

## NCI encourages women in construction

The construction industry is among the most male-dominated industries worldwide. However, in South Africa, women seem to be well represented in the industry and can get even better.



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According to the Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB), 48% of South Africa's construction companies are owned by women. This shows that great amount of efforts is done in this sector to ensure that women are equally benefiting from the opportunities this sector has.

“One of the many myths told to women is that they must be rough and tough like a man to make it in the construction industry. Over the years, women in the industry have proven that even with our gentle and nurturing attributes, we can still achieve what many deem as the unthinkable and not womanlike,” says Patt Chalwa, chief executive officer at National Construction Incubator (NCI).

Giving her thoughts on the representation of women in the construction industry, Yandi Jiya-Tiba, executive manager, support services at National Construction Incubator said that the percentage is a good representation. However, it would be more exciting if the 48% reflected here would be of women owning their own business and the 52% which is currently held by men be the total percentage of women in our industry.

The National Construction Incubator (NCI) is one of the country's leading women owned construction entities. With its multiple investors from both the public and private sectors alike, the NCI programmes aim to support and pave the way for SMEs in the construction industry, with a strong focus on female contractors and youth.

“As a nation, we need to create developmental funding solutions that will cater for this segment of female entrepreneurs who have endeavoured into a challenging and previously male-dominated sector such as construction sector. Perhaps a wholly owned women development organisation in construction could be the starting point for greatness,” added Babalwa Mapisa NCI Board member and Chairperson of the Finance Committee

Women are winning these gender barriers in sectors that were previously known to be dominated by men. Their success is proof enough that the quality of a person's work has nothing to do with their gender, thus paving way for the much-needed equality and recognition in the workplace.

In closing, Chalwa said her former mentor once told her that when you want to talk about work, surround yourself with men but when you want to get work done, get women to do the job. She further said within the NCI, the latter phenomenon has proven to be true, and that more women are needed in construction in the country to turn the country's economy around.

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