

PAUL MWANGI • KENYA

“This experience really opened doors for me. In addition to the practical work, I, for example, learned how to draw up cost estimates - an important on-site learning. After my first successful jobs, I was often recommended to others and received numerous enquiries.”

Paul Mwangi, 33 years old, is proof that hard work and determination pay off. He found himself at a crossroad after completing his secondary school level and not able to proceed further in his education due to financial constraints. Undeterred by his situation, he embarked on a journey of self-awareness and resilience. He started off as a manual laborer at various construction sites, struggling to make ends meet. Paul's innate passion for designing houses and construction drove him to self-learn architectural modeling in his spare time. Media coverage helped recognizing Paul's potential.

A local government representative notices his talent and supports him in getting a civil engineering diploma at the Kiambu Institute of Science and Technology. Through the Institute, Paul discovers Build4Skills. He applies and is luckily accepted. Build4Skills places graduates from the Kiambu TVET institute on construction sites for practical

training. For the stipulated 3-month training period, Paul lands a place at Corban Construction company.

During this period, his flexibility and commitment shone through as he effortlessly navigated various tasks, from masonry to plumbing, drawing interpretation to mechanical works. Paul's exceptional dedication did not go unnoticed. Impressed by his commitment and competence, the site supervisor recommended him for an assistant supervisor role upon completion of his training. In this new capacity, Paul thrived, leveraging his expertise to supervise and coordinate laborers and subcontractors alike. As the current project in Corban nears completion, Paul's trajectory continues to soar. He eagerly anticipates further opportunities with the company, driven by the hope of securing additional contracts and contributing to the company's continued success.

Paul Mwangi's inspiring journey highlights the transformative power of dedication to overcome challenges. By creating innovative learning environments on construction sites, Build4Skills unlocks new opportunities and empowers individuals like Paul to reach their full potential.

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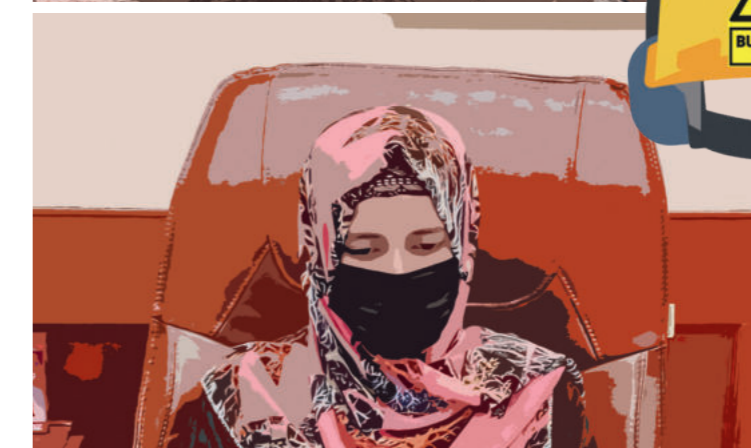
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Success stories to Build on

“This experience really opened doors for me”

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NAOMI NYAMA • SOUTH AFRICA

"I am very proud of the confidence that I gained here. My vocal, my voice. Today I know; when I talk, people will listen."

Naomi Nyama is 25 years old. She laughs as she places the next brick on the wall. Proud of the skills she knows today, Naomi looks back at a rather difficult situation in life, which was marked by uncertainty and self-doubt. In her early twenties Naomi is neither in school, training or employment. *"I was a shy girl. Didn't like to express myself."* It seems like Naomi's dreams had no space in a reality that is sculpted by patriarchy. The young woman spends most of her time at the small family home in Ivory Park. Ivory Park is a township outside of Johannesburg, South Africa.

"I used to be at home a lot. Being together with my family. Ideas about what to do in life were not that important. Then my sister found out about the Faranani project, and we both decided to apply. I was really surprised and so happy to have been accepted to the program."

Naomi is one of 49 young women and men to build a multi-purpose hall at a school within her local area. A cooperation

between Youth Build South Africa, the Trevor Noah Foundation and Build4Skills mobilizes young people who are not in employment, education, or training to improve their living conditions. By building a hall for the community the promising talents are introduced to various construction tasks. From brick laying and plumbing, up to carpeting and welding. The initiative seeks to build thriving communities through education.

"In a few months I learnt so many things. Today, I know brick-laying, plumbing, tiling and so on. Basically, everything from the foundation up to the roof of a construction. I love plumbing; it is my favorite. Maybe because of where I want to go in the future."

Naomi smiles a lot while talking about her latest tasks at the Faranani construction site. *"My best advice for women in construction training is to just enjoy it. You must do it from the bottom of your heart, that's where the energy for all the work comes from. Sometimes, we are faced with challenges. When the male participants joke around like "you (women) cannot do this..." we take on the challenge and do it even better."*

DJÉLIA DIAGNE • SENEGAL

Djélia Diagne is a successful project manager in the Senegalese construction industry. And even more. Besides her managing tasks, the 33-year-old supports young women entering the infrastructure sector promoting that women can go beyond the limits society has set. Getting to where Djélia stands today was difficult – but the determined woman managed well. Build4Skills is happy to have been able to accompany Djélia a part of the way.

Since her childhood, Djélia has one dream: to become a civil engineer and to be a woman the construction industry looks up at. Djélia has always been working hard to achieve her dream while not being granted the access to education her male colleagues enjoy. As a married woman it is unlikely to follow a career path.

Djélia did it anyways: *"Being aware that there's a lot to be done to achieve gender parity in these sectors, the first factor to consider as a woman is competence. We have to be very competent and try to go beyond our limits."*

Djélia starts her professional career teaching maths and sciences. Not wanting to give up on her dream job, Djélia uses the income she got from teaching and is finally able to

finance her civil engineering training. After graduation the young woman gains a lot of experience in different areas of the building sector. And stands out as a successful project manager within the industry.

Through mouth-to-mouth propaganda Djélia discovers Build4Skills. As a program that promotes women at work in the construction sector, the Build4Skills Mentoring program is inevitably a place to be for Djélia. A place where women learn from women in an otherwise rather male dominated working field. Participating in the mentoring program, Djélia improves her soft skills like professional communication and leadership.

"The mentoring program has helped me to better manage my relationships with male colleagues. It increases my desire to succeed and take on positions of responsibility."

Djélia Diagne's journey exemplifies how networking and collegial support amongst women can make a difference. And by turning construction sites into learning sites, Build4Skills aims to bridge gaps and provide opportunities for women and men. Because the civil engineering field needs a workforce that builds on each other.



MEHEK BASHEER • PAKISTAN

Mehek Basheer dreamed of working in the import and export business of the automotive industry since an early age. *"If you work in the right direction, you can achieve anything. There are fewer women in this field, but I am confident that we have opportunities."*

The Shana Bashana Initiative, merging theoretical classroom-based education with work experience in a male-dominated working sector, helped Mehek to gain a professional foothold. In February 2023, Mehek successfully graduated in "Logistics and Supply Chain" from The Hunar Foundation Vocational Training Institute. This was followed by two months of training in logistics at SIEMENS Pakistan as part of the Shana Bashana Initiative. Today, Mehek says she has the right self-confidence to work in this field. *"I was given the chance to discover myself. At SIEMENS, there were many women who gave me confidence, which gave me a maximum confidence boost."*

The automotive industry is traditionally a male-dominated field. The sector lacks female trainees and employees. Superiors support Mehek and give her the self-confidence she needs to work on an equal footing. Mehek admits that

working with exclusively male employees can sometimes be challenging, but she sees it as an opportunity to serve as a role model for other young women and to actively contribute to promoting gender equality in this industry.

With great commitment, Mehek successfully completes her training course in logistics. Although parts of her family raised doubts regarding her choice of course, Mehek remained determined and excelled in her tasks. Building on her learning experience at SIEMENS, Mehek's career has taken off. Soon after, she acquired a trainee position at a supplier of various products to the automation industry in Pakistan. Here, Mehek discovered a second field for her professional career. *"Recognizing my potential, the company provided me with an opportunity to work in the Human Resources domain, specifically focusing on Supply Chain."* Today, Mehek has secured a permanent position at a prestige HR multinational firm. *"I am proud that I have found my way. My practical learnings at SIEMENS and Inox Enterprises showed me the intersection of supply chain and HR. This unique blend of skills helps me today in leveraging my logistics expertise to contribute to more efficient and effective employee management processes. This feels great."*

