the international development sector in order to avoid the risk of introducing extraneous variables present when selecting organizations across industries (Gordon, 1991). An industry is defined by shared worldviews and characterized by a common body of knowledge, which is shared through media equally available to and used by managers within the industry (Abramson, 1994). The study also applied purposive sampling based on previous knowledge of the population and the specific purpose of the research (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000). The target population for this study consisted of all 55 staff affected by the redundancy process.

All the 55 affected staff had worked in their organization an average of 7.5 years and had work and technical experience averaging 15 years. Their ages ranged from 22 to 58 years. 55% were males, 45% were females. 75% of respondents had at least a first degree, while 25% of respondents had a more advanced degree. In order to conduct the survey 55 questionnaires were distributed out of which 48 questionnaires were returned, showing 87% response rate.

We used the Likert scale, namely 1- strongly disagreed, 2- disagreed, 3 neither agree nor disagree, 4-agree, 5 –strongly agree. The sample size is considered to be sufficient according to the central limit theorem.

4.5 Pre and Post Redundancy Survey Analysis

In this section, we provide an analysis of the findings of the perceptions of affected staff before and after the redundancy process.

4.5.1 Comparative Analysis

Pre-redundancy organisational justice factors were averagely rated at 3.1, information justice rated 3.64, interaction justice 3.45, and redundancy plan 3.8. Post redundancy, organisational justice factors were rated 4, information justice was rated 3.55, interaction justice was rated 4, and the redundancy plan was rated 3.7

Organisational justice factors increased significantly by 0.9 points at the end of the redundancy process compared to pre-redundancy. Information justice factors reduced by -0.09, interaction justice factors increased by 0.55 points, and redundancy plan reduced slightly by -0.1. Summarily, we can conclude that measuring the perceptions of staff before and after the redundancy process provides data and insights to learn lessons to guide future redundancy processes. In addition, we believe there were other factors that contributed to the comparatively positive scores of both phases, which were all averagely rated very high in the Likert scale. We will examine those additional factors in the rest of the paper.

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Figure 1:

| Pre- Redundancy Initiative Baseline Survey | | |
|---|--|---------------|
| Organisational Justice | | Scores |
| 1. | The presentation by senior leadership shows evidence of non discrimination in the selection criteria applied to identify staff at risk in making these decisions | 3.5 |
| 2. | Fairness and equity were key considerations visibly captured into the redundancy principles | 3 |
| 3. | There is trust that leadership will treat organizational members with and abide by country labour laws. | 3 |
| Information Justice | | |
| 4. | There is adequate information to reassure staff that the redundancy initiative is to enable the organization respond to the changing operating context | 4 |
| 5. | The restructure means we are focusing on strategic priorities as our route to make impact. | 3.6 |
| 6. | There is clarity on how the restructuring process will be conducted without affecting normal business operations | 3.4 |
| 7. | I am convinced that the financial shortfall shared with staff of the organization's funding situation is manageable and we don't not need to lay off staff. | 3.85 |
| 8. | I am convinced we could have avoided the layoffs. | 3.7 |
| 9. | The savings from the restructuring will save us significant funding | 3.3 |
| | | 3.4 |
| Interaction Justice | | |
| 10. | We are convinced that line managers have the required training to identify staff at risk | 2.5 |
| 11. | I trust the HR team to ensure a dignified process | 3.6 |
| 12. | I trust organization to follow labour laws where there is a requirement for the organization to give priority to colleagues who will be made redundant and considered for redeployment opportunities | 3.2 |
| 13. | There is clarity on psycho-social support that will be provided to staff affected. | 4.5 |
| Redundancy Plan | | |
| 14. | There is transparency on the percentage of the organization's members who will be made redundant? | 3 |
| 15. | I am convinced that the final number will depend on national works council processes | 3.2 |
| 16. | I am convinced senior leadership carefully considered where to focus efforts on existing work which is having impact, where to refocus resources on new but necessary skills and approaches, and where to end projects models or technical approaches that are not mission critical in this new context | 4.2 |
| 17. | The leadership team have looked across the whole organisation with no exceptions, from leadership to national, thematic and functional teams | 3.6 |
| 18. | There is a clear plan to ensure consultation between senior leadership and works councils and managers across the organisation in deciding which roles would be made redundant | 4 |
| 19. | There is an indicative period of when the redundancy process will finish and by the end of that period there will be complete clarity of who is being made redundant | 4.2 |
| 20. | We understand there will be different processes, notice periods and departure dates for different countries due to national labour law standards. | 4.5 |
| Off-boarding Feedback from departing staff | | |
| Organisational Justice | | |
| 1. | I was treated fairly in line with the presentations during the staff calls by senior leadership | 4.2 |
| 2. | Fairness and equity were key considerations visibly captured into the redundancy principles | 4.1 |
| 3. | I am convinced that my process was done in line with my country labour laws. | 3.7 |
| Information Justice | | |
| 4. | Overall there was adequate information to reassure staff that the redundancy initiative is to enable the organization respond to the changing operating context | 3.86 |
| 5. | The restructure will enable the organisation to focus on strategic to enable impact. | 3.75 |
| 6. | There was clarity on how the restructuring process will be conducted without affecting normal business operations | 3.8 |
| 7. | I am convinced that the financial shortfall shared with staff of the organization's funding situation is manageable and we don't not need to lay off staff. | 3.3 |
| 8. | I am convinced we could have avoided the layoffs. | 3.5 |
| 9. | The savings from the restructuring will save us significant funding | 3.1 |
| Interaction Justice | | |
| 10. | My at risk/verbal notification call was conducted with respect and this is because the line managers were trained to facilitate the calls | 4.5 |
| 11. | I trust the HR team did their best to ensure a dignified process | 4.1 |
| 12. | I trust the organization to follow the local labour laws where there is a requirement for the organization to give priority to colleagues who will be made redundant and considered for redeployment opportunities. | 3.6 |
| 13. | I received psycho-social support and resources to help me cope with the lay off and also prepare for my future job search | 3.8 |
| Redundancy Plan | | |
| 14. | There was transparency on the percentage of the organization who will be made redundant | 3.5 |
| 15. | I am convinced that the final number depended on national works council processes | 3.8 |
| 16. | I am convinced senior leadership made a careful calculation of where to focus efforts on existing work which is having impact, where to refocus resources on new but necessary skills and approaches, and where to end projects models or technical approaches that are not mission critical in this new context | 3.7 |
| 17. | The leadership team have looked across the whole organisation with no exceptions, from leadership to national, thematic and functional teams | 3.6 |
| 18. | There was a clear plan to ensure consultation between senior leadership and works councils and managers across the organisation in deciding which roles would be made redundant | 3.8 |
| 19. | There was an indicative period of when the redundancy process will finish and by the end of that period there will be complete clarity of who is being made redundant | 3.9 |
| 20. | We understand there will be different processes, notice periods and departure dates for different countries due to national labour law standards. | 4.2 |

| Factors | Pre | Post | Variance |
|-------------|------|------|----------|
| OJ factors | 3.1 | 4 | 0.9 |
| IFJ factors | 3.64 | 3.55 | -0.09 |
| INJ factors | 3.45 | 4 | 0.55 |
| Red Plan | 3.8 | 3.7 | -0.1 |

4.6 Design

This section discusses how the redundancy process was designed and implemented. The redundancy process was broken down into three phases to capture key processes, outputs and outcome standards. Phase one covered the preparatory stage, phase two deals with the actual implementation and phase three deals with the post-redundancy lessons learned.

4.6.1 Phase One

A. Foundational Principles

A key foundation for the redundancy initiative was to define key equity principles and processes to guide the entire process in line with organisational values and country labour law standards. Senior leadership approved a redundancy guidelines document that provided clarity on important issues around values, applicability and scope, guiding principles, terminations and redeployments, decision rights on criteria for selection and approvals of staff at risk, staff assistance programme and support, redundancy termination processes, formula for redundancy payment, etc.

B. Project Management

The organisation's staff were based in 45 countries worldwide. The redundancy process affected staff in 14 countries. To ensure synergies of effort, the Human Resources (HR) Team formed a project team that compiled all the Labour law standards on redundancy across all 45 countries, with extra emphasis on the 14 countries, including applicable consultation and information standards. The HR team also developed a framework to ensure a line of sight between the organisation's strategic imperatives to determine teams at risk, individuals at risk and applicable country labour law standards. This then helped the HR team to compute an indicative redundancy package for senior leadership consideration and subsequent provisioning by the Finance team. Some of the key components included tenure, accrued months in lieu of notice, redundancy payment, encashment of untaken accrued leave and any other considerations, including offer of mutual termination agreements.

A redundancy toolkit was also developed by the HR team for the senior leadership team. The toolkit covered important components such as redundancy provisions, redundancy guidelines, FAQs, consultation standards, off boarding and knowledge transfer materials, talking points, and written materials for the notification to terminate calls and the actual termination notice. A training programme was also designed to support line managers to handle the notification calls with dignity, care and sensitivity.

Senior leadership then partnered with HR to map out a project management plan with timelines to engage key stakeholders, including staff, the board of directors, relevant works councils, and regulatory agencies. A risk management register was designed to guide the potential for mapping potential litigation risks based on countries, types of staff contracts and personalities of staff at risk, etc.

4.6.2 Phase Two

A. Key Standards - Law, Process and Engagement

In line with Phase One, senior leadership engaged the board of directors to secure approval of the process and the budget. This was followed by meetings with works councils and staff to provide transparent information on the process, timelines and next steps. Thereafter, the HR team supported Line Managers to conduct notification calls and sent written confirmation of notice of termination to the affected staff. Given different labour law standards on notification, consultation and termination, the period for getting feedback and finalising the process varied.

The global nature of the redundancy process required an extensive review of applicable country labour law standards that defined the content, process and engagement. In this section, we sample and summarise the key country-specific standards in all 14 countries.

B. United Kingdom

Collective and individual redundancies will be considered unfair if there is no genuine redundancy situation and a fair process must be followed, which requires consultation as soon as 20 employees are made redundant within a period of 90 days, even in the absence of a works council. Early termination of fixed-term contracts is generally not possible.

Redundancy is a potentially fair reason for dismissal. However, a redundancy dismissal will be unfair if there is no genuine redundancy situation or if the employer has not followed a fair process. A fair process involves prior warning and consultation with the affected employee before the employer makes any decision. Employers should also take care not to discriminate based on any protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, i.e., age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation, etc. There is no obligation to consult with a works council or trade union regarding redundancies, except where the employer has already made a commitment to do so, or where collective consultation obligations apply. When an employee is dismissed for redundancy and has more than two years' service with the employer, the employee will be entitled to a statutory redundancy payment calculated in the same way as the basic award in an unfair dismissal claim. In situations where there is no works council, the collective consultation process must take place with the 'appropriate representatives' of affected employees, which, depending upon the circumstances, may be:

- a) trade union representatives (recognised for collective bargaining purposes);
- b) representatives selected for other purposes who have authority to deal with redundancy situations (e.g., a works council); or (
- c) representatives specifically elected for this purpose.

The appropriate representatives must represent all of the 'affected' employees (Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation Act, 1992). Employers can lay off employees or put them on short-time working if this option is included in the employee's

employment contract, is custom and practice in the organisation, national agreement for the industry, an agreement between the employer and a trade union or agreed by the employer and employee to change the terms in the employment contract. In the event of office closure, the organisation is required to consult affected employees.

C. Belgium

The general legal framework for dismissals applies to individual redundancies, and there is no limitation on the causes for dismissal; however, the cause must not be manifestly unreasonable (CBA April 2014 Section 109, *CBA n°10*, *CBA 24* and *Act of 13 February 1998*), and the employer should be able to justify the reasons. There is also a provision for notice period or payment in lieu of notice. In addition, economic difficulties had to be documented in case of collective or individual redundancies. It also provides for a requirement to consult on collective redundancy, and the length of a collective redundancy procedure would be 6-12 weeks or more, and a compensation payment is required. The organisation has to inform and consult the staff representatives or the employees themselves, and also inform and notify the authorities (regional authorities & FPS Employment), and special compensation would have to be paid to employees for 4 months. The law also defines protected employees (e.g., pregnant workers, workers on parental leave). This category of staff can't be dismissed if the termination is related to the reason for their protection (e.g., leave, mandates, functions, or complaints). In addition, staff representatives on the works council and the occupational health and safety committee can't be dismissed for economic reasons unless a special procedure is applied.

D. France

The threshold for a small collective redundancy is from 2 to 9 employees over a 30-day period, and the threshold for a large collective redundancy is from 10 employees over a 30-day period. Large collective redundancies require the Labour administration's approval. The Approximate standard for a consultation process alone is 2 to 4 months. The closure of an office may be considered a change to the employment contract and require the employees' agreement. In addition, it is not possible to terminate fixed-term contracts on the grounds of economic difficulties unless via termination by mutual agreement. According to Article L.1233-3 of the French Labour Code, the grounds for individual and collective redundancies include economic difficulties, technological change, reorganization to maintain competitiveness and cessation of activity. The employer must have a **real** and **serious** cause to terminate the employment contract, although there is no specific legal definition of what a 'real and serious cause' is.

The dismissal of a single employee for economic reasons must follow a specific procedure including obligation to look for redeployment possibilities, establishment of a redundancy order, a preliminary interview must be arranged with affected staff, a letter of dismissal must be sent and the administration must be notified (Dreets), consultation with the CSE (works council) is mandatory for individual dismissal only if the dismissal

is due to a reorganization of the company or concerns a staff representative. A former employee is given **priority for rehiring** for a period of one year following the dismissal. In case of collective redundancies which was the type of redundancy the case study organization applied for the case of staff based in France the steps include obligation to look for redeployment possibilities, establishment of a redundancy order, consultation with the CSE, explaining the envisaged course of action and measures envisaged to limit dismissals and to facilitate the redeployment of the employees concerned, preliminary interviews, notification to the administration, letter of dismissal, notice period and severance payment.

E. Germany

The threshold of collective redundancy is 6 employees affected or fewer, depending on the rationale and impact of the project. This will imply co-determination regarding the social plan. The approximate timescale for the collective consultation process is 4 weeks to 6 months. Office closure is considered a change in operations, thereby triggering the same process as for collective redundancies. Early termination of a fixed-term contract is generally not possible. §1 KüSchG (Protection against unfair dismissal act) provides that termination must be 'socially justified' and compelling operational requirements can make the dismissal socially justified, unless the employer has not, or has not sufficiently, considered the employee's seniority, age, duties to support dependents and severe disability. A severance payment is required. The works council has to be consulted before every dismissal, and any notice of dismissal that is given without consulting the works council is null and void (Art. 102 BetrVG). Under the law certain groups are defined as protected employee e.g. works council members, company data protection officers, pregnant women and mothers up to 4 months after delivery, severely disabled persons unless with the consent of the Integration Office (§ 168 Ninth Book of the Social Security Code), representative for severely disabled persons (§ 179 Ninth Book of the Social Security Code), persons on parental leave (§ 18 Parental Allowance and Parental Leave Act), persons on care time (§ 5 Care Time Act), vocational trainees after the probationary period (§ 22 Vocational Training Act). In the specific case of works council members and with reference to [Section 15 KSchG](#), ordinary dismissals (economic/operations reasons, team closure, etc.) **are not allowed** during the term of office of the WC member until one year after the end of the term of office. The **only situations where a dismissal is possible will be due to serious misconduct** ([§ 626 BGB](#)), such as violence, alcohol use, fraud, theft, etc. In this case, the WC consent is needed; in the absence of the WC's consent, the employer must go to the Labour Court and request approval. The other situation where this is possible is due to the complete closure of the organisation.

F. Italy

Redundancy in Italy, or "giustificato motivo oggettivo" (objective justified reason), refers to dismissals based on economic, organizational, or technical reasons. Employers must follow strict, mandatory procedures—including consultation with unions for collective

layoffs—and pay the *trattamento di fine rapporto* (TFR), a deferred compensation, regardless of the reason for termination. Individual Redundancy *oggettivo* is based on business reorganization or downsizing, requiring proof of the economic reason and requiring a mandatory conciliation procedure before the Labour Inspectorate. Collective Redundancy *licenziamento collettivo* applies if an organisation company dismisses 5 or more employees within 120 days in the same province and requires a formal procedure with trade unions. Affected staff are entitled to unemployment benefits provided they have contributed to social security. If a collective redundancy is unavoidable, employers must apply specific criteria, usually agreed upon with unions: (1) family responsibilities, (2) seniority, and (3) technical and organizational needs.

G. Spain

Individual redundancies are possible with compensation; the redundancy becomes collective as soon as 10 employees are affected. In any case, the economic difficulties must be justified and will be verified by the labour inspectorate. Collective redundancy requires negotiation with the staff works council. It is generally not possible to carry out collective redundancies if short-time working has already been introduced unless a proven change of circumstances justifies it. Office closure might be considered as a substantial collective change and involve negotiation with the Staff Delegates. Individual termination of contracts for economic, technical, organizational or productive reasons will be carried out by way of individual objective dismissal if the number of affected workers, in a period of 90 days, **does not exceed** more than 9, if the organisation employs between 10 and 99 workers. The usual procedure applies, and compensation must be paid (= 20 days per year of service, with periods of less than one year being prorated on a monthly basis and with a maximum of 12 monthly payments). This compensation must be paid by the company at the exact time of termination, except if the contract is terminated for economic reasons. In all cases, the staff council needs to be informed. The labour and Social Security Inspectorate (ITSS) has to be involved. Since March 2, 2023, the ITSS has been authorized to rule on the existence of the causes specified by the company in the initial communication of the collective dismissal, and to verify that the documentation submitted complies with the requirements based on the specific reason alleged for the dismissal. The staff council representative must be part of the negotiation. The process requires a strictly regulated timeline with the involvement of the labour authority. The employer may have to pay a contribution to the public treasury if over 50 employees are laid off.

G. Netherlands

The procedure for individual and collective redundancies is very bureaucratic, and labour the administration must give its approval. The Collective Redundancies Act applies in cases of the dismissal of 20 employees or more within a period of three months. Before resorting to a redundancy dismissal, the employer must start by trying to

negotiate a mutual agreement. and early termination of fixed-term contracts is, in general, not possible. The UWV (Employee insurance agency) and the trade unions with members in the company must be notified of the collective dismissal. The trade unions must be consulted regarding the intended dismissal plans. The works council must also be informed and may have a right to advise, depending on the circumstances.

H. Thailand

Severance pay must be provided to any employee whose employment is terminated by the employer at not less than the rates prescribed under Section 118 of the Labour Protection Act B.E. 2541 (1998) (“LPA”), calculated based on the employee’s latest daily wage rate and years of service, or at higher rates if more favorable to the employee. The employer and the employee cannot negotiate to reduce or waive the statutory severance pay. Severance pay must be paid on the termination effective date (i.e., the last working day of the employee) (Supreme Court Judgment No. 106/2524). The Thai labour law does not have a principle or concept of collective redundancy procedure. The legal requirements under LPA regarding employment termination apply on an individual basis, regardless of the number of employees being made redundant at the same time.

The key requirements include a termination meeting between the organisation and employee to clarify the reasons for redundancy and to clarify the statutory and contractual entitlements. Although this meeting is not legally required, it is a common practice in Thailand and is recommended. In addition, there is a need to provide an advanced written termination notice to each employee before or at the date the wage payment is due, in order to take effect on the following wage payment date as required under each Employee’s employment agreement. Alternatively, the organisation may terminate the employment of each Employee with immediate effect (i.e., on the date of serving the notice of termination) upon paying each Employee the payment in lieu of advance termination notices, which equals the Employee’s salary for the entire notice period. The notice to terminate must be served directly to the employee or by registered post and/or by email, with evidence showing that the email has been sent to the Employee. If the employee refuses to accept the notice at the meeting, the notice should be read out to the employee in the presence of one witness. The person who handles the termination process should record in the notice that the employee refuses to accept the notice, and thus the notice is read out to the Employee in the presence of the witness. The witness has to sign the notice as proof that the termination has been made known to the Employee. In terms of redundancy payment, the organisation must pay the statutory and contractual entitlements to each Employee as required by law, i.e., the unpaid salaries and overtime payments, the payment for unutilized holidays, the severance pay based on each Employee’s years of service, the payment in lieu of advance termination notice, etc.

I. Philippines

According to Article 298 of the Labour Code, redundancy is an authorized cause for termination due to restructuring, requiring valid business reasons, one-month written notice to both the employee and the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), and separation pay. The organisation must provide evidence of redundant positions, such as new staffing patterns, feasibility studies and indicate a fair criterion based on skills, performance, and seniority. A written notice must be served to the affected employee and DOLE at least 30 days before the intended date of termination. The employee is entitled to separation pay equivalent to at least one month's salary or one month's pay for every year of service, whichever is higher.

J. Egypt

In line with Articles 196-200, the labour authority has to approve a redundancy process due to economic reasons, such as business closure or downsizing, which requires submission to a specialized committee. Once approved, employees are generally entitled to severance payment calculated as half a month's salary for each of the first five years, and one full month's salary for each subsequent year. In terms of notice periods, two months is required for employees with less than 10 years of service, and three months for those with more than 10 years or payment in lieu of notice.

K. Kenya

Redundancy in Kenya is governed by Section 40 of the Employment Act of 2007, requiring a fair, transparent, and consultative process. Employers must provide at least one month's notice to employees, their union (if applicable), and the local labour officer, while paying at least 15 days' severance pay per completed year of service. Written notice of intended redundancy must be given to the employee and the labour officer at least 30 days prior to the termination date. The organisation must hold consultations with the union or the affected employees to discuss the reasons, extent, and selection criteria to avert or minimize job losses. Selection should follow the "last-in, first-out" (LIFO) principle, but this is subject to consideration of skills, ability, and reliability. The redundancy must be for a valid operational reason (e.g., restructuring, technology changes, economic downturn) and not for personal victimisation. Compensation for redundancy includes one month's notice or payment in lieu of notice, severance of not less than 15 days' pay for each completed year of service and payment of cash in lieu of accrued leave.

L. South Africa

In line with Chapter 5, Section 41 of Act No 75, the Basic Condition of Employment 1997, redundancy is defined as retrenchment and must follow a strict, fair, and consultative process. Redundancy can be done on "operational requirements", e.g., economic, technological, structural or similar needs of an employer. The organisation must pay an employee who is dismissed for reasons based on the employer's operational

requirements, severance pay equal to at least one week's remuneration for each completed year of continuous service with that employer. The Minister may vary the amount of severance pay by notice in the Gazette. An employee who unreasonably refuses to accept the employer's offer of alternative employment with that employer or any other employer is not entitled to severance pay in terms of subsection. The payment of severance pay in compliance with this section does not affect an employee's right to any other amount payable according to law. The organisation must prove operational requirements necessitate the dismissal, consult on alternatives to avoid job losses, select employees using fair criteria, and provide severance pay of at least one week's remuneration per completed year of service. The organisation must issue a written notice, inviting consultation if they contemplate dismissing employees for operational reasons (restructuring, technology, economic, etc.). A consensus-seeking process must occur with affected employees, trade unions, or elected representatives, and the parties must discuss measures to avoid or minimize dismissals, change the timing of dismissals, mitigate adverse effects, select employees, and determine severance pay. The organisation must genuinely consider alternatives, such as reducing hours, freezing vacancies, or "bumping" (replacing less experienced employees). For Large-Scale Retrenchments, a facilitator from the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) may be appointed. A minimum of 30-60 days must elapse before notices of termination are issued. Employees are entitled to statutory notice pay, depending on their length of service, in addition to severance, which is a minimum of one week's remuneration for each completed year of continuous service. Employees may refer disputes to a labour court or CCMA.

M. USA

In the United States, there is no statutory severance under federal law. Employment is based on "at-will" employment, meaning the organisation can terminate employees at any time for any reason (not illegal) and generally has no legal obligation to provide severance pay, notice periods, or justification for job elimination. The Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act requires employers with 100 or more staff to provide 60 days notice for mass lay-offs. Federal law (FLSA) does not require severance pay, though it is often provided through company policy or negotiated in employment agreements. It is worth noting that some states have "mini-WARN" laws that are more stringent than federal law, such as requiring notice for smaller layoffs. Employees terminated due to redundancy are generally eligible for unemployment insurance benefits, and redundancy cannot be used as a pretext for discrimination based on age, race, gender, or other protected characteristics.

N. Costa Rica

The labour Code (LC), Law No. 2 of 1943, Código de Trabajo, Ley No. 2 de 26 de Agosto de 1943, is the foundational labour law that regulates employment relationships in Costa. The Código de Trabajo serves as the primary legal framework and outlines workers'

rights, employer obligations, and the procedures for labor disputes. Redundancy in Costa Rica is treated as a termination without cause, allowing employers to de-establish roles provided they pay the required statutory notice and *auxilio de cesantia* in addition to untaken accrued vacation and prorated Christmas bonus. Severance is mandatory for tenure over 3 months, calculated up to a maximum of 8 years. In practice, while redundancy is legal, the reasons should be documented to avoid claims of wrongful termination, which could lead to paying salaries from the date of termination until a final court decision. The first three months of employment are considered a probation period, during which, if the contract is terminated, the employer is not required to provide notice or severance pay. The section provided an overview of the redundancy labour law standards. In the next section, we discuss key findings.

4.6.3 Phase Three - Findings & Lessons Learned

In this section, we discuss key findings and lessons learned from the redundancy process, both during and after it.

4.6.3.1 Internal Process Standards

A. HR Team

The HR team, under the leadership of the CHRO, established a Project execution team where subject matter experts in compensation, legal aspects of employment relations, learning and development, HR regional partners and HR operations back-end staff collaborated using the Asana project management tool and had daily meetings to review progress. The CHRO also provided weekly sit-reps to the senior leadership team. The senior leadership sitreps provided 4 key components. These were updates on (i) processes which had been completed, ongoing, or at a stalemate, (ii) legally complex pushback on fairness issues on equality v equity (iii) strategic approach including a multi-layered approach to communication at front end (engaging staff, works councils, board, wider organisation, donors etc) in alignment with back-end HR and legal processes. This was to provide a nimble risk mitigation, response and management approach to guide the entire process.

The operational excellence standards the HR team applied included rigour, data-driven insights, understanding and application of principles of redundancy, country labour law standards and labour relations practices anchored on dignified and respectful communication with staff at risk. There was also very close collaboration with the internal and external legal teams to deal with responses from staff at risk, their staff representatives or lawyers on issues of interpretation and application of the principles and process standards for consultation.

In addition, the CHRO provided hands-on guidance, including drop-in training sessions to the HR team to deal with stress, speed of response, emotional intelligence and work load and well-being. This was necessary as the HR team still had to provide “normal services” to the business, including processing employment contracts for donor-

funded teams in locations not affected by the redundancy, onboarding new joiners, preparing for annual staff opinion surveys, etc.

Once all the required legal consultative processes had been concluded, an HR representative and the Directors of the affected staff made the verbal notification calls with the affected staff. This was followed by a written formal notification subject to the legally required standards to receive feedback from the staff. At-risk notification calls were done via written scripts vetted and approved by HR, Legal and Senior leadership. Each post-call was also reinforced with a quick review of all reactions and responses and turnaround, including seeking legal input on key contentious issues requiring extra-legal insights and advice.

The HR team provided 24/7 support for staff impacted by the redundancy with compassion, dignity, and practical tools. This included emotional and mental health support with access to the staff assistance program, with up to 8 coaching/therapy sessions fully covered by the organisation. Practical Job Search Support was also provided, including resources on essential job-hunting tips and conversations with the Recruitment team.

Career Transition Support was also provided, including a confidential one-to-one chat with the Learning & Development team to explore next steps, set personal or professional goals, etc. In addition, an offering of references and recommendation letters was made available for departing colleagues, and line managers were always on standby and available to serve as references. HR and leadership also reviewed and agreed on staff farewell messages with the departing staff to ensure a dignified closure.

From an organisational justice quality assurance standard, the HR team also provided signposting support and offered confidential one-to-one chats with the Justice and Equity team upon request, for questions around equity, fairness, and diversity of individuals being made redundant.

B. Senior Leadership Role

Senior leadership provided overall accountability for redundancy data integrity and established a single source of truth approach to align HR data, Finance data and projected grants pipeline data. In terms of sub-levels of accountability, HR was accountable for headcount data, and HR & Finance co-owned the redundancy payments estimate. Senior leadership had weekly calls with the two departments to ensure alignment. Senior leadership also led weekly general staff calls and delegated a few senior leaders to engage with the works councils at designated times, in line with the applicable country labour law consultation standards. Senior leadership also took ownership of the preparation of frequently asked questions (FAQs) and made them available on the organisation's intranet. This was reinforced with end-of-the-week updates jointly issued by the Chief Executive Officer and Chief HR Officer.

C. Equity Versus Equality

The organisation has staff in locations with a convergence and divergence of unemployment benefits. The implication was that in some countries, staff laid off will be entitled to unemployment benefits, while in others they will not be entitled. In order to address this complexity, a provision in the redundancy principles indicated that the redundancy process would be administered in conjunction with local legislation. However, if local legislation offers limited benefits and / entitlements which are more limited than what is contained in its redundancy principles, then the redundancy principles will apply. This created tension, and the organisation had to manage complaints from staff whose countries' redundancy law standards were very low and who argued to be treated based on the comparatively better standards in other countries. The organisation pushed back with an explanation that this would violate the equity criteria since the basis for fairness was compliance with country labour law standards across the board as the minimum equity standard.

D. Data Integrity

There were instances in some countries where, due to local legislation standards, information on pregnant staff was not available to the HR team because the staff had not sent a formal notification of their situation. A few staff who were selected for redundancy based on the organisation's criteria opposed their selection by providing evidence of their pregnancy status, and they were subsequently removed from the list. This highlighted the need for accurate data in human resources information systems (HRIS) to avoid exposure to potential litigation.

E. Mutual Termination Agreements

The organisation had to explore mutual termination agreements in a few cases where adhering to the local labour law process was bureaucratic and time-consuming. Mutual termination agreements (MTAs) also provide a window to manage complex redundancy processes, provided the compensation is not significantly at variance with the labour law standards, and both parties agree and sign a "*without prejudice*" agreement that lays out terms and conditions clauses that respect the rights of both parties. This means organisations conducting redundancy processes should have the flexibility to adapt their approaches depending on the context of the negotiations and the complexity of the law.

F. Technical Capacity

Given the multi-dimensional nature of the redundancy initiative, e.g., legal, psycho-social, internal communication, it is important to consistently train HR, senior leadership and line managers to ensure the verbal notification calls are done with care and sensitivity. One of the good practices was to ensure all the calls were vetted by HR, internal and external legal teams and senior leadership. Psychology support is also required to enable staff to process and deal with the anxiety, anger and insecurity resulting from the loss of a job. The HR team delivered a series of training on the Kubler-

Ross Model as part of the psycho-social technical support to both affected and non-affected staff. Non-affected staff have to be targeted for counselling, given the fear that is generated by seeing their colleagues lose their jobs. Senior leadership had to assure ‘stayers’ that this was a one-off redundancy process.

G. Data Driven Decision Making and Leadership Resilience

Senior leadership invested time and resources to build a clear “business case” for the redundancy using simple and engaging data and insights during calls with all staff. It is also important to use approved indicative numbers clearly and be concrete, e.g., % of staff affected, figures on annual team-cost savings, figures on operational cost cuts already made. A data and insights-driven approach gives credibility to the entire engagement process with staff representatives and staff. This must be reinforced with staff calls aligned with the applicable legal consultation and information standards. Some of the key best practices include timely presentation, diversity and inclusivity of senior leaders who spoke during the calls, presenting with humility and firmness while being respectful to reinforce the dignity of staff. It is also important for senior leaders to understand the psychology of bargaining as the HR team had to support leadership to navigate the counteroffer of affected staff in order to project their level of aspiration and bargaining limit of the staff, their work council representative and legal counsel.

H. Engagement with Work Councils

This case study confirms the need to engage with work councils in a transparent manner. This is done when leadership provides clarity and confirms that decisions were collectively agreed upon, guided by its strategy and mission and a targeting of individuals or personalities. It is important to consistently reinforce the criteria. It is also a good practice to acknowledge difficulty and at the same time underline organisational stability, acknowledging the human toll while stressing the “future theory of change” outcomes. It is also important to **lean on transparency and process**, and point to relevant information shared with staff in line with the redundancy principles and the labour law compliance. This shows the work councils that there is a process, and it’s being followed.

I. Internal Communication

In a global organisation, it is important to avoid country-specific comparisons, and it is key to stick to local legal processes. It is also key that senior leaders don’t make it just about money and always pair financial and operational with strategic imperatives and adaptation narratives. Given the diversity of country labour law standards and individual backgrounds of staff, it is imperative to avoid personalising the issues and avoid comments on individuals, teams, or specific departures. It is important to keep it to principles and process, not performance, stressing that the organisation reviewed activities, not teams or roles.

J. Redundancy Plan

It is very important to have a data-driven estimate of the percentage of the organisation that will be made redundant. In line with respect for diversity and inclusivity standards, it is important to examine if there are specific teams or countries, or regions that will be impacted more in terms of the number of redundancies or the type of redundancy. An engaging visual of how the plan will affect staff across the organisation is key to providing a helicopter view for all staff. It is also key that this plan has a “proviso” that the final number will depend on the national works council processes. Senior leadership and HR must amplify narratives showing careful reflection and calculation of where to focus efforts on existing work which is having an impact, where to refocus resources on new but necessary skills and approaches, and where to end projects or approaches that are not mission-critical in the organisation's operating and strategic context.

K. Convergence and Divergence of Redundancy Standards

The study also highlighted the importance of comparative employment relations knowledge, laws, practices and standards in managing redundancies. Converging practices across countries included general legal frameworks for the definition of redundancy, severance payments as compensation for loss of job, protection of pregnant staff and work council representatives, payment of cash in lieu of untaken vacation, distinction between individual and collective redundancy information and consultation standards. Diverging practices included the scope and coverage of the works council, specific information and consultation standard periods, the threshold for small and large collective redundancy, the specific role of the state, payment of unemployment benefits, redundancy notification periods, and the formula for determining severance payments. Senior leaders and HR professionals in organisations need to have a thorough understanding of the various country labour law standards to ensure redundancy processes are compliant.

5. Conclusion

An organisation's decision to lay off staff is a very sensitive and difficult process as it affects the workplace climate, the livelihood of staff and creates tensions. However, despite these potential risks and challenges, our study confirms that there are key factors and standards to be considered to ensure a fair process and outcome. These factors and standards include defining clear values and principles anchored on the country's labour laws, organisational justice, transparent business case to engage staff, well-defined staff engagement spaces, leadership resilience and effective HR leadership. In addition, it requires a redundancy plan using a project management tool to guide the diagnosis, design implementation and evaluation of the redundancy process. An effective redundancy process requires data and insights integrity, HR operational excellence at all stages of the process and technical capacity of all key stakeholders. An organisation's redundancy process is inherently political and characterised by an interests-based lens

that underpins the engagement between senior leadership and works councils/staff representatives.

Implications For Future Research

This study focused on a redundancy process in a global organisation whose staff were laid off in 14 countries across the four geographic hemispheres in the world. Namely Asia, the Americas, Africa and Europe. While the findings contribute to knowledge and research on redundancy and organisational restructuring, they cannot be generalised across the board; however, it offers data and insights that can be replicated at scale for further analysis to confirm, modify or rebut the conclusions of this work.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

There are no conflicts of interest nor competing interest in the study.

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