

Establish a Community Outreach Department, Makerere University urged.



The Department of Architecture and Physical Planning, College of Engineering, Design, Art and Technology successfully pulled off the second edition of the Fundis training during a two-day event held at the College on the 13th and 14th of April 2023.

It was during this event that the University was called upon to establish a new Department or administrative unit to coordinate and promote community outreach programmes as a strategy to solve existing community problems.

The Fundis training is part of CEDAT's community outreach programme that is intended to share accumulated scientific knowledge and skills in building design and construction technologies.

Of the 200 participants trained, six (6) were female Fundis from Nakawa Division. The Fundis' event and exhibition for manufacturers of building materials is an annual event held in partnership with various stakeholders.



Some of the participants during the session

The sponsors of the event included the National Building Review Board (NBRB), Steel & Tube, Kenya Commercial Bank (KCB), Hima Cement, Habitat for Humanity Uganda, Crestanks Ltd and Uganda Clays.



Alongside the training was an exhibition by a number of manufacturers of building materials that show cased the some of the building materials on the market and also explained to the fundis the best ways to use them.

The Vice Chancellor of Makerere University, Prof Barnabas Nawangwe, was Chief guest at the event represented by the Deputy Vice Chancellor in charge of Finance and Administration and also Principal CEDAT, Prof. Henry Alinaitwe. He gave remarks at the opening ceremony of the two-day training event where he cautioned local builders across the country to stop stealing building materials if they are to win their clients' trust.

"Some of you go an extra mile of doubling the required materials for example if 1000 bags of cement are needed, you ask for 2000 and later when the client realizes the truth, they stop dealing with you and that's how you are losing it," he said.

Prof Nawangwe also cautioned the builders to desist from using substandard materials which have resulted in erecting weak buildings which fall even before construction is complete.

"Whether it is sand, cement or steel, there are standards and all standards can be tested in the labs. If you are building and you are in doubt about the standard, go to labs and test. Even when you are constructing at intervals, test materials you are using regularly to ascertain their strength," he said.

Speaking at the event, Dr. Venny Nakazibwe, the Deputy Principal of CEDAT said that they want to assess and understand the levels at which the local site fixers (Fundis) are operating in terms of skills, knowledge and innovation in building construction.



PLASCON Paints at their stall

"We want to see how we can help them to get new knowledge to be able to perform better and also for us to be able to connect and understand the community better," she said.

This is a two-way engagement since the students at the College of Engineering, Design, Art and Technology and the Fundis will mutually learn from each other.

According to Dr. Amin Tamale Kigundi, the Head of Department Architecture and Physical Planning, this is the second time that CEDAT is organizing the Fundis'

training and sensitization event in partnership with various stakeholders such as the National Building Review Board (NBRB) and the manufacturers of building materials such as Steel & Tube, Kansai Paints, Hima Cement and Crestanks.

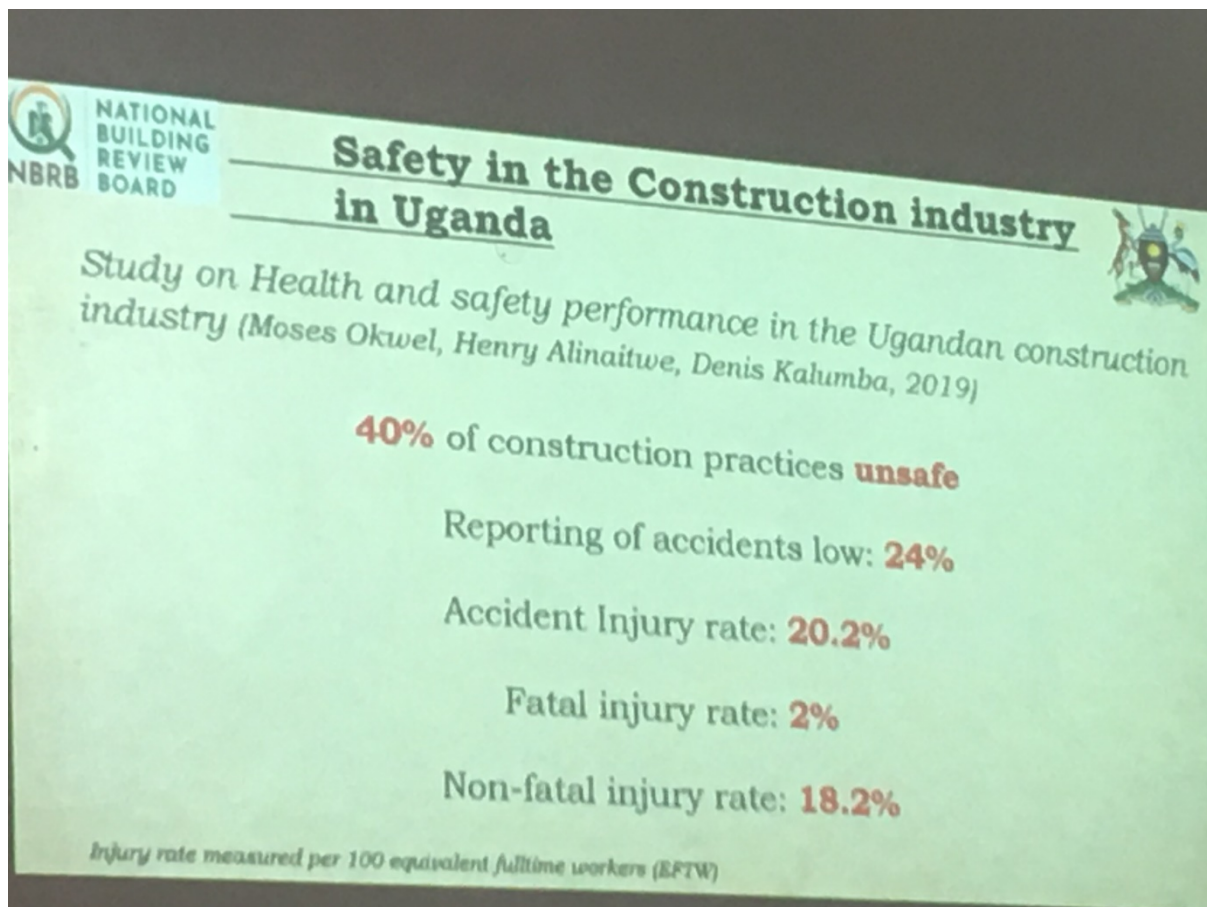


He said in line with the University policy of being more responsive to the needs of the society, the Fundis training workshop aims at linking the University to the community and is one of the key elements of CEDAT's community outreach programme.

‘As a Department and College, it has always been our dream and desire to establish a common platform for sharing the accumulated scientific knowledge with the Fundis on modern building designs and construction technologies,’ noted Dr. Kigundu while welcoming guests to the event.

He said the College recognizes the critical role played by the Fundis in fostering the construction sector, transforming communities and establishing settlements. The training that brought together fundis, masons, painters, metal fabricators also aimed at sharing accumulated scientific knowledge and skills at the Department with the Fundis from the five divisions of Kampala city in order to enhance their skills in modern building design and construction technologies.

The other objectives were to reduce the existing gap between training institutions and the community; to improve the Fundi's understanding of the professional building codes and regulations; to produce a critical mass of change agents that can promote a competitive local construction industry; and to take the University to the community as a strategy to solve existing problems.



Some of the facts and figures shared at the training

Dr. Kigundu noted that majority of the Fundis did not get an opportunity to go to formal institutions of learning but usually learn from fellow Fundis. 'Failing to go to formal training institutions and learning informally can however, create a situation where wrong things are learnt and propagated, leading to construction problems and challenges like the collapse of buildings and loss of life', he noted. Fundis have also been blamed for causing several urban problems like the expansion of the informal settlements and slums.

The Departmental Head also noted that University students were to benefit from the newly established platform, by learning from the good aspects of the Fundis such

asSelf-employment, learning outside the formal education system and learning by doing.

He said based on the experience of the informal contractors and Fundis, it was found possible to vocationalise the learning and training at the Department and even in the entire University and that selected community projects such as the construction of public toiletsin cities will be collaboratively implemented and in partnership with the business sector, students, lecturers, the local community, city governments and the Fundis.

At the closure of the training, the Minister of Works & Transport was represented by Eng. Flavia Bwire, the Executive Secretary, National Building Review Board (NBRB).

She gave the closing remarks where she stressedthe need to expand the Fundis training beyond Kampala region. She also commended Makerere University and CEDAT for sensitizing and engaging the Fundis as a strategy to improve their performance and operations in the construction industry.

She also requested Makerere University to undertake an assessment of the impact of the training on the operation of the Fundis trained before.



Prof. Mukiibi Stephen, makes his presentation

The training covered various aspects that included Land ownerships, Site Analysis, Building Construction Methods & Techniques, Building Laws & Regulations Building Codes & Standards, Safety on Construction Sites, Building Industry Management System (BIMS), Interior and Exterior Design, Painting & Aesthetics.



Practical session

Special appreciation was extended to the sponsors of this event as well as the organizing committee chaired by Prof. Stephen Mukiibi and assisted by Dr. Assumpta Nagenda Musana, Dr. Senkatuka Ian, Dr. Namuganyi Lillian, Madam Amanda Ngabirano, Dr. Ssemwogere Kenneth, Dr. Omolo Frederick, Mr. Nyakwebara Charles, Arch. Mulwana John Bosco, Dr. Namuganyi Lillian and Architect Acellam Bernad.