



Union Internationale des Architectes · International Union of Architects

Policy on Gender Equity in Architecture

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UIA Professional Practice Program Joint Secretariat

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Preamble

The UIA aims to promote the culture of inclusion in the profession and recognizes that the gender disparity in the architectural profession needs to be seriously addressed. While there is apparent effort made to strive for gender equity, and there is a decrease in the gender disparity, female Architects remain heavily underrepresented in the profession.

The UIA recognizes the importance of contributions by female Architects to the architectural profession and the built environment. The UIA Gender Equity Policy in Architecture aims to establish a general framework for adoption by the UIA Member Sections, taking into consideration cultural backgrounds and the current state of the Gender Equality Gap and related problems.

The Policy is critical in facilitating female Architects' participation in the profession and, and enabling them to do so.

The 'UIA Policy on Gender Equity In Architecture' sets out principles designed to maximise fair and equitable access to opportunities for female Architects relating to:

- Ownership and leadership in the architecture profession (including recognition of a wide range of contributions and achievements, new succession strategies, and new models for progression to partner/owner roles);
- Participation as employees in the architecture profession (including matters such as equal pay, equal responsibility, meaningful part-time work, more flexible career pathways, flexible working conditions, and the retention of women in the profession);
- Representation and governance within the Institute (including committees, National and Chapter Councils, juries and selection panels);
- Institute programs, services and events (including membership options, professional development, conferences and events, awards and prizes, products and services); and
- Operational activities within the Institute (including employment and recruitment practices, pay equity, leadership, management and succession).

The 'Khartoum Declaration on Gender Equity in Architecture' was adopted by the members of the UIA Professional Practice Commission (PPC), during its meeting held in Khartoum, Sudan on 16-17 February 2017, and the 130th UIA Council Session Seoul (Korea) on 3-4 March 2017

Principles

The following are the proposed principles to be adopted as the foundation for fair and equitable participation of female Architects within the architecture profession:

1. Acknowledge the profession's obligation to accommodate the diverse needs of the community: It is fundamental that Architects have the capacity to understand and respond to the diverse needs of Clients and the broader community. This can best be achieved when all levels of the profession reflect the diversity of the community, and for the Member Section to develop and promote strategies to achieve this outcome.
2. Recognise and respond effectively to the diversity of members: In all key decisions and activities, the Member Section is to account for the diverse interests and circumstances of all members, taking particular account of gender, career stage and access to services.
3. Incorporate provisions to ensure gender equitable outcomes in all Institute initiatives: In considering any new or significantly redeveloped programs, services, and activities, the Member Section is to evaluate its programs for its contribution to gender equity, as well as other parameters such as financial impact, risk, time and resource requirements.
4. Communicate the value of women in leadership roles: The Member Section is to address the severe gender imbalance in leadership and ownership of architectural practices. It should advocate for the specific benefits of a more gender-balanced approach to design direction, project management and business management.
5. Promote equality of employment arrangements: The Member Section is to adopt and promote within the profession, employment and recruitment practices which ensure that women are recruited, paid and selected for promotion, on the same basis as men.
6. Support the development of alternative and flexible career pathways within the profession: Understanding that women are less likely to follow traditional, linear career paths, the Member Section is to identify, validate and offer guidance on flexible approaches to recognition, reward and career progression for females in architecture.
7. Develop cross-gender mentorships and networks: The Member Section is to facilitate and encourage informal access by women to the guidance and experience of men in leadership, networks and mentors in the profession, and by men to women in leadership, networks and mentors.
8. Educate the profession about the impact of gender stereotypes: Recognising that many contemporary workplaces retain vestiges of systems, processes and



cultures that evolved when workplaces were primarily populated by men, the Member Section will inform and educate members about the often invisible barriers to equality that result.

9. Actively seek input on the needs of female members: The Member Section will provide effective and readily accessible channels for members to provide feedback or unsolicited suggestions, ideas, concerns or complaints relating to gender equity.
10. Develop and coordinate specific programs to give effect to this Gender Equity policy. The Member Section is to establish and maintain an effective forum to create, maintain, review and report on specific programs designed to implement the principles of this policy

Recommendations

1. Conduct surveys to establish the position of female Architects in the profession;
2. Conduct research on the obstacles and ‘glass ceilings’ which prevent women from attaining leadership positions in the profession;
3. Conduct research on the interests and needs of women in the profession;
4. To establish a Women-Specific Lead entity to work on the policy and provide clear leadership on the following key functions:
 - a. Policy development and Advocacy of equitable practices
 - b. Operations
 - c. Establishing Monitoring and Accountability mechanisms to track progress;
5. Female Architects should be invited to participate in and be consulted on the drafting of the Gender Equity Policy or other similar policies;
6. To have affirmative action aimed at promoting women in decision making positions, achieving balanced participation;
7. Remove impediments to equality; implement anti-discrimination legislation (if any); combat gender stereotypes and sexism, and promote inclusion;
8. The following are considered to be some effective ways to attract and retain women in the profession:



- a. Promoting change in the office culture that allows a better work life balance;
- b. Promoting training programs and guidelines on the value of diversity as an underlying culture of the organization;
- c. Imparting knowledge on how to manage a more diverse workforce and how to attract, retain and promote female talent;
- d. Increasing job flexibility;
- e. Developing mentorship program for female Architects in practice;
- f. Offering incentives and credentials for Architects who wish to return to the profession after taking leave of absence;
- g. Offering industry-funded scholarships for women to pursue architecture;
- h. Actively attracting more female Professors and Academics to teach in accredited programs;
- i. Increasing community outreach to promote women in architecture;
- j. The creation of a support system such as:
 - i. Activities to compensate for gender disadvantage or discrimination, via childcare facilities and maternity leave;
 - ii. Parental benefits including leave availability, and promotion;
 - iii. Activities aimed at encouraging parents to share leave period more equally;
 - iv. Improve working conditions, which are conducive for female Architects, such as a support system for female Architects with children, with well-established childcare facilities/assistance;
 - v. Mentoring, advisory helplines and training support;
 - vi. Create an ecosystem of support for females through mandatory and voluntarily quotas in public and private practices respectively;
 - vii. Leadership and company commitment to support females in management in achieving gender diversity in the practice.
- k. Actions to tackle the gender pay gap and promotion:

- i. Provide clear criteria for promotion and transparency of career paths and opportunities;
 - ii. Transparency in the remuneration system;
 - iii. Better dissemination of employment legislation and good office practices;
 - iv. Legislative structures to help prevent gender-biased discrimination in the workplace and in the profession;
 - v. Inclusion of equal opportunities clauses in the professional bodies' codes of practice;
 - vi. Returner retraining;
 - vii. More affordable and flexible CPD offerings.
 - viii. More diverse representation of the profession to the public;
 - ix. Embedding of gender equality in both the curriculum and practices of architecture schools, such as:
 1. A more diverse staff profile in schools of architecture;
 2. Monitoring of the performance of architecture schools in improving diversity targets and equal opportunity practices;
 3. Advisory practice notes for both architectural practices and schools of architecture;
 4. More careers information and more diverse representation in promoting architecture as a career.
9. Political Engagement:
- a. Engage with governments to recognize the contribution of women in the construction industry.
 - b. Legislation requirements to ensure gender mainstreaming in all government policies including equal pay and equal opportunities.
10. Encourage more female participation in the Member Section and Architectural Boards.
11. Introduce measures for the implementation of gender equity policies such as:



- a. Campaigns to encourage women to stand for decision-making positions;
- b. Campaigns to empower women and promote their presence in leadership positions in the profession;
- c. Specific arrangements to facilitate participation in the meetings, such as childcare facilities;
- d. Special training courses/seminars