Promoting Employment and Income through Sustainable Building Materials Production and Home Construction among Women and Girls in Tanzania

Lack of affordable, quality housing in rural areas is a major challenge facing Tanzanians. Women, the elderly, and people with disabilities are particularly affected by this shortage. Tanzania Women Architects for Humanity (TAWAH) is an NGO established in 2010 by Tanzanian women architects and engineers committed to empowering women and girls to spearhead the sustainable construction of quality, affordable, environmentally friendly housing and sanitary facilities. Collectively, TAWAH’s members have extensive experience in all phases of construction, including pre-design needs assessment, design, materials production, construction, project management, and turnover of the finished structure.

With support from the Julius Baer Foundation, TAWAH is building a women-led knowledge centre in Mhaga Village, Kisarawe District, where TAWAH, women business owners and employees in the construction industry will work with project participants to produce building materials and construct quality houses using locally available resources. One focus of the centre will be modern mud-brick making. An additional focus will be creating new enterprises and jobs in the construction sector.

TAWAH’s women architects, engineers, entrepreneurs and artisans will work alongside disadvantaged women and girls – many of whom have not had access to formal education – as teachers and mentors. This collaboration will create supportive learning communities while helping people in need. Through the centre’s workshops on building materials production, construction techniques, and small enterprise management, trainees will be prepared for income-gen-

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540 students attend a girls’ secondary school completed by TAWAH in 2020.

74 female university students worked with TAWAH mentors in construction related programs, 2019–20.

Sustainable Development Goal Number 10
Reduced Inequalities
More information: un.org
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Facts and figures: Tanzania

- Tanzania’s poverty rate dropped from 34% to 26% between 2007 and 2018, due to steady economic growth. However, inequalities of wealth and opportunity have increased, particularly affecting rural Tanzanians.
- The richest 1% of Tanzanians possess as much wealth as the poorest 40%, and the country has a Gini coefficient of 40.5.
- Construction is among the top three sectors that contributed to the growth of Tanzania’s economy.

Wealth inequality is mirrored in the level of housing poverty. In rural areas, houses tend to be less durable, built with mud and thatch, and lacking in proper ventilation and indoor plumbing. By contrast, in more affluent areas, houses are more likely to be built with sand cement blocks and have roofs of corrugated metal sheeting or tiles, as well as proper sanitation systems with access to clean water. Women in rural areas, with fewer resources and limited skills, currently enjoy neither improved housing nor opportunities to earn income through participation in construction related activities. TAWAH invests in skills development such as brickmaking, construction, and small business management for women and girls to help them attain quality housing, earn income, and enjoy a fairer share of the benefits from the construction sector.

For more information on TAWAH projects visit our website: www.tawahtanzania.or.tz

“Those who received the privilege of education, have a duty to repay the sacrifice which others have made by serving others.”

Julius Kambarage Nyerere, 1960