

CONCRETE

28

ISSUE
SEPT 2022



KwaZulu-Natal Premier Nomusa Dube-Ncube

EDITOR'S NOTE

“

... the 'gentler gender' is every bit as tough, resilient and determined as its male counterpart.

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There is perhaps no more special an edition of Concrete than the one we issue just after Women's Month, for it shines the spotlight on the very special women who are making a noise of ever-increasing intensity in our industry. That noise is like a symphony to our ears, as it demonstrates the growing prominence of women in our demanding and competitive sector and proves that the 'gentler gender' is every bit as tough, resilient and determined as its male counterpart.

This year marked the third cidb Empowerment and Recognition of Women in Construction (ERWIC) awards, an event that has grown by leaps and bounds since 2020, when it broke new ground in the awards arena. The success of the initiative can perhaps best be seen in the formation of a community of previous winners who have joined forces to share experiences and knowledge, and lend a helping hand to women starting out on their journey to build a better South Africa — one contract at a time.

As a prelude to the evening ceremony on 24 August, a seminar was held spearheaded by the community's pioneers, Thobekile Ndlovu, Dr Julia Phetla and Rachel Molamu, all accomplished, award-winning contractors who are helping to change the face of construction.

The session addressed the current state of gender equality in the sector, discussed access to work and lucrative projects as a springboard for progress and considered government's pronouncements on increasing work opportunities for women, such as through

the 40% allocation of public sector infrastructure budgets.

From the discussions came constructive suggestions for supporting women in construction. These included promoting workplace diversity, developing and enforcing zero-tolerance harassment policies, providing female role models and becoming involved in construction activities that encourage young women to consider the sector as a career.

The seminar was graced by Kea Seshoka, professor of African languages at North-West University, whose motivational words were a great encouragement to participants in the room.

Keynote speaker was newly appointed KwaZulu-Natal premier, Nomusa Dube Ncube, certainly a trailblazer and an inspiration to women in all fields in South Africa. She is acknowledged for her commitment to driving the empowerment of

small and emerging businesses and she urged all present to continue to strive for a more female-friendly built environment.

We at the cidb look forward to participating in many more such seminars, as we seek to change the culture of the sector and welcome more women into the fold. As our Chairperson, Khulile Nzo, said in closing the session: 'Giving opportunities to women in construction is not an act of charity or social investment. It is an economic imperative. We need all South Africa's best capacity and active minds to be a winning nation.'

The country's shortage of skilled professionals, tradespeople and artisans looks set to worsen in the years to come, and women have to be a major part of the solution. We make up about 51% of the population and there's no reason why we shouldn't make up the same percentage of the construction sector.

Celebrate with us the high-achieving, and up-and-coming, ERWIC award winners honoured on the pages of this issue. Long may they prosper.



KwaZulu-Natal Premier Nomusa Dube-Ncube with cidb Board members and past ERWIC award winners.



The construction industry continues to operate in difficult trading conditions, with constrained investment, sluggish growth and obstacles such as building site disruption.

On Wednesday 24 August, however, these woes were pushed to the back of minds, doubts were cast aside and celebration was the name of the game, as the leading female lights in the hard-hat brigade gathered in Sandton to enjoy the achievements of the year gone by at a gala event that fêted the best of the best. The glittering occasion was the third running of the cidb Empowerment and Recognition of Women in Construction awards, now a much-anticipated happening on the sector's year planner.





Deputy Minister Noxolo Kiviet

WOMEN AT THE CENTRE

“The ERWIC awards recognise the hurdles women have to jump to enter sectors that are seen as belonging to men.”

In her address to the ERWIC community seminar, KwaZulu-Natal Premier Nomusa Dube-Ncube, reinforced the importance of women such as those honoured during the awards evening. She outlined plans to reshape the province's economy and unlock opportunities for millions of emerging entrepreneurs, particularly women. 'We want them to be at the centre of the entire built environment value chain,' she stressed.

'The infrastructure budget over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework period amounts to R18.6 billion, R19 billion and R18.7 billion across all 14 government departments. When we set this budget, our focus was on reconfiguring the structure of the economy of the province post-Covid-19.'

She added that in rebuilding the infrastructure damaged by the devastating floods the focus is on entrepreneurs as potential creators of wealth and employers. 'This is a key aspect of the infrastructure revolution.

'We are finalising the establishment of the Strategic Infrastructure Development Agency, which will be the province's infrastructure nerve centre, coordinating projects. The KwaZulu-Natal Treasury's infrastructure crack team of technical specialists, including project managers, engineers and architects, is being strengthened to speed up high-quality construction of public infrastructure and eliminate under expenditure.'

The Premier reiterated that gender empowerment is not a part-time activity, but is intended to build a movement for transformation.

'The ERWIC awards recognise the hurdles women have to jump to enter sectors that are seen as belonging to men,' she concluded.

CREATING ROLE MODELS

cidb Chief Executive Officer, Bongani Dladla, a steadfast advocate of women in construction, set the tone, telling guests that women are making a notable mark in the construction industry thanks to concerted efforts to attract them into the sector. 'They are increasingly assuming positions traditionally held by men and overcoming outdated stereotypes created mostly by men afraid of real competition that women will bring,' he stated.

However, he cautioned, the built environment still has much to do before it can be considered transformed.

'One of the primary aims is to create role models for those in the lower cidb grades to spur them to aspire to greater heights, while motivating and recognising the performance of those in the more advanced categories.'

“Over three years, the ERWIC awards have been a driving force for change and we do this not just for the ceremony and the trophies, but to highlight to the industry that there are many competent women among us and they are doing the work required.”

Bongani Dladla





RESILIENCE AND RECALIBRATION

“There is nothing as fulfilling as recognition; nothing as encouraging. So we are here to encourage, congratulate and promote women. We are here to ensure that women are recognised and acknowledged and given the necessary support to grow, develop and to better, not only themselves, but their businesses, their employees, their communities.”

The theme of this Women's Month — ‘women's socioeconomic rights and empowerment, building back better for women's resilience’ — was an appropriate backdrop for the ERWIC awards, keynote speaker, Deputy Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure Noxolo Kiviet, pointed out. ‘I want to emphasise resilience,’ she stated. ‘The struggles of women have multiplied over the years, but we are continuously chipping away at all the stumbling blocks to our progress. It's fitting to celebrate women today.’

‘Ceremonies such as this give us a chance to listen to views and ideas on how to recalibrate the industry and put it at the centre of resolving the country's biggest challenges, namely unemployment, poverty and stalled development.’

The awards, she continued, must grow, honouring the industry's trailblazing women, showcasing the strength of women and what they can achieve with the necessary support, and serving as a clarion call for transformation. ‘All role-players must commit to the cause for women empowerment by providing tangible action, leadership and opportunities for women contractors to grow and thrive in our industry,’ the Deputy Minister stressed.

‘Women constitute more than half the population of the country. It's only right that they are allowed the space to claim their equitable share of economic activity. Our development can be accelerated only by all our available productive capacity. The awards

show us that, given opportunity, women excel in every sector and area of the economy.

‘We must remember the late Dr Thandi Ndlovu, who became uncomfortable treating patients in a shack and decided to build a facility in which she and other doctors could work. In learning the ins and outs of the industry, she then decided to build a construction empire. It was not only about building a business, but about changing lives and providing dignity for people.’

The Deputy Minister urged that the practice of challenging all policies and practices that disempower women continue. ‘At the heart of these are the stereotypical thinking that performance excellence in construction has a gender. It has no gender, for goodness sake.’

Citing the skewed statistics on the cidb Register of Contractors, she pointed out that most women contractors are in the lower grades and that women ownership across all grades has declined. ‘In January 2022, women ownership at Grade 9 stood at 17% and we were beginning to smile, but it has now declined to 10%.

‘This must change.

‘It will change.

‘In the words of Lewis Pugh: “If the desire is deep enough, you'll get it done”.’





EXCEPTIONAL ACHIEVERS EVERY ONE

AWARDS:

PROJECT DELIVERY EXCELLENCE

Excellence in implementation, meeting clients' requirements with sustainable and innovative solutions, led by an effective team.



Grade 1

**Masello Angelinah
Nkosi with cidb Board
member Karabo Siyila**

Boitsholo Trading and Projects cc for the Coega Feltex Trim factory Pretoria project.



Grade 5 - 6

**Matilda Nompumelelo Petse
with cidb Board member
Boitumelo Mokgatle**

Mampumi Trading for refurbishment of 13 classrooms at Buhlebuyeta Primary School.

'Thank you cidb for recognising us. This is for Mampumi Trading, its staff, South African women in construction and all women in the lower cidb grades. We have to take them from the bottom up to the higher grades.'



Grade 2 - 4

**Flavia Tau with Karabo
Siyila**

Tumagole Trading Enterprise, for renovations to the City of Johannesburg recreation centre.

'I really appreciate this event and award. My background is law, but when I constructed my first house, I knew this was my love and passion. Women, let's go out and do it. It's doable.'



Grade 7 - 9

**Tebogo Moloi with cidb
Board member Yvonne
Mbane**

Oakantswe Construction and Projects for the Nellmapius ext 22 project.

'Receiving an award is a great achievement for me and my team. My people make sure that we implement our projects on time, within budgets and to client requirements. They are always there for me – day or night. Let's continue supporting each other. Conquer, grow and lead.'

AWARDS:

RURAL PROJECT OF THE YEAR

Motivated individual responsible for a successful rural project.



Kgothatso Matsogo with Yvonne Mbane

Kgothatso Electrical for the electrification of 50 households in Boikhutsong.

“I wasn’t expecting this. It’s my birthday as well, so best birthday gift ever. I dedicate it to my people. Without them, I would not be here.”

INNOVATIVE ENTITY OF YEAR

Use of new technology and showing innovation in approach to projects, as technology advances can lead to significant transformation in ways in which infrastructure is planned, delivered and maintained.



Rose Tsetsane with cidb Board member Celeste le Roux

Bashoeshoe Investments and Projects

“I’ve been very encouraged by the words I’ve heard today. The journey I am travelling is very lonely. I don’t know why women are so scared of becoming involved in innovative building technology. I’ve been working on it for 10 years and will not give up until I see such projects being implemented. And please, ladies, I am lonely – join me.”

WOMAN-OWNED ENTITY OF YEAR

Woman owning 51% or more of a construction entity who has managed and grown a successful business and contributed to the growth of the industry through dedication, commitment, conviction, vision and leadership.



Malebogo Lobelo

Lobelo Building Contractors

“We feel empowered today. We women are so resilient and we are moving forward. We’re going to show that we can change the game and the narrative. This goes to my son, who has been supportive all the way, but also to my little daughter and the Lobelo family.”

AWARDS:
BUSINESS RESILIENCE OF THE YEAR

Resilience, agility and adaptability during the lingering effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. The entity will have survived, even thrived, kept staff employed and paid, fulfilled obligations and completed projects.



Mafani Nelly Dasheka with cidb’s Dr Ntebo Ngozwana
Quantum Leap Investments

“This is dedicated fully to my team, which entered me for the awards behind my back. We survived and we are celebrating our 20th year this year.”

YOUTH-OWNED ENTERPRISE OF THE YEAR

Business owner 35 or younger running a sustainable entity with sound track record over two years and contributing to the transformation of women.



Yibanathi Mtirara with cidb Board member Bongekile Zulu
Magz Projects

“Thanks cidb for this opportunity. This is for the hard work of all my colleagues.”

AWARDS:

In a recent edition of Concrete, we challenged ERWIC entrants to match the tremendous achievements in 2021 of Lebogang Zulu of Tshitshirisang Construction and Projects, who won in four categories. Itumeleng Mohoang of Thabomeleng Construction Group did just that. She described her first award of the night as ‘a shock’, but shock soon turned to euphoria as she took trophy after trophy. The cidb congratulates Itumeleng and all other ERWIC winners for their outstanding contributions to construction.

MENTORING ENTITY OF THE YEAR

Contribution to the development and support of women in the industry; providing skills-based training, mentoring support and on-the-job training.

TRANSFORMATION ENTITY OF THE YEAR

Encouragement and nurturing of women employees, and supporting the gender agenda through implementation of transformation policy to enhance sustainability of women in the industry.

WOMAN MENTOR OF THE YEAR

Woman who supports other women, who has contributed to nurturing talent to help other grows and mature in their fields.

EXCEPTIONAL WOMAN IN CONSTRUCTION

Professional, ethical and committed. Shows determination and promotes and highlights the contribution of women in the industry.



Itumeleng Mohoang with cidb Board member Moloko Rabosiwana

Thabomeleng Construction Group

“This shows what can be done through skills development in construction. Skills are my subject matter speciality and my core business. Having been upskilled by CETA, I’ve basically come full circle.”





CHAIRMAN'S AWARD

“What an honour and a privilege to be here. It has not always been easy, but we will continue to strive for transformation.”

Outstanding woman who has contributed to the development and transformation of women through her dedication, conviction, commitment and vision and leadership.

‘This was a difficult decision,’ Chairperson Khulile Nzo told the audience. ‘All the candidates were worthy of the award. It took a while and a fair amount of argument, debate and shouting, but we were finally able to agree.’

Portia Tau Sekati

Property Sector Charter Council



Perserverance Mashale of KNM Projects with cidb Chief Corporate Service Officer Mathlodi Ngwenya

