

# BUILDING WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN TRADE UNIONS

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# WOMEN AND CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

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- Women are reticent to work in what is the most-male dominated industry not only in Romania, but all over the world
- There are claims that women are not physically able to work in such a demanding industry or they fail to obtain entry
- Numerous attempts to increase female participation, but they have not changed significantly since 1980s
- Women represent slightly over 10% of the workforce in construction industry and around 1% as members of trade unions



# WOMEN AND CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

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- The industry lacks qualified human resources → getting women to consider such a career is a big challenge
- Trade unions have worked sometimes to exclude women on the ground of protecting men's jobs, while at other times they have taken an active role in recruiting and supporting them
- The Decent Work Agenda offered trade unions new instruments to encourage women to work in various industries by encouraging all the affiliated organizations to focus on the issues of gender and equal opportunities and to increase participation of female workers



# WOMEN AND CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

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- Even if the number of female students enrolled in construction studies or training is rising, here is a severe discrepancy between the number of female students and the number of women employed in construction for a sustained period.
- The career of women in construction is less secure, mostly in low-paid positions, that contributes to the limitation of career progression.
- Rigid work practices, a traditionally masculine or sexist culture, exclusion, gendered violence, inadequate work facilities and equipment, and informal recruitment processes have all contributed to the low numbers of women working in construction.



# WHAT ATTRACTS WOMEN IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY?

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- Studies say that 90% of women that work in the industry are influenced by a family member who worked in construction or own a construction company
- If the father owns a construction company or has a very good position in the management team, the daughter or other relative can be attracted to join the industry





# SUCCESS FACTORS FOR WOMEN IN CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

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- the ability to work with people, dedication, adaptability, leadership, and integrity/honesty are positively influencing women's career success
- confidence or self-efficacy is one of the personality traits carrying women through their careers in the construction industry
- women who participate in a 'non-traditional' occupation demonstrate the highest level of career self-efficacy



# GENERAL BARRIERS TO JOIN A TRADE UNION

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- women's lack of knowledge about the benefits of trade union membership
- fear of reprisals by employers
- lack of time due to work and family responsibilities
- cultural restrictions or religious constraints
- the male-dominated nature of the “trade union culture” (times of meetings, style of meetings, trade union jargon, etc.)
- trade union recruitment strategies



# OUR APPROACH

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- how can we attract more women and girls to take up a trade or blue-collar job within the industry?
- how can recruitment practices be improved to help more women obtain jobs within the industry?
- how do we retain women within the industry?



# PRIORITY I – ATTRACT WOMEN

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- Positive encouragement for women about construction education, which means also a better communication about industry's attractiveness
- Gender-sensitive training programs, that includes practical solutions for specific issues
- Awareness-raising campaigns to develop more transparent pathways to enter the construction industry and develop a career

# PRIORITY 2 – RECRUIT WOMEN

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- A more independent and formalized hiring process to be promoted in the industry
- Increased prominence and visibility of female role models in the industry
- A holistic approach to cultural change builds through support throughout the entire workforce



# PRIORITY 3 – RETAIN WOMEN

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- widespread industry, workplace and social change to abolish gendered violence at work and traditional ideas of women's work
- introduction of job-sharing, flexible work arrangements, provision of childcare, and changes to other workplace practices to accommodate caring responsibilities
- facilitating women's networks and female mentorship within the industry



# ATTEMPTS TO ATTRACT WOMEN

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- promoting agreements with all stakeholders on working conditions for women
- contract compliance, including equality measures and employment goals in all tender documents
- proactive application of equal opportunity policies by all contractors and subcontractors
- working conditions, including structured working hours, childcare provision, and inclusive maternity leave
- securing support at senior level and from women's groups and trade unions in meeting objectives and monitoring, and organizing meetings and conferences





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**ID CARDS pentru muncă decentă în sectorul de construcții**

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ca provocare a secolului XXI

MARIA GABRIELA STERIAN

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# THANK YOU!

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