

Status of transformation in South African built environment professions

Abstract

This report on the baseline of transformation in the Built Environment takes transformation initiatives in each of the professional built environment councils into consideration. To achieve its objectives, the baseline employed a mixed method approach to analyse transformation statistics of both gender and race ratios reported by the six Built Environment Councils. Ratios were generated for 2010 and 2015, and predictions were made for 2020. The analysis including professional registration categories, and discussions held with registrars of the Councils. The findings highlight the need for improved interaction, planning, activities, programmes and interventions geared towards transformation in the Built Environment Professions. On a more positive note, the findings illustrate that transformation is defined in different ways but in councils where transformation is incorporated on a holistic basis in the strategic principles, it is defined in a broader sense. In terms of gender ratios, findings show that in 2010 ECSA stood at 1:30 and 1:16 in 2015 and the prediction for 2020 was 1:1.4. Based on this, the study further offers recommendations on the roles of the Councils as well as activities and initiatives that the Councils can spearhead in its pursuit to achieve transformation. Accordingly, Councils are encouraged to have interaction with students early and award deserving students at Accredited Learning Sites (ALS). Furthermore, Councils should follow-up on candidates, i.e. research on non-progression of candidates and re-registration of lapsed memberships.

Introduction

The CBE Act mandates the CBE to ensure consistent application of policies by the Built Environment Professional Councils (BEPCs). The CBE acts as an umbrella body whose functions are focussed on regulation, facilitation and coordination across the professions. The BEPs and associated skills are of national interest and key to the existing and planned government infrastructure programme. There has been repeated calls for the CBE to provide leadership in terms of driving transformation within the BEPs.

Numerous activities, programmes and interventions geared towards transforming the BEPs have been undertaken by each of the councils, DPW and CBE respectively. The development of a successful transformation strategy necessitates a clear

understanding of the current status quo in need of redress. The CBE is overseeing this study which aims to provide a substantive and detailed portrayal of the status of transformation within the South African Built Environment (SA BE).

The purpose of the assignment is two-fold. Firstly, to conduct a baseline study, consolidating and analysing available information and reported statistics relating to transformation within the South African BEPCs. Secondly, to conduct a basic situational analysis of the findings of the baseline study as well as discussion with registrars for each of the BEPCs and key informants for the CBE and DPW.

In 2013 the CBE proposed a transformation model and action plan that was approved by the CBE Council and presented to the DPW EXCO. However, the proposed model did create some difficulties in

gaining commitment and ownership. As such the outcomes from this study are intended towards refining and further developing the proposed 2013 model and action plan.

According to the transformation framework, each of the BEPCs should drive transformation in the Built Environment from within their respective councils. The CBE's programme that drives skills development focuses on the workplace training model and the maths and science support programme. Within this programme several targets for driving transformation were achieved, including 1) identifying a number of high demand professions for Strategic Integrated Projects (SIPs), 2) increase the number of school learners benefitting from the maths and science programme, 3) increase the number of candidates/BE graduates' workplace training, 4) increase the number of interns placed for workplace training, and 5) report on the state of accreditation in BEPCs.

Definition of transformation

The SA BE is far from being transformed and while the exact target is not clear, the national demographic is used as a guideline. According to StatsSA, in 2011 the presentation of black people in South Africa was 80,2%, 8,8% were coloured, 2,5% Asian/Indian and 8,4% white. For gender transformation a ratio of 50/50 male/female is desirable.

The definition of transformation and the approach taken in each council follow a broader approach to transformation as opposed to slavishly attempting to "meet the national demographic". According to the construction Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) charter, transformation would mean an increase in ownership, control and management of productive assets and access to training skills.

Background to the transformation consultations

In the 2012/2013 financial year, the CBE developed the transformation action plan with the development of the 2013 transformation model. Several councils highlighted problems in setting and attaining targets, such as lack of funding for driving transformation; IDoW a barrier; uncertainties about registration categories; and low number of applications with some councils.

During 2015, little progress was made regarding the signing transformation targets in each BEOC. Several councils did not commit to specific targets and recommitted at the start of 2016 to participate in the transformation agenda. Efforts as published in annual reports are given below.

ECSA

Transformation is an integral part of the business plan of the Engineering Council. Several activities have been included in the plan (new registration

system; MoA signed with the Gauteng Department of Infrastructure Development; creating a trust fund to assist engineering students; increase number of registrations by 8% per year)

SACAP

Transformation is an integral part of the strategic agenda of the council. Transformation is not only the demographic representation, but also deal with quality of architectural education. Specific activities were undertaken: review of professional fees; IDoW remains a problem; new Continuous Professional Development (CPD) framework; a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) sub-committee was formed; career awareness; best student awards

SACLAP

One of the smaller councils and have a definitive challenge regarding transformation. Financial constraints and small numbers entering the profession play an inhibiting role. Currently the council is doing the following: increasing training of members; arranging candidate workshops for their board exam

SACPCMP

During 2015 a transformation committee was established. Efforts were made to convene discussions with HOD's of universities; student chapter at UJ; engaging presidents of VAs on the promotion of project management (PM) as a career; transformation by means of accreditation at universities

SACPVP

The 2015/2016 strategic plan mentioned new transformation initiatives. Strategies employed: pre-exam workshops for competency examinations; ensuring part-time study opportunities; CPUT's programme offered as a block release programme

SACQSP

Transformation is mentioned as a new project in the SACQSP. Candidate de-registration and funding to do workplace training are cited as the main culprits in the inability to ensure transformation.

DPW

The DPW is not prescriptive about the transformation goals to be achieved. It is, however, important that government as a whole is committed to achieve gender and racial balances in terms of the demographics.

In conclusion, no council is close to achieving the target and could therefore safely pursue the national demographic as a target. Indications were that targets would not have been met by 2020.

Methodology

The baseline employed a mixed method approach, which allows for the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. In the quantitative aspect is used in the analysis of numerical data such as statistics to reveal trends, correlations and to calculate averages. Whereas the qualitative aspect helps with unearthing in-depth data about participant's experiences and perceptions of a given phenomenon. Each of the six BEPC's annual reports were also used to calculate the current baseline, the historical rate of change and, with available information make a prediction for 2020.

Research Findings

Information published in the annual reports of each Council were considered. Calculation for 2010 to 2015 was calculated. Data was presented for the following ratios:

- Overall gender ratios in professional registration categories
- Female percentage in professional categories
- Overall race ratios in professional categories in each BEP
- Summary of racial balances in all registration categories combined in each council
- Gender ratios for registered candidates in each BEP
- Registered candidates' female representation
- Race ratios in the candidate categories
- Racial representation in the candidate registration categories.

A selection of findings is given below:

Overall gender ratios in professional registration categories

Council	2010	2015	2020
ECSA	1:30	1:16	1:1.4
SACAP	1:4.4	1:3.8	1:3.3
SACLAP	1:1.1	1:1.1	1:1.1
SACPCMP	1:37	1:30	Not enough info to predict
SACPVP	1:9.2	1:2	Not enough info to predict
SACQSP	1:7	1:3.7	1:1.4

From the above it is notable that ECSA has had a steep decline in gender ratios over the past years

Overall race ratios in professional registration categories

Council	2010	2015	2020
ECSA	1:9.7	1:4.6	1:1.1
SACAP	1:2.5	1:2.6	1:3.6
SACLAP	1:165	1:43	Not enough info to predict
SACPCMP	1:15.5	1:9.4	Not enough info to predict
SACPVP	1:6.8	1:3.8	Not enough info to predict

SACQSP	1:6.6	1:4.7	1:2.7
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From this table, it is clear that racial ratios are more difficult to change and drop much slower than gender ratios.

Gender ratios for registered candidates

Council	2010	2015	2020
ECSA	1:4	1:4	1:3
SACAP	1:2.5	1:2.2	1:2
SACLAP	1:0.9	1:1.1	1:1
SACPCMP	1:1.8	1:2.8	Not enough info to predict
SACPVP	1:2.8	1:1.8	Not enough info to predict
SACQSP	1:2.8	1:1.6	1:0.5

Race ratios in the candidate categories

Council	2010	2015	2020
ECSA	1:2	1:0.7	1:0.4
SACAP	1:1.2	1:1.3	1:1.2
SACLAP	1:4.1	1:6.2	Not enough info to predict
SACPCMP	1:1.4	1:0.39	Not enough info to predict
SACPVP	1:1.7	1:1.4	Not enough info to predict
SACQSP	1:1	1:0.9	1:1.1

In ECSA, the SACPCMP and the SACQSP, African candidates represent more than 50% of registrations, with the SACPCMP nearing the national demographic of 80% for the first time

BEPC's approach towards transformation

Definition of transformation in each council

Transformation is defined in different ways. Transformation is described as a luxury they cannot afford; a means to survive; simply reflecting the demographic being forced on the BEPCs a reflection of changes in the socio-economic fabric of the country.

An observation is that in councils where transformation is incorporated on a holistic basis in the strategic principles, transformation is defined in a broader sense.

Accreditation

Most BEPCs made specific mention of using this mandate to achieve transformation by means of:

- Increase study opportunities and accessibility
- Student registration categories
- Multiple exit opportunities

School level interaction

Most stakeholders indicated that school level interaction does not form part of their mandate and that the VAs might be responsible for marketing at school level.

Tertiary level interaction

Stakeholders mentioned that the burden of promoting study courses is the responsibility of the ALSs while promotion of a career in the BE are done by the VAs and this is working well.

Candidacy

Several stakeholders indicated that there is a tendency for candidacy periods to drag on with unnecessary delays. Candidacy throughput is an issue in almost every BEPC and both racial and gender imbalances are increased through non-registration. The transformation agenda has been discussed extensively with the BEPCs and the CBE. However, no specific commitments by each council could be established. Some BEPCs have made progress over the last number of years (ECSA, SACQSP, SACPCMP and SACAP), whereas the SACLAP and SACPVP councils seem less directed in their efforts.

In this phase a basic situational analysis, based on the findings of the baseline study as well as discussion with council registrars will be discussed.

External economic and construction environment

The construction industry is contextualised in terms of the forecast economic growth rate, market capitalization of listed JSE construction companies, public and private sector spending and performance indicators on construction. Growth was predicted to slow sharply in 2016 and recover slightly in 2017 and 2018 with predicted growth remaining below 2% until 2020. A dismal performance in 2015 as a result of the lack of recovery in the economy contributed to the bleak forecast for growth in the industry. Government infrastructure development plans also declined since 2013 and are not predicted to increase during 2016 or 2017.

Legislative environment

Several problems with the current framework have been identified, such as complying with the public finance management act; alignment to government policy; improve oversight; transformation; funding mandates; non-compulsion of registration; investigation of complaints.

Three options are being explored in terms of legislated cooperation. The first is to have a single CBE council with six professional boards; the second is to maintain the councils with amendments clarifying roles and responsibilities and lastly to revert its responsibilities back to DPW for direct oversight.

Recommendations

Stakeholders commented on possible easy wins to bring about change. Suggestions:

- Accreditation: increase accessibility to courses
- Tertiary interaction: engage professionals and students early on
- Tertiary interaction: awards to deserving students at ALS
- Limit number of years of candidate registration
- Candidate follow-up strategies in place
- Amnesty registration periods every other year

Managing expectations: the councils should...

Some of the expectations mentioned by stakeholders on the role of the BEPCs:

- Responsibility for transformation
- Play a proactive role in registering government employees
- Communication with members (assist unregistered practitioners to register)
- Accreditation (ensure universities' accreditation are completed)
- Candidate follow-up (research on non-progression of candidates; re-registering lapsed memberships)
- VA assistance and guidance
- Advise pro-actively (look for problems in the CHE and DE that impact transformation)

Conclusion

Predicted growth in the construction sector in the foreseeable future does not bode well for the performance, development and growth of the construction industry until 2020. On the bright side, it seems that the growth will not slow more than is currently the case. Direct players in the Built Environment that have a large impact on the ability to drive transformation include the Competition Commission, the DPW and the DHET and CETA through their ability to skill the right number of people, with the right skills for the market.

Areas for Future Research

A baseline study on transformation that includes the six Built Environment Councils as well as SAGC, SACPLAN and EAPASA.

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This research brief draws its origins from the CBE Research Report: Status of transformation in South African Built Environment Profession developed in October 2016. Available at the CBE Knowledge Hub.