CONSTRUCTION
INDUSTRY COUNCIL

Gender Inclusivity in the Construction Industry

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Acronym

Acronym	Full-Term
CIC	Construction Industry Council
B	General Building Works
C	General Civil Works
E	General Electrical Works
M	General Mechanical Works
ME	Mechanical Engineering
BSH-6	Shop Fittings, Timber and Carpentry Works
ESA-4	Security, Safety and Surveillance System Works
C/SE	Civil Engineering/Structural Engineering

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

An exploratory study on women representation in the construction industry was undertaken by the Council which forms part of the implementation of the current Contractor Development Strategy (CDS) which is a pillar that supports an enabling environment in the industry. The main motivation in women representation lies in the fact that the construction industry stands out for having a great relevance in the global economic structure, being responsible for a considerable creation of jobs at different levels of training; whilst the construction sector is labor intensive and is predominantly male hence very susceptible to gender imbalances.

1.2 Objectives of the Report

By becoming a reference in gender inclusion practices, CIC and the construction industry can develop initiatives that can contribute largely to combat the existing imbalance, both in a direct and indirect way thus influence other industrial sectors. This initiative forms part of the unpacking of the current Contractor Development Strategy of implementing an enabling environment though developing a gender inclusivity programme for the industry.

2. Methodology

2.1 Target Group

The target group includes all construction companies that are registered with the CIC, preferably considering all grades under each category.

2.2 Sampling Criteria

The population consists of all CIC-registered construction company. A stratified sample of 89 contractors was conducted according to each category (that is, B1, B2, B3, B4, B5, B6, C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6, E1, E2, E3, E4, M1, M2, M3, M4 selecting both top and bottom 3 performers) and 11 individual artisans. A simple random selection was done based on grade representation in the absence of responses.
Table 1 below shows the summary of companies under different categories and grades that responded to the survey.

Table 1

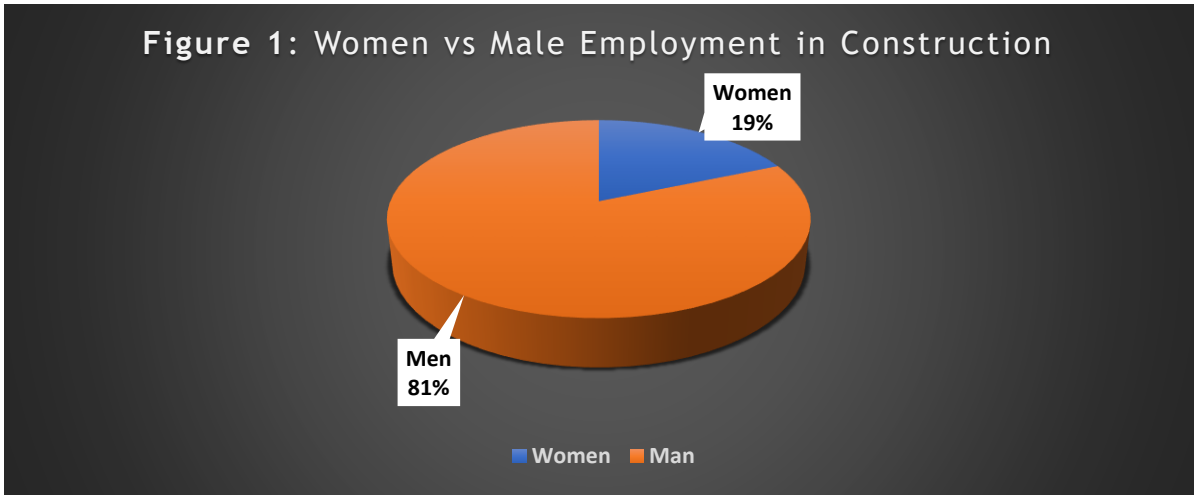
Construction Category	Grade	Sample	Responses
Building works	B1	5	4
	B2	4	1
	B3	5	3
	B4	4	3
	B5	2	1
	B6	7	1
Civil works	C1	5	2

Construction Category	Grade	Sample	Responses
	C2	3	1
	C3	5	1
	C4	3	1
	C5	3	1
	C6	3	1
Electrical Works		6	
	E2		1
	E3		1
	E4		1
Mechanical Works		5	
	M4		2
Specialist works		8	
	BSh-6		1
	ESa-4		1
Consultancy		7	
	C/SE		3
	ME		1
Individual Artisans		11	0
	Totals	**86**	**28**

3. Construction Industry Key Findings on Women Representation

3.1 Women Employment in the Construction Industry

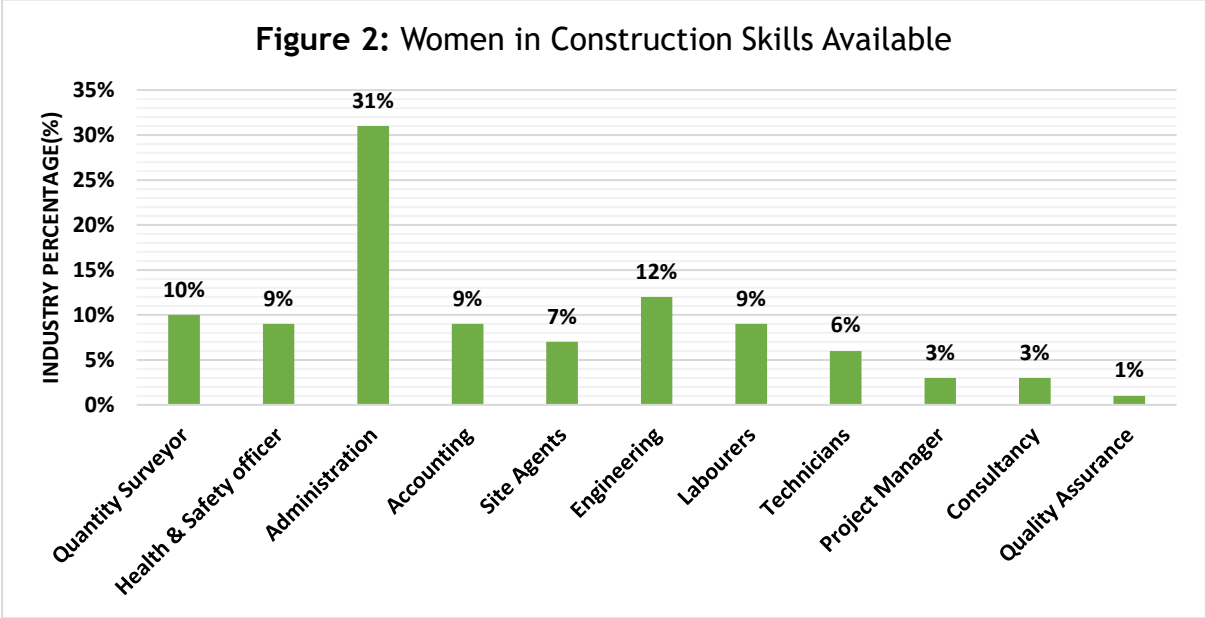
From the sampled construction companies, where about a total of 5 283 employees were recorded, only 19% were female and the rest male as shown in figure 1. From the mechanical works category sampled, it was observed that there was no women representation and that male employment especially those with expertise in mechanical engineering dominated. Some in the building works category consisted of one to two female employees in each company.



3.2 Women in Construction Available Skills

The average skill dominated by women in construction was mainly administrative wworkwith 32% of women employed under different fields such as marketing, human resources, secretariate, clerk, housekeeping etc. About 12% of women were observed to be in engineering where this is the dominant technical related construction field for women. About 10% of women were found to be Quantity Surveyors.Other skills available amongst women in construction are illustrated by

Figure 2 below:



Administration (housekeeping, site clerks, secretariat, human resources, marketing, directorship and MDP's). Technicians (IT)

3.3 Women Employment in Comparison to Men Employment by Category

From table 2, it can be observed that there is no women representation observed in terms of employment for civil and mechanical works especially those categories under C6 and M4, respectively. There is little representation of women employed within the building works category especially those categories under B1 and B3 with less than 10%. Categories under B2, B4, B6, C1, C2, E3, E4 and ESa-4 also had little women representation as the employment range fell between 10%-20%; and B5, C3, C4, C5, BSh-6 and C/SE had representation of women that lied between 20% to 30% of women employment whilst BSh-6, E2, C4, C3 and B5 were at the range of 30%-40% representation. Only the ME category had more women employed hence representation than it did male employment which stood at an average of about 56% employees. The overall average of women employment in all the categories, however, stood at 19%.

Table 2. Comparison of Employees by Gender per Category

Category	Total employees	Men	Women	Percentage Men (%)	Percentage of Women (%)
ME	9	4	5	44%	56%
C4	35	23	12	66%	34%
B5	42	28	14	67%	33%
E2	6	4	2	67%	33%
BSh-6	70	47	23	67%	33%
C3	13	9	4	69%	31%
C5	97	68	29	70%	30%
C/SE	53	37	16	70%	30%
B6	109	77	32	71%	29%
C1	4 388	3 521	867	80%	20%
E3	5	4	1	80%	20%
B2	65	53	12	82%	19%
C2	65	53	12	82%	19%
ESa-4	33	27	6	82%	18%
B4	12	10	2	83%	17%
E4	7	6	1	86%	14%
B3	103	94	9	91%	9%
B1	566	540	26	95%	5%
C6	3	3	0	100%	0%
M4	17	17	0	100%	0%

3.4 Women in Leadership and Shareholding Positions

Having women in leadership and shareholding positions imply that women are better placed in decision-making where women's constraints within the construction industry stand to be addressed. The construction industry requires both physical and mental exertion. Even though working within the industry may be deemed to require physical strength, workers must also be able to think cognitively and exhibit sharp problem-solving skills. This is another area in which women are capable of excelling and is necessary for the construction industry.

Whether employees are actively working on a job site, creating blueprints, or budgeting for a new project, a project requires a strong combination of ideas. With women in decision-making roles, they have much to bring to the table and can visualize a project differently by unveiling new insights or ways of working that would otherwise go unnoticed.

3.4.1 Shareholding Positions of Women in Construction

The Eswatini construction industry is dominated by male ownership where there are few women; in terms of shareholding inferences, on average, about 68% of the construction industry has no women owning some shares and the remaining 32% of the construction companies that do have shares, only 4% have 100% shareholding. This is further broken down in table 3 below.

Table 3. Women in Construction Shareholdings

Total Companies (in Percentage)	Percentage Shareholding of Women	Percentage Shareholding of Men
19 (68%)	0%	100%
2 (7%)	1%	99%
1 (4%)	45%	55%
4 (14%)	50%	50%
1 (4%)	60%	40%
1 (4%)	100%	0%

3.4.2 Leadership Positions of Women in Construction

Reference is made from the estimated 5283 employees sampled in the construction industry; 14 (0.3%) women are board members, 36 (0.7%) are in management, 85 (1.6%) are found to be working in construction-related technical positions and 92 (1.7%) are stationed in other support departments like housekeeping and driving. This is illustrated in table 4.

Table 4. Women in Construction Leadership

Leadership position	Total women employees	Percentage to the total employees (%)
Board	14	0.3%
Management	36	0.7%
Construction related technical	85	1.6%
Other	92	1.7%

Table 5. Women in Leadership Positions by Category

Categories & employees		Total Women Employees			
Category	Total employees	Board	Management	Construction Related-Technical	Other
B1	566	3	5	5	13
B2	65	1	1	0	11
B3	103	1	4	0	2
B4	12	0	1	0	1
B5	42	2	4	5	3
B6	109	1	6	9	5
C1	4 388	4	12	52	58
C2	65	1	1	0	10
C3	13	1	3	0	1
C4	35	2	3	5	2
C5	97	0	2	15	4
C6	3	0	0	0	0
E2	6	2	0	0	0
E3	5	1	0	0	0
E4	7	0	0	0	1
M4	17	0	0	0	0
ME	9	0	1	3	1
BSh-6	70	0	2	9	4
ESa-4	33	0	3	2	1
C/SE	53	1	4	5	5

4. Women in Construction Support Strategies

4.1 **Enabling/Conducive Environment for Women in Construction**

According to gathered information from the few that support women in construction, about 26% of the construction industry does advocate for women's employment by hiring them in simple roles that do not require manpower as per the norm. Approximately 17% of the construction industry makes an effort for the hiring women through creating custom-fit roles such as consultancy and administrative work; however, the industry is observed to be gradually introducing the hiring of women in all trades. About 16% of the industry introducing the hiring of all trades is capacitated by furnishing and providing women with the necessary tools and resources needed to execute their work, especially in painting, carpentry, plumbing, and health and safety. Some industry players have commenced introducing

employment equity policies to balance males and females. The balancing is executed by doing a pay equity analysis and in this way, they try to treat employees equally.

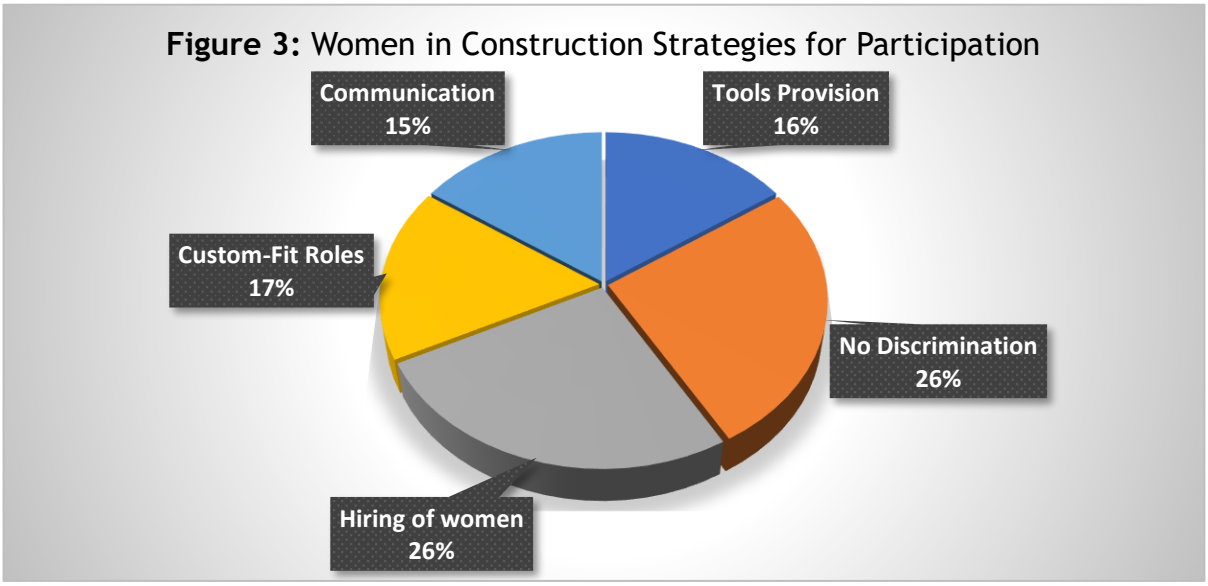
Moreover, 26% of the construction industry supports women through non-discriminatory campaigns, and promotions such as women's day celebrations, enacting company rules, code of conduct, and policies protecting women from sexual harassment and indecent or offensive language. Also, about 15% of the construction industry maintains communication open among all team members. Communication is mostly done by having constant meetings and briefings to flatten the curve of unfair practices and treat women with utmost respect and equally with men.

Furthermore, some construction companies also emphasize the fair opportunity to demonstrate key knowledge of trade on the application for employment hence women are included in posts advertised. There are also opportunities for women to take charge of smaller tasks and demonstrate workmanship and trade application skills during the apprenticeship and probationary periods. Upon the completion of the probationary period and integration into existing teams, women are allowed to have the opportunity to lead projects as a head technicians and take full responsibility for the project outcome.

However, of note is that the construction industry especially those smaller in size as characterized by the number of employees, premises, turnover, grade (that is new entrants like B6), and more are not seen encouraging women in construction either in terms of employment or having initiatives and/or policies in place that capacitate their participation. Their facilities are structured in such a way that they favor only men's employment.

All the strategies that support women's employment were grouped into 5 categories namely; Tools Provision, No Discrimination, hiring of women, Fit Roles Creation, and Communication as illustrated in figure 1 below:

Figure 3: Women in Construction Strategies for Participation

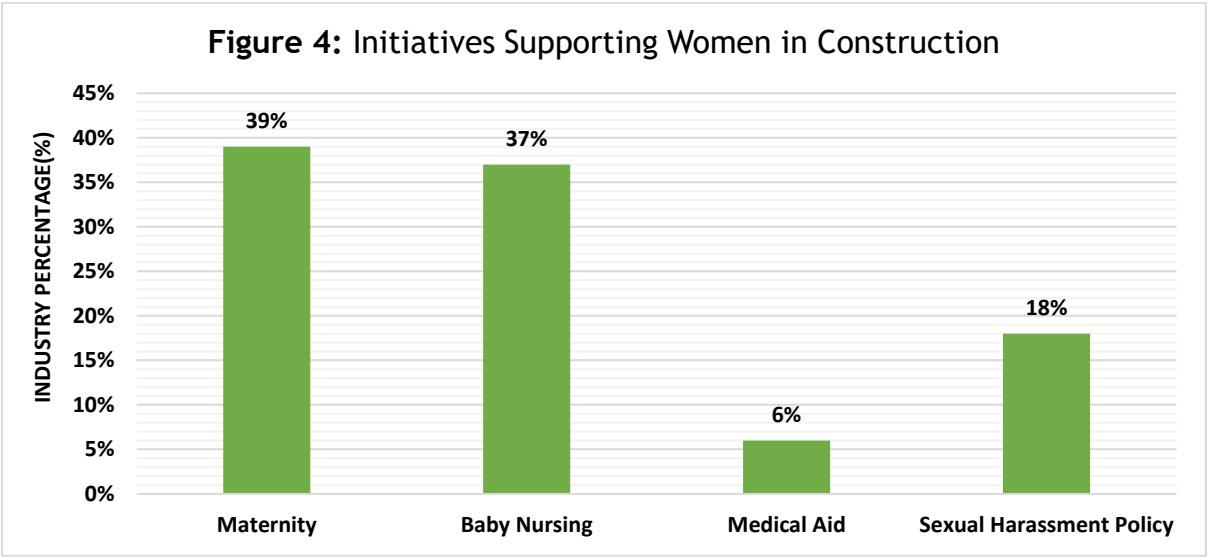


4.2 Support Initiatives for Women in Construction

With a majority of the labor population being dominated by males, the construction industry has little or no policies that provide for women needs especially maternity leave as stipulated in the government gazette.

From figure 4, about 39% of the construction industry provides maternity leave for women and approximately 37% provides for baby nursing; the remaining industry does not benefit from maternity or baby nursing. Only about 6providees medical aid as added care. The summary is in figure 4 below.

Figure 4: Initiatives Supporting Women in Construction

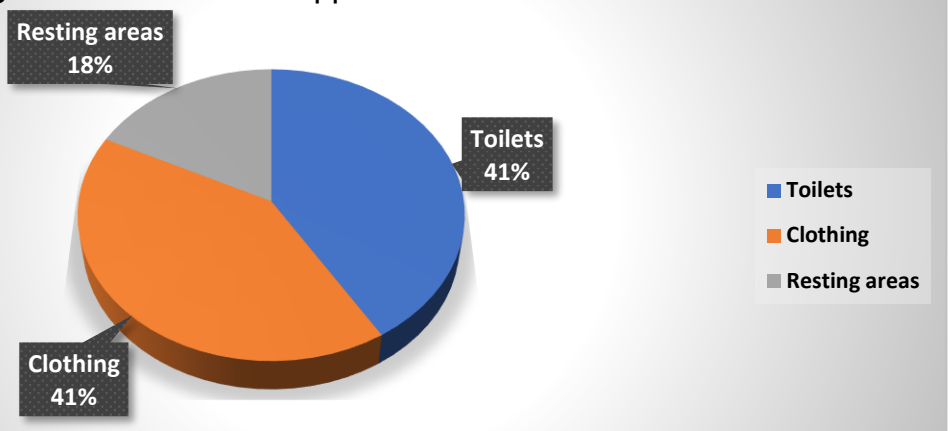


4.3 Physical Facilities Supporting Women in Construction

The construction industry caters to physical facilities; about 41% of industry players provide separate toilets with an adequate supply of toilet papers and bins for

disposing of sanitary towels on all sites; and 41% provide appropriate PPEs for female employees while others provide the facilities but not on sites. About 18% had safe, clean, separate resting rooms/areas both at the offices and on sites and separate accommodation when staying in locations overnight/s far from the base of location. Only big industries seem to provide safe, clean, separate toilets and resting places for all employees at their offices and sites.

Figure 5: Facilities in Support of Women in Construction



5. Challenges and Solutions to the Challenges of Women in Construction

5.1 Challenges

Since the industry is male-dominated, it takes time for women to be promoted to deserving positions which are influential within the organizations. Organizations tend to overlook them in bigger responsibilities because of the unconscious biases that exist due to their maternal responsibilities. Other challenges faced by women in construction include irregular working hours for women which includes extended hours, lifting of heavy machinery/equipment, shared portable rest room, and sexual harassment in other organizations. However, it is not the entire industry that encounters such challenges as they are mitigated through enabling and corrective initiatives.

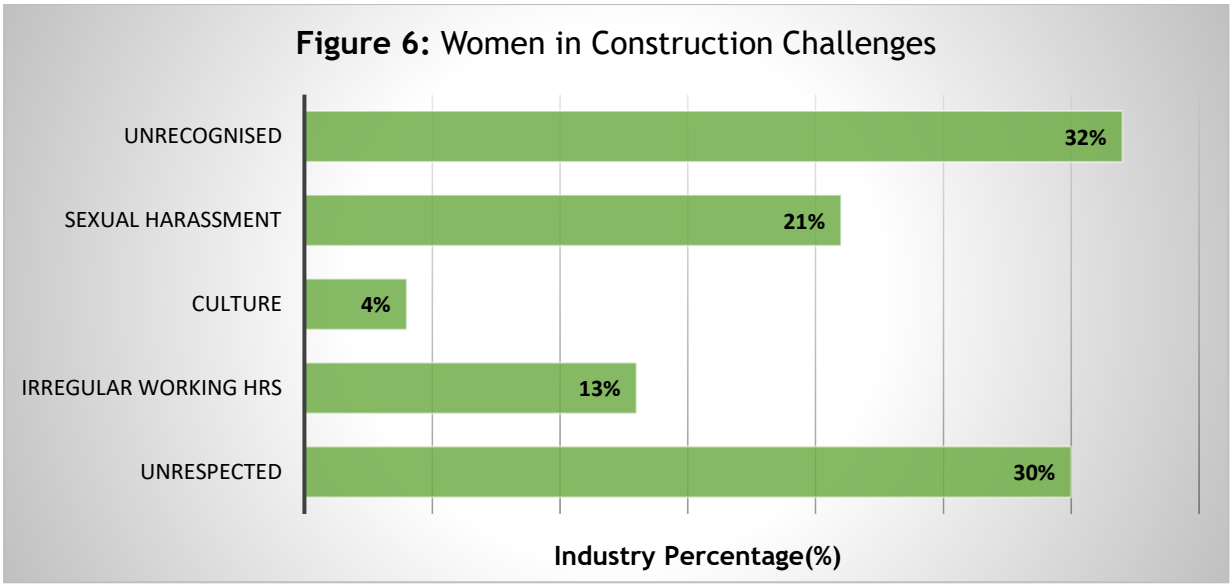


Figure 6: Women in Construction Challenges

5.2 Recommended Solutions to the Challenges

The survey results show that the Council should come up with safety regulations to which all companies should adhere part of which should emphasize company policies where if employees do not comply, face consequences. Findings from the industry indicate that more education and trainings on women's inclusivity and making it compulsory is important, especially on-site managers. Also training the construction industry on how to handle each other as professionals, regardless of gender is needed. The survey results also show that there must be safety regulations for women especially improving work from home rather than experiencing staying in the work environment till late. This will lead to the promotion of women in construction.

From figure 7, it is observed that about 48% of the construction industry prefers gender inclusivity to be compulsory and 29% of them prefer providing safety precautions, especially for construction works deemed as high risk for women. Also, roughly 23% of the construction industry prefers training on gender inclusivity especially to encourage awareness among site managers on the need and benefits of hiring women in the industry.

Figure 7: Recommended Solutions to Challenges of Women in Construction