

CBE – Women development in the Built Environment

As part of highlighting gender equity and the skills shortage within the built environment professions, the Council for the Built Environment (CBE) continues to strengthen one of its mandates that facilitates participation of built environment professions in integrated development in context of national goals. Listed below are a few of the more recent projects in which the CBE has participated or partnered.

Women for Housing (WFH), is one of the CBE projects initiating partnership with other women organisations. The aim of the project is to develop women in the built environment. The WFH has a leadership development programme which will cater for students who have chosen career in the built environment.

The Research Manager at the CBE, Mrs. Nana Mhlongo said an Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to be signed with WFH and a pilot programme is currently undertaken with the Tshwane University of Technology students to develop a model for a student programme.

The 2008 Renowned Women Leadership and Empowerment Award winner and Executive Director of Women for Housing, Mrs. Elisabeth O' Leary, said the programme seeks to provide students and young professionals with career advice, leadership skills, practical experience and access to the construction network.

Elisabeth won the Leadership and Empowerment award during the CBE's inaugural 2008 Built Environment Symposium which was held in Midrand. The award recognizes leadership and empowerment that demonstrates innovation and consistency in contribution towards enabling women's participation in the Built Environment sector.

The CBE has successfully managed to partner in some women development activities with the South African Women in Construction (SAWIC) under the leadership of Anne-Marie Buys. In line with this project, CBE participated in the 2008 "Take a Girl-Child to Work" campaign on the 29th of May 2008, an initiative by Cell-C, SAWIC and DBSA. Girl learners in Grade 10-12 were given the opportunity to gain firsthand knowledge about available career options in the Built Environment.

"Educate, Empower and Celebrate female engineering students" was the theme for this year's South African Women in Engineering (SAWOMENG) annual conference. The CBE has partnered with SAWOMENG, a student-run organization based at the University of Cape Town.

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