

GUIDELINES FOR INTEGRATING AND ENSURING SAFETY OF WOMEN FUNDIS IN CONSTRUCTION

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INTRODUCTION Buildher provides low-income women with sustainable jobs and enterprises in construction finishing trades, enabling skilled women fundis to achieve economic mobility and build successful careers in the construction sector. We advocate to stop harassment and gender bias in construction and develop guidelines to ensure women fundis have equitable access to jobs, fair pay, professional growth, and business opportunities.	
BACKGROUND Women fundis in the construction industry face numerous challenges, including harassment, unequal pay, and limited access to opportunities. Addressing these issues is essential for promoting gender equality and enhancing the overall efficiency and quality of construction projects.	
LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK These guidelines align with national labor laws and gender equality policies, including the Employment Act, 2007 and the Constitution of Kenya, 2010, which prohibit discrimination and ensure fair treatment in employment.	
TARGET AUDIENCE Contractors, Sub-contractors, Project and Construction Managers in Kenya	

OBJECTIVES:

1. Guide contractors on fair and equal hiring of women fundis.
2. Establish parameters for testing qualifications and ensuring equal pay for women fundis.
3. Provide realistic daily actions to ensure the safety of women fundis and maintain a harassment, abuse and bias-free worksite.
4. Integrate strategies and practices to support the inclusion and career advancement of women in construction.

1. FAIR AND EQUAL HIRING AND TESTING PRACTICES

ACTION STEPS:

- **Instructions to Security Guards:** Ensure security guards at construction sites allow equal opportunity for men and women seeking work opportunities.
- **Equal Access to Testing:** Supervisors and construction managers must commit to testing both men and women equally by providing all candidates with small tasks to demonstrate their skills, such as tiling, painting, carpentry, plumbing, etc.
- **Evaluation Criteria:** Use the same criteria for evaluating all candidates: skill level, speed, quality, and detail of workmanship.

- **Monitor and Report:** Establish a system where security guards and supervisors record the number of men and women tested each day, and the number hired vs. rejected, ensuring transparency and accountability.

MEASURABLE OUTCOMES:

- Daily logs from security guards and supervisors showing the number of men and women given testing opportunities, and the number hired vs. rejected.
 - Reports on evaluation outcomes to ensure fair assessment.
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2. EQUAL PAY

ACTION STEPS:

- **Specified Pay Scales:** Implement clear pay scales based on trade and skill level/experience, applicable to all workers regardless of gender.
- **Transparent Pay Policies:** Ensure pay levels are clear and transparent to all construction managers and supervisors, irrespective of gender.
- **Regular Pay Audits:** Circulate regular pay audits with the construction management team to confirm compliance with pay scales and rectify any discrepancies.

MEASURABLE OUTCOMES:

- Brief and clear document of pay scales and policies.
 - Construction or Projects Manager to review reports showing compliance with equal pay standards.
 - Circulation of a brief record of pay audits to the management team.
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3. FAIR FIRING PRACTICES

ACTION STEPS:

- **Clear Guidelines:** Establish clear guidelines for performance and behavior expectations that apply equally to all workers.
- **Documented Warnings:** Ensure that all warnings and performance issues are documented and communicated clearly to the worker involved.
- **Equal Treatment:** Apply the same criteria for termination decisions for both men and women, ensuring that decisions are based on performance and behavior, not gender.

- **Review Process:** Implement a review process where termination decisions are reviewed by a neutral party to ensure fairness and consistency. This review process should verify that intimidation, bullying, and silencing are not influencing the decision, particularly in cases involving misconduct, theft, or harassment.
- **Communication:** Clearly communicate the reasons for termination to the worker in a respectful and professional manner, providing any necessary support or resources for their transition.

MEASURABLE OUTCOMES:

- Records of documented warnings and performance issues.
- Logs of termination decisions showing equal application of criteria.
- Reviews of termination decisions to ensure fairness.

4. ADDRESSING BIAS AND DISCRIMINATION THROUGH SCENARIOS AND RESPONSES

Ensuring contractors, sub-contractors, project, and construction managers maintain fair, transparent, and equal opportunities for women fundis, fostering an inclusive and productive work environment.

SCENARIO TABLE:

SCENARIO	BIASED/DISCRIMINATORY RESPONSE	WHY THIS IS A PROBLEM FOR EMPLOYERS	EQUAL, FAIR, AND TRANSPARENT RESPONSE
Skilled and Unskilled Women Fundis approach the site gate seeking work.	Security guard turns Skilled and Unskilled Women Fundis away, stating they don't hire women and they prefer men for the job.	Missed opportunity to hire skilled workers, impacting project completion. Limits pool of skilled workforce, resulting in potential delays and lower work quality.	Security guard allows Skilled and Unskilled Women Fundis to speak to the supervisor about availability of jobs and the site testing process.
Supervisor gives preferential treatment to men by asking fewer or different questions and requiring fewer documents.	Supervisor dismisses Skilled and Unskilled Women Fundis' work without proper evaluation.	Loss of skilled workers, unfair practices, lower pool of workers and level of efficiency on site.	Supervisor gives women and men equal opportunities to test. This includes asking the same questions and requiring the same documents (e.g., NITA certification) from all candidates.

Skilled and Unskilled Women Fundis ask about the pay for their role.	Supervisor offers Skilled and Unskilled Women Fundis a lower rate than male counterparts.	Missed opportunity to get the highest skilled workforce and most capable and determined workers, high turnover and reduced productivity.	Supervisor provides the specified pay scale for the role, showing no gender bias.
Skilled and Unskilled Women Fundis report harassment on site.	Manager ignores the complaint, saying it's not serious.	Encourages a site environment filled with harassment and abuse, increasing cases of violence, hostility, misconduct, and theft.	Manager takes the complaint seriously, follows reporting procedures, and investigates promptly, increasing site efficiency and productivity.
Women lack properly sized safety gear and PPE.	Supervisors and security justify by saying they prefer men for the job.	Increased risk of accidents, impacting overall site safety and productivity. Limits talent pool, resulting in potential delays and lower work quality.	Supervisors issue women fundis properly sized safety gear and PPE, ensuring proper fit and replacing too big or improperly sized gear. Safety checks are conducted for all workers equally, ensuring everyone's safety.

DISCLAIMER

Buildher reserves the right to revise, update, or modify these guidelines as necessary to reflect changes in industry standards, legal requirements, or organizational policies. All stakeholders will be notified of any significant changes to ensure continued compliance and alignment with best practices. These guidelines are intended to provide general guidance and are not exhaustive; they should be used in conjunction with other relevant policies and procedures.