



# 8<sup>th</sup> INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE "CONSTRUCTION SAFETY & HEALTH"

26 & 27 May 2023

Hotel Hilton Nicosia,  
Engomi, Cyprus

## Wellbeing in Africa Construction Industry

Ehi Iden  
President, OSHAfrica

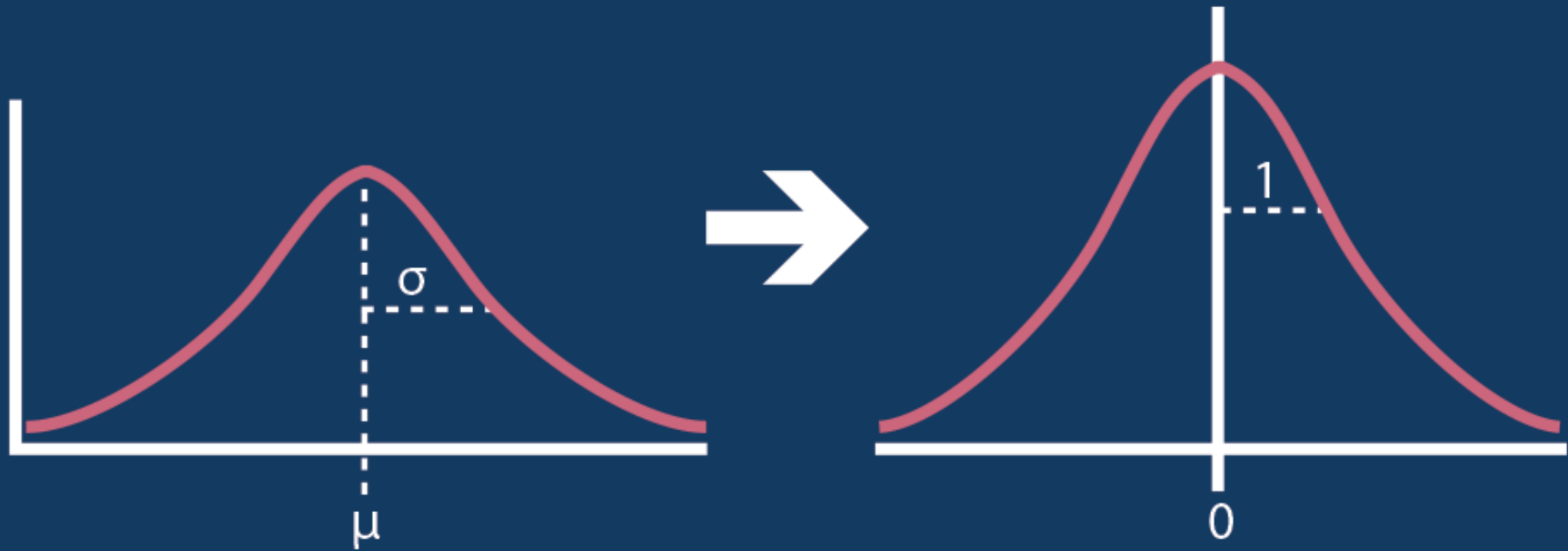




# Construction in Africa

- This is the largest and fastest growing industry in Africa, it has been rated as one of the most important sectors in continent's economy.
- African construction market is valued at \$380 billion with an expected Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 7.4% between 2021 and 2026.
- This is a male dominated sector of the economy where physical strength and resilience seem almost a pre-qualification
- Men are three times as likely to die from suicide than women, according to the Samaritans.
- This sector is poorly regulated with inadequacy in national health and safety legislation
- Has a high degree of poor working conditions and workers' exploitation

# STANDARDIZATION



Current Practices

Recommended Practices



# Wellbeing Risk Enablers

- No barrier of entry into this sector
- Presence of greedy and dishonest operators
- Ignorance of project owners
- Increase in qualified labour shortages
- Poverty
- Presence of a high pool of ignorant casual labourers





# Wellbeing

# So what is Wellbeing?

“Wellbeing – Psychological health at work is characterized by the active promotion and maintenance/sustainability of healthy psychosocial working conditions to sustain individuals’ positive mental health and ability to work productively and creatively, and the active prevention of ill health and poor psychosocial working conditions.” ISSA



# Our Long Term Focus

Wellbeing

Retirement



# Factors Affecting Employees Wellbeing in Construction

Work Environment

Work Processes

Working Conditions

Management System





# Work Environment

- **Working clock-round without definite work hours – this includes night or day and rain or sunshine**
- **Work intensified and poorly structured work environment – employees sometimes sleep on-site**
- **Presence of varied levels of chemicals, presence of dust and other harmful airborne properties as cement, asbestos and silica**
- **Presence of noise exposure which most times last for longer hours**





# Work Processes

- Presence of hazardous equipment mostly used in construction, most of them highly outdated and risky to use
- Physical strength work-dependent processes
- High burden of heavy loads being lifted in construction work processes
- Increased rate of manual handling and awkward postures highly present in construction work processes







# Working Conditions

This has about one of the worse working conditions which includes:

- Longer hours of work
- Poor supervision
- Workers abuse and exploitation
- Absence of structured employment contracts
- High presence of illiteracy and untrained workforce
- Unprecedented work overload and overtime which are in certain cases compulsory





# Management System

- High prevalent of workload
- Unfair human management system
- Poor project management systems
- Project delivery pressures
- Absence of health and wellbeing promotion
- Disease and injury prevention and response programs lacking
- Autocratic employees' management system
- Absence of employees social safety net





# These Ruin Employees Mental Health and Wellbeing





# INTERVENTION





- Enabling laws needed to govern health, safety and wellbeing of employees in construction sector
- Effective pre-requirement standards that must be met by construction companies operators
- Adequate workplace inspection and enforcement
- Health and wellbeing promotion in construction sector
- Train employees on health and wellbeing using infographic approach



- Recommend proper employment contract and safe work conditions
- Employers must consider retirement state of employees as an everyday responsibility
- Automate tasks that are harmful to employees health and wellbeing
- Have a regulated and safe work hours that discourages overtime
- Improved welfare, access to healthcare when needed and implement social safety net



# What gets better?





# The Bottom Line

- Improved mental health and wellbeing
- Improved productivity and profitability
- Reduced hospitalization and rehabilitation cost
- Improved health related lost time





Thank you!