



**building
radar**

Woman in construction: time to
think differently!

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Women in construction: time to think differently!

Times are changing and so is the workforce. By now approximately half of the world's workforce are women. In Germany 51% of the population are women and 44% of the workforce are women, however only 17.1% of women in the workforce hold positions within the management board across all industries. Yet in certain industries, like the construction industry, females are chronically underrepresented. The construction sector plays a significant part in the world's economy. In Europe the construction industry employs around 14.1 million people, who account directly for 9.5% of employment. Yet most (88%) of the people employed within this sector are male, hence European governments are trying to fight these statistics.

The German Government recently agreed to create a female representation quota for management boards. As of 2016 all 108 publicly listed companies will have to enforce a 30% female quota within their management boards. If companies are not able to find a suitable candidate for one of the positions this seat will remain vacant until a suitable woman was found. In Germany this would also affect well-known companies like Heidelberg Cement AG or Hochtief AG. In light of these changes Building Radar investigated the matter further.

What are the proportions of women within the construction industry?

In Germany the amount of women working within the construction industry in 2012 was about 13%. Of these 13% about 9.4% of women work within the main construction trades, whilst Architects and Engineering offices had a representation of around 34.9%. For the years 2013 and 2014 we could observe a marginal improvement leading to an overall female employment rate of 14%, of which 9.9% work within the main construction trades and 35.6% work for Architectural and Engineering offices. In 2014 only every fifth position within the control committees were occupied by women (21.1%). There are only two industries in Germany where the percentage of women representation in control committees are worse, these industries are: The Financial- and Insurance industry with every seventh (15.3%) and the Energy sector (13.1%) with every eight position being

occupied by women. For 2015 Building Radar estimates that the female employment rate will increase to around 14.6%, of which 10.4% will be employed within the main construction trades and 36% will work for Architectural and Engineering offices. Women make up around 1% of the CEOs and around 3% are represented within the management boards.

Women in construction: Snapshot Top Benchmarks

Top benchmarks for the representation of women within the construction industry can be found in Scandinavia. Norway introduced a 40% female representation quota back in 2003. Though this percentage has not been fully enforced, the national average for women working in the construction industry is 35%. Of these 35% around 4% are CEOs and 15% board members. These percentages paint us a brighter picture than it is. What these quotas in reality created was a phenomenon known in Europe as “women with golden skirts.” This means that a single woman will hold multiple senior positions in a variety of companies in order to fulfill the given quotas.

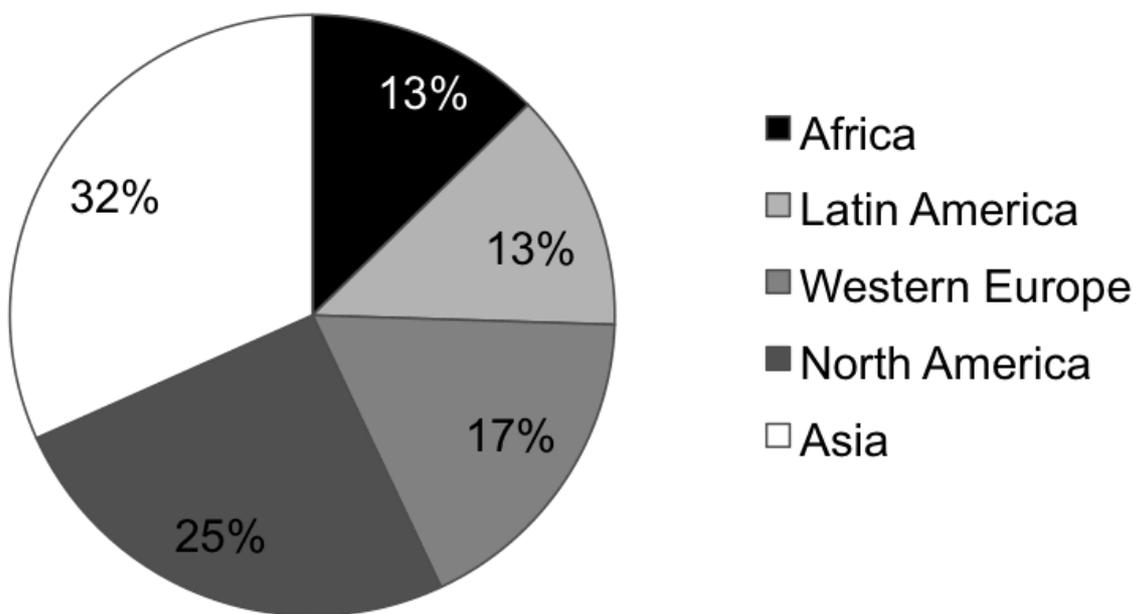
Denmark and Sweden also have relatively high female representations with 25 and 18 percent respectively. For Denmark we can observe that around 2% of the women are CEOs whilst around 10% of the women are board members. In Sweden we can observe that around 5% of females are within the management boards and 2% of the women work as CEOs. These figures represent the benchmarks for female representation within the construction industry.

Women in construction: Snapshot low Benchmarks

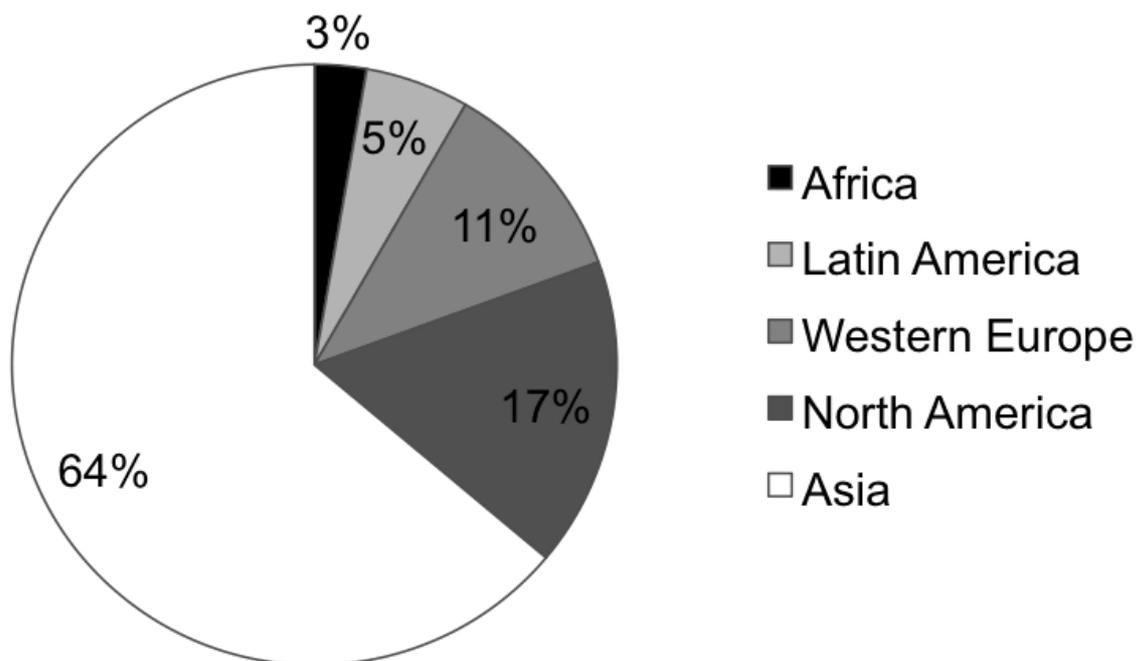
On the other end of the spectrum we can see women employment rates within the construction industry to be as low as 2% (Greece). The average employment rate in Europe varies between 4-6%, whilst countries such as France and the Netherlands have around 10% of participation. In 2014 the UK employed around 11% within the construction industry of which 1% actually worked within the manual trade and less than 1% were represented within management boards. Another problem that arises in the UK is that the

gender pay gap is 23% wider than the national average. A EU comparison has shown that the gender pay gap within the construction industry usually is around 28% compared to the national average.

Women in construction: World-wide snapshot



World percentage of all women who are in construction



World percentage of all construction workers who are women

What are the barriers to enter the construction industry?

Having looked at the situation in Europe we can see that women are simply underrepresented within the construction trade. Reasons for this are plentiful; apart from the obvious stereotypes that the construction trade is/was a predominantly blue collared, male dominated, sexist elbow pushing “society” we can see a variety of reasons that go beyond mere stereotypes. There is a clear lack of incentives for women to join the construction sector. Education and recruitment efforts are dearth whilst pervasive denigration and gender pay gaps are high. Furthermore physical strength, behavior at the workplace, unisex sanitary standards and restricted promotional opportunities all represent barriers that we will need to overcome within this industry. If the numbers can be trusted then the UK alone will need an additional 200.000 workers within the construction trade by 2020. With many immigrants lacking the required skills and knowledgeable personal becomes a scarcity who will you turn to? The obvious answer will be: women. They will stop the shortage in workforce, further encourage female innovation within the construction market and thereby benefit the whole industry!

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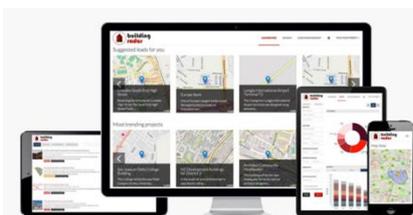
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Building Radar and Woman

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