



Water Women's Day

Women Sanitation Champions



Agenda

- Introduction
- My career
 - Government: Nompumelelo Ntshalintshali-Motsa + Q&A
 - Private sector: Amutha Palaniandi + Q&A
 - Academia: Konstantina Velkushanova + Q&A
- Closing

Amutha Palaniandi – Mason, Trichy, India

When did you join the sector, what was your first job?

- I started my career as a helper in construction in the year 2006.
- After 6 years I took up masonry

Why did you join the sector?

- I lost my parents when I was young, thus was not able to pursue my education. Then I got married and unfortunately my husband was alcoholic. I wanted to ensure that my children should get good education - for which I had to work. Owing to poor literacy, there were not many options available to me. Remuneration in construction was comparatively high than others. So I choose the profession. I have undergone training for construction of toilets and standard containment structures.

What was a key barrier you faced and how did you overcome it.

- When I wanted to become a mason, the men would not teach me the skills. Even my husband who is also a mason would not teach me things like leveling, etc. It was a kind engineer who came forward to teach me.
- Many discouraged me that women would not be able to climb heights
- Our common attire- saree
- My male subordinates who kept grumbling about their fate for having to work under a women

A key tip you would share to other women wanting to join the sector.

- There is no gender disparity in work, if we learn the skill and are willing to adopt to the need of the profession, we will be able to excel in what we do. Currently I get paid better than male masons owing to the quality of my work.



Ms. Nompumelelo Ntshalintshali – Motsa - Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Specialist Former Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) Regional Coordinator for Africa

When did you join the sector, what was your first job?

- Sanitation studies was not offered in Eswatini at that time, I enrolled in a Diploma in Water Technology.
- My first job in the water and sanitation sector was in the laboratory, where I was analyzing surface water for pollution control.

Why did you join the sector?

- Fond of nature and a clean environment
- The sight of more people defecating in open fields, particularly in rural communities

What was a key barrier you faced and how did you overcome it.

- Sector dominated by men and gender stereotypes
- Discrimination in the male-dominated field.

A key tip you would share to other women wanting to join the sector.

- I encourage women and girls to join the sector to break biases
- Women are under represented not just in the sanitation field but in STEM workforce.



Ms. Nompumelelo Ntshalintshali – Motsa - Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Specialist Former Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) Regional Coordinator for Africa

When did you join the sector, what was your first job?

- I joined the WASH sector very early in my career - I studied Environmental Engineering and have been working in the sector ever since.
- First job in the WASH sector was a junior research assistant in one of the universities in Bulgaria (where I come from) – i was working on membrane processes for desalination of industrial brackish water.

Why did you join the sector?

- I always felt passionate about the environment, in particularly the water and sanitation sector; I always loved to get my hands dirty so I naturally focused more on waste water and solid waste treatment processes
- The game changer in my career happened when I moved to UKZN in Durban, South Africa and focused my work on non-sewered sanitation, aspired to improve the provision of sustainable sanitation solutions to those who are most in need, including the development and implementation of innovations

What was a key barrier you faced and how did you overcome it.

- Stereotyping

A key tip you would share to other women wanting to join the sector.

- More than a decade ago, we were only a few female colleagues in the sector... I am so excited and proud to see more and more women joining the sanitation sector. Once you become a sanitation professional/practitioner, you will never regret it for the rest of your life. It is the most rewarding feeling! Plus, it's always fun to get your hands dirty every now and again.



Thank You!