

Women in Construction



A/Prof Jane English



Gender discrimination, common sense or part of something bigger?

Pink Lego is an abomination. End this gender fascism



Home

Safe place

Trust

A future



Home

Safe place

Trust

A future



Improving discourse between management and labour on site

**Murray
& Roberts**

♀ **knowledge**

♀ **prejudice**

1997-1999

**Post democracy
Unions legalised**

♀ **behaviours**

3 | nationalities, ethnicities and cultures

| | | | |
|----------------|----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Zulu | Cuban | Muslim | Mozambican |
| Xhosa | Portuguese | Jewish | Tswanan |
| Sotho | British | Dutch | Malawian |
| Angolan | White SA, English | Moroccan | Zambian |
| Libyan | White SA, Afrikaans | Egyptian | Zimbabwean |
| Pedi | German | | Irish |
| Ugandan | Coloured | Urdu | Italian |
| Hindu | Swiss | Australian | Indian |



Committing to behavioural change

♀ **Language**

♀ **Recognise culture**

♀ **Verbal communication**

♀ **Non-verbal communication**

♀ **Respect and recognition**



Women are marginalised for many reasons

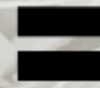
Birth of girls less desirable as they are not considered economically productive



Excluded from gaining employment in most areas under colonialism



Given a poor education under colonialism



Women earn less

NRF Funded Study 2004 – 2007

CIDB Charter: Increase women in construction

176 interviewed: men, women, employers and employees



Constraints on women gaining economic advancement

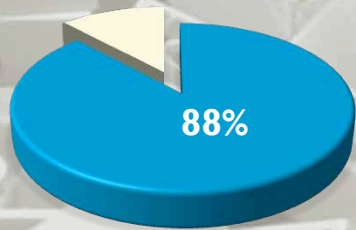


Women

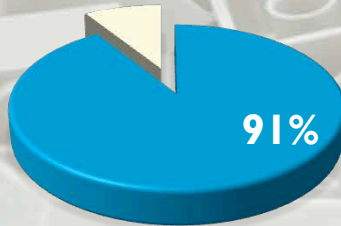


Activities and skills ✓

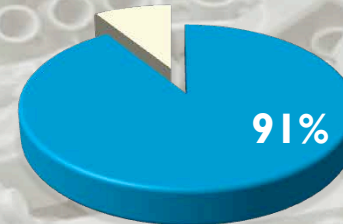
Painting the house



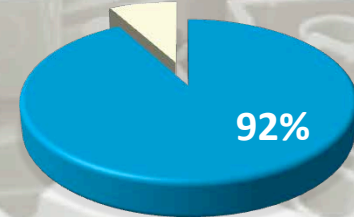
Clearing the site



Stock control



Book keeping



Marshall, 2002

Habitat, 2014



Women



Community



Victoria Mxenge Housing Development Association

Sisters are Building it for Themselves: How the Victoria Mxenge women changed the housing game

REBECCA DAVIS SOUTH AFRICA 14 JAN 2015 11:03 (SOUTH AFRICA)



♀ **Rural, unskilled, poorly-educated, homeless women seeking work.**

♀ **A movement overseeing the self-build of over 5,000 houses.**

♀ **Small amounts (stokvel experience) saved into joint housing savings**

♀ **Detailed records / reports = accountability and transparency.**

♀ **Accessed housing subsidies.**

♀ **Professional architect on designing through to costing a house.**

“It’s like baking a cake. We use cups and spoons, but with this bigger cake we use hands, feet, bags of cement, wheelbarrows and bricks.”

Veliswa Mbeki, Rose Maso and Nokhangelani Roji in Ismail, 2005: 32



Women

♀

Western influence ~~X~~



Women



♀

Macho image

x

Women



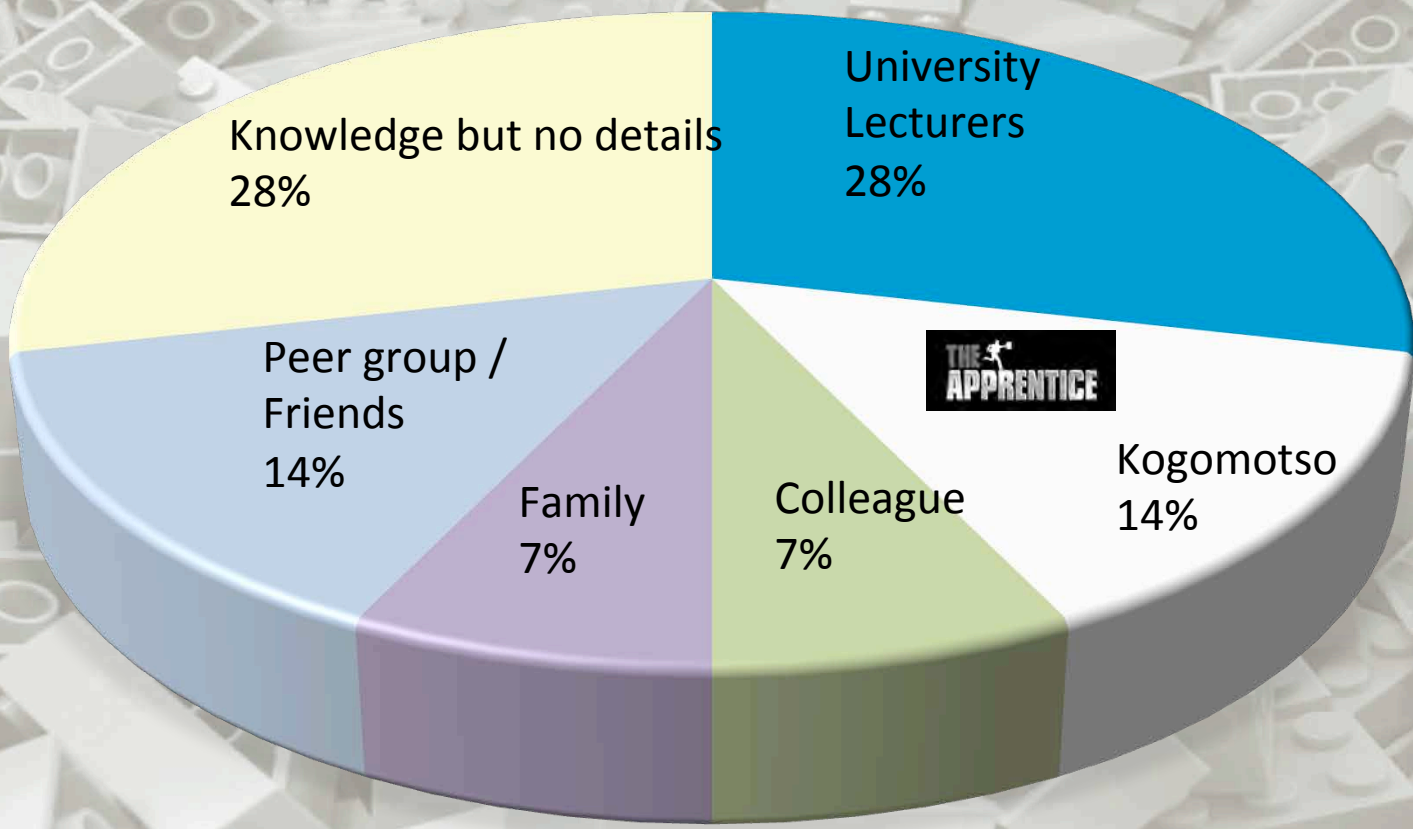
♀

Technology

✘



Where are the female role models?



**Karen Le Jeune, UCT
2010 Study of high school girls**

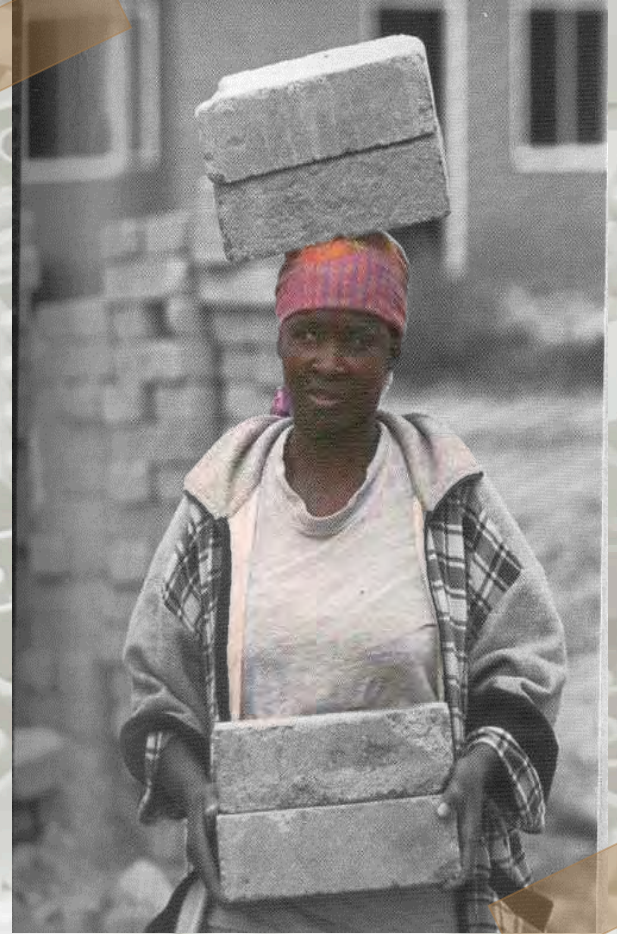


Women



African roots as builders ✓

Nosipho Roji



Access and opportunity

Siyavuvya Papu

“Young women in the Eastern Cape rural areas or informal settlements have no access to information. I struggle to explain to them what my job is.”

But this is changing as the Department of Public Works is setting up training facilities.



The construction world is changing

“...dawn of a new era, the opportunities for young black females is endless...”

“Women better at detail – very attentive to detail.”

“I am very particular and precise as to how work should be completed and therefore any person who hires me can be sure that they will get good value for their money.”

“Any softness has been more empathy than emotion and has added to the management and leadership style with employees respecting and appreciating that leadership demonstrates humanity if a situation calls for this.”

***Cristina Teixeira:** CFO – Group Five;
Businesswoman of the Year 2014*

“Women are more reliable than men: if they have children they will take their jobs very seriously.”

“Houses will be built by women, for women,
empowering women.”

Minister Sisulu, August 2014



Conclusion



“I have also been very fortunate to work with a team that has been supportive and respectful to my role however we do understand that there will always be cases of gender bias, I encounter it daily, if not within the organisation then with those I come in contact with, but there is no need to allow this to define your performance – I have found that with hard work demonstrating tangible results I have been recognised for my performance and my gender has not affected this.

***Cristina Teixeira: CFO – Group Five;
Businesswoman of the Year 2014***

Summary of barriers and cures

Adapted from Le Jeune, 2009

| | Classification & listing of barriers | Characteristic | Affect | Cure |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|---|--|
| Marketing | The poor industry image & visualisation | <i>Macho, low tech</i> | <i>Not attractive career option</i> | Update imagery |
| | Lack of knowledge of career opportunities Industry liaison with communities | <i>“Bricklaying”?</i> | <i>Not chosen as career option</i> | Engage in partnered modern awareness campaign |
| | Lack of female role models | <i>No networks</i> | <i>Fragmentation and isolation</i> | Promote role models |
| Socio-cultural issues | Societal roles, and cultural beliefs | <i>Getting better at recognising women’s rights</i> | <i>Non-traditional careers not promoted among women</i> | Early socialisation |
| | Personal female attributes | <i>Lack of confidence in abilities</i> | <i>Domination by men</i> | Bolstering of self-esteem, confidence boosting education |
| | Ethnicity and traditional roles | <i>Problematic</i> | <i>Discrimination</i> | Implement equitable employment policies |
| Industry, culture and environment | Remuneration discrimination | <i>Women earn less than men</i> | <i>Women leave the industry</i> | Implementation of policies for equal pay |
| | Hostile work environment Site conditions Physical strength | <i>Work life conflict</i> | <i>Women leave the industry</i> | Implementation of employment equity policies promoting alternative work practices |
| | Male dominated culture | <i>Work life conflict</i> | <i>Women leave the industry</i> | Culture shift |
| | | | | |