



GLOBAL INITIATIVES SUPPORTING WOMEN IN CONSTRUCTION

June 2025

INTRODUCTION

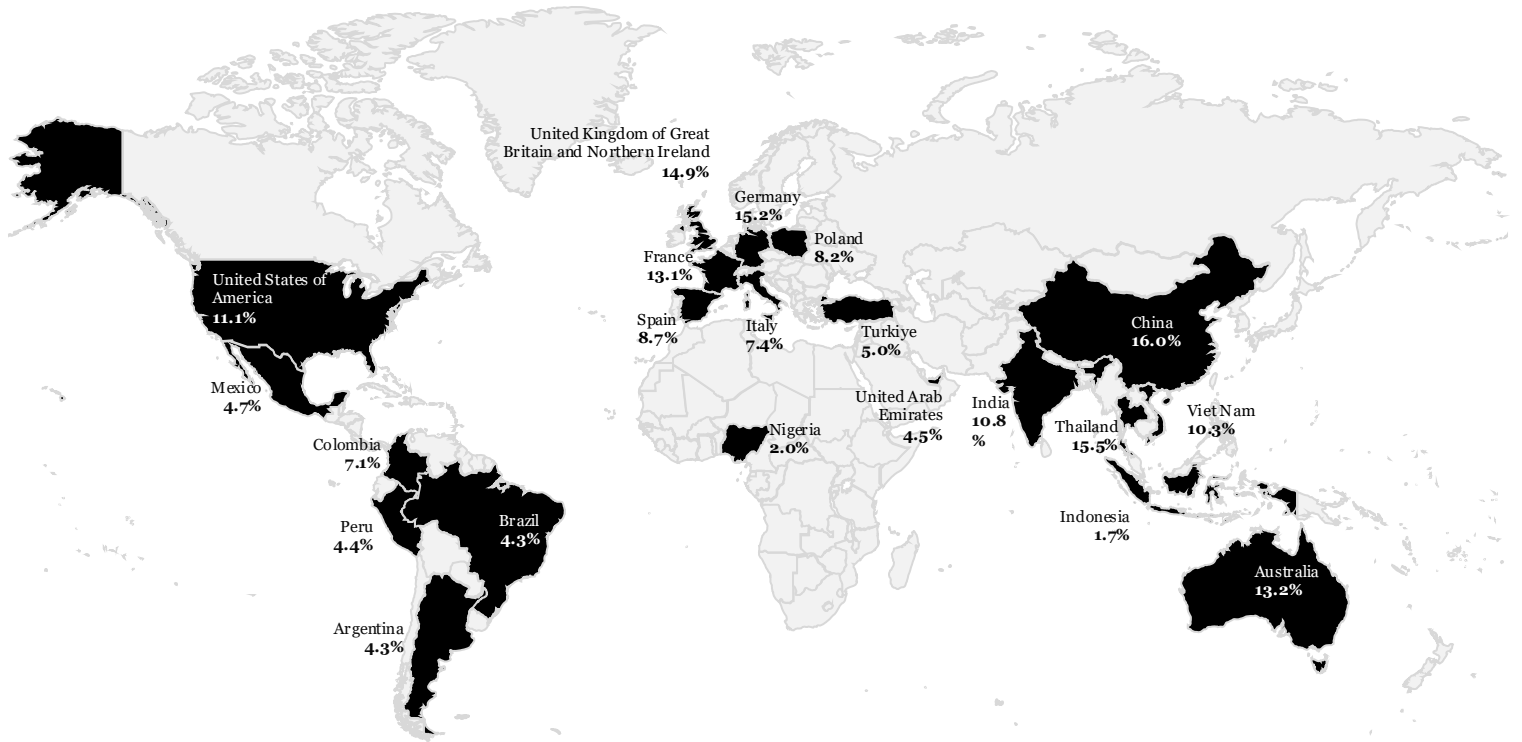
As noted in our initial report, *The Status of Women in Construction: A Global Perspective*, the global construction industry acknowledges the need for increased gender diversity. Countries are increasingly encouraging women to join the sector to address critical challenges such as labor shortages, innovation stagnation, and a lack of diverse perspectives in leadership. The inclusion of women not only fills workforce gaps but also brings new approaches to problem-solving, teamwork, and project execution, benefiting the industry's long-term growth and sustainability.

Despite growing awareness, progress has been gradual. The average representation of women in the construction workforce globally is 8.69 %, which indicates significant underrepresentation.

This report explores the global efforts of twenty countries with the largest construction workforce to address the need to increase the number of women in the construction industry. The goal of this report is to highlight the positive efforts being made worldwide to attract and retain women in the construction industry.



Global Representation of Women in Construction



The average representation of women in the construction workforce globally is **8.69 %**, which indicates significant underrepresentation.



02. NOTABLE OUTREACH EFFORTS

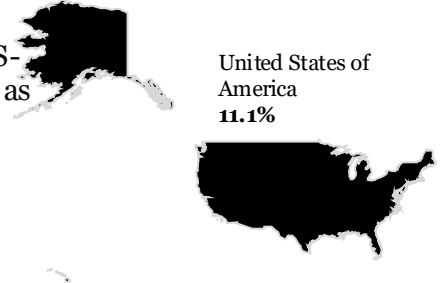
Some countries have implemented remarkable programs to address this gap:

These initiatives reflect a growing recognition of the economic and cultural benefits of diversity.



United States:

In May 2024, the US Department of Commerce introduced the CHIPS WiC Framework to enhance women's participation in CHIPS-funded construction projects. The framework focuses on goals such as building partnerships with organizations that support women's recruitment, developing training pathways for women and economically disadvantaged individuals, providing essential supportive services like childcare and transportation, and ensuring safe workplaces by addressing harassment and discrimination.



Mexico:

In Mexico, CEMEX has implemented female leadership development programs, increasing women's management representation by 12% since 2018. Organizations like Mujeres WIM de México and MujerARQ offer networking and development opportunities for women in construction and mining. In November 2024, HSBC Mexico announced financing for women entrepreneurs under CEMEX's supplier finance program, providing up to 700 million pesos at a preferential rate to enhance liquidity and working capital..



Nigeria:

The Nigerian government has implemented policies to promote gender equality in the construction sector, including the National Gender Policy and initiatives from the Ministry of Women's Affairs. The Nigerian Institute of Architects' Women in Architecture initiative further supports women's participation and leadership in the industry, promoting diversity and inclusion.



Turkey:

In October 2021, UN Women and the EU launched a €4.5 million project to enhance women's rights and gender equality in Turkey, including support for women's rights organizations in various sectors like construction. Additionally, the Limak Foundation, in partnership with UNDP, introduced the Turkey Engineer Girls Program to encourage young women in engineering through scholarships, mentoring, and internships.



United Arab Emirates:

In 2023, the UAE launched the National Policy for Empowerment of Emirati Women to promote women's participation across all sectors, including construction. This framework supports decision-makers in enhancing women's roles in development. Additionally, JLL initiated a Women in Construction Drive in 2022, featuring workshops and mentorship to encourage young women to pursue careers in construction.





Indonesia:

In 2017, the voluntary national review established Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aimed for achievement by 2030. Notably, Goal 5 highlights that Build Change in Denver has increased women's participation in the brickmaking industry to 65% through the Bata Jaya Cooperative, promoting WIC in the country.



Indonesia
1.7%



Australia:

The Australian Government has allocated \$60.6 million to the Building Women's Careers Program, which aims to foster systemic change in training and work environments for women, especially in construction. The New South Wales Government has also invested \$20.2 million to increase female representation on construction sites from 5% to 15% by 2023, offering grants to businesses for projects that enhance women's participation in trade roles. Additionally, Women Building Australia, backed by Master Builders Australia, provides mentorship, networking, and resources for women in the industry, along with a register of female-led businesses for vulnerable women seeking tradespeople.

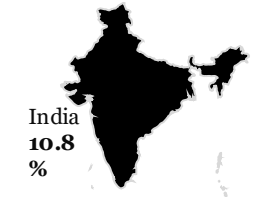


Australia
13.2%



India:

In February 2024, the Union Ministry of Women and Child Development introduced directives to improve conditions for women in the construction sector, focusing on maternity benefits, direct wage deposits, and enhanced workplace health measures like safe sanitation, Internal Complaints Committees, and night transport facilities.



India
10.8%



China:

The Program for the Development of Chinese Women, established in 2021, focuses on several key initiatives, including enhancing women's roles in the economy. Its main goals are to promote equal employment opportunities, eliminate gender discrimination, optimize women's employment structures, and support the development of female talent.



China
16.0%



Thailand:

The International Labour Organization (ILO) and UN Women launched the Safe and Fair Programme under the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative to support women migrant workers in Thailand's construction industry by enhancing their well-being and building capacity within women's organizations and migrant networks. Additionally, the IVL Foundation and Baan Dek Foundation initiated a Women's Empowerment Program in Chiang Mai aimed at vulnerable women, including those in construction, providing training in goal-setting, financial education, life skills, and work readiness. In 2023, the program held 97 training sessions with 159 women, focusing on outreach, soft skills, and upskilling.

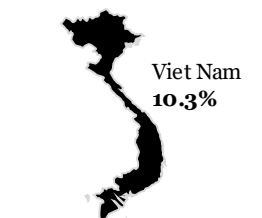


Thailand
15.5%



Vietnam:

Jessica Tran, Country Manager for Vietnam at Clime Capital, is addressing underrepresentation in Vietnam through the Climate Leaders Network, launched by IFC and Global Energy Alliance. Additionally, Coteccons Construction, Vietnam's largest construction company, is making progress in employing women, which may encourage similar initiatives in other companies.



Viet Nam
10.3%



Colombia:

In 2024, Colombia introduced Law 2397, the "More Women Building" Strategy, aimed at reducing gender inequality in civil infrastructure and construction by promoting female workforce participation in both public and private sectors. The Ministries of Transportation and Housing are tasked with developing policies to eliminate gender gaps in the industry. Additionally, in January 2020, the International Finance Corporation provided a \$335 million loan to Banco Davivienda to support women-owned SMEs and sustainable construction projects. From April 2022 to July 2023, USAID's "Construimos a la Par" project trained women in construction skills, resulting in 50 women obtaining jobs with 14 partner companies and encouraging industry leaders to commit to gender parity.



Peru:

The Women's Economic Imperative (WEI), launched in 2018 by the British Embassy in Lima, aims to encourage more women to start and grow businesses in non-traditional sectors like extractive industries, STEM, environment, agroindustry, construction, and financial services.



Brazil:

In September 2024, the "CBR for Elas" event, organized by the Social Coordination Unit, aimed to certify women in civil construction as part of the Joao Pessoa Sustainable Program's women's empowerment initiatives. The program focused on connecting women, enhancing their skills, and fostering opportunities, while also partnering with the Federal University of Paraiba (UFPB) through the "Women's Thousand" project, which provides training for women over 16 in economic and social vulnerability



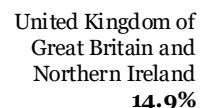
Argentina:

Ingeniería Sin Fronteras Argentina launched a Construction Productive Unit to train and employ women in on-site construction roles, increasing their representation in the industry. The Women Can Build II initiative, supported by the European Commission in November 2023, empowers women in construction across Latin America through capacity-building programs for skill enhancement and gender equality. Additionally, Pro Mujer, a social enterprise, issued a bond to finance microloans for women entrepreneurs, including in construction, promoting economic opportunities in the sector.



United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland:

The UK launched the Women into Construction (WIC) program, a not-for-profit initiative that supports women entering the construction industry. It assists contractors in recruiting and retaining female talent to create a more gender-equal workforce. The Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) funded several projects to promote gender diversity, including the WiC - Changing the Face of Construction project with £480,392 aimed at engaging 80 employers and helping 400 women, with goals for 210 women to complete employability training and 140 to gain employment. Additionally, CITB funded "Tackling the Gender Pay Gap – Progression for Women in Construction" with £122,569 to enhance collaboration with major firms and support women's career advancement.





France:

Announced in 2019, the FSOF allocates €120 million over three years to support feminist civil society organizations, including initiatives for gender equality in construction. Additionally, France's National Employment Fund offers financial support for business training initiatives, covering up to 60% of costs to enhance workforce skills in sectors like construction.

France
13.1%



Spain:

The Women Can Build Project, led by Fundación Laboral de la Construcción and funded by the EU's Erasmus+ program, aims to redefine vocational training and promote gender equality in construction. Over 38 months, it trained 50 women, gathered over 100 testimonies, and engaged 500 educators. Additionally, Spain's "Construindo en Feminino" initiative supports unemployed women aged 18 to 29 at risk of exclusion, offering a 12-month program that combines paid work in construction with specialized training.

Spain
8.7%



Italy:

Italy's National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP), part of the EU's "Next Generation EU" initiative, allocates significant funds for promoting gender equality and women's participation in sectors like construction. This includes investments in women's employment and entrepreneurship. UniCredit, in collaboration with the European Investment Bank, has launched a pilot project to provide financial support to women-led businesses. Furthermore, a national gender equality certification system has been introduced to encourage companies to adopt equitable practices, offering incentives for those that meet the standards.

Italy
7.4%



Germany:

Germany is an active member of FEMCON (Female Empowerment in Construction), an EU group created to assist with increasing the number of women in construction across the country. Furthermore, in 1981, Germany founded the Feministische Organisation von Planerinnen und Architektinnen (FOPA), which still actively participates in hosting events and publishes materials to promote feminist perspectives in the built environment.

Germany
15.2%



Poland:

Coca-Cola Poland launched the "Success is ME" Program in Poland's private sector. This initiative offers free online tools and training to assist women in the labor market, including the construction industry.

Poland
8.2%



CONCLUSION

The global construction industry is increasingly focused on gender diversity to address labor shortages, boost innovation, and diversify leadership. Despite this, women are significantly underrepresented, making up only 8.69% of the global construction workforce.

We have highlighted the initiatives that various countries have implemented to combat this, which include:



Government Policies: The United States, Nigeria, the United Arab Emirates, and Colombia have introduced policies and frameworks to promote women's participation.



Training & Development: Programs in Mexico, Turkey, Australia, and Vietnam focus on leadership development and skill enhancement.



Financial Support: Mexico, Australia, and Italy offer financing and grants to support women in the construction industry.



Networking & Mentorship: Organizations in Mexico, Australia, and the UAE provide crucial support.



Workplace Improvements: India and the US are addressing maternity benefits, safe sanitation, and harassment.

These initiatives reflect a growing worldwide commitment to creating a more inclusive and equitable construction sector. We hope that by highlighting these efforts, we can inspire ideas and momentum around the globe.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION,
CONTACT:**

Dr. Gretchen Gagel
CEO and Founder

International Institute for Women in Construction
gretchen@iiwic.org

