

## THE LOUNGE

**Jane Wangari** is Bamburi Cement Country Health and Safety Manager and Geocycle Director

by Manuel Ntoyai  
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## Briefly describe to us your career journey

I joined Bamburi Cement as an intern in 2008 while I was still in the university where I was pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree in Manufacturing Engineering and Technology at Egerton University. I went back after completing my studies and after six months I was promoted to a new role as Industrial Safety Coordinator at the Mombasa plant where I worked for one and a half years. In September 2010, I got a chance to advance my career at British American Tobacco (BAT) as an Environment, Health and Safety Executive, a position, which I held for four years. Fate would run its course and in 2014, I got an opportunity yet again to work at Bamburi Cement, but this time as the Country Health and Safety Manager. I worked in this position for four years before being promoted to Country Head of Environment, Health and Safety, adding environmental management to my responsibilities. In October last year, the company requested me to provide support in acting capacity as Geocycle Director, a challenge that I gladly took on. In April 1, 2022 I officially took up the role as Geocycle Director besides my other role.

## What does your role at Bamburi Cement entail?

My role involves supporting six sites, three in Nairobi and three in Mombasa and over 1,500 contracted trucks. This, I do by managing and conducting risk assessments, putting proactive measures in place to prevent accidents, such as machine guarding, work at height protection measures, mobile equipment segregation with pedestrians, workforce engagement, among many other

# Tough balancing act for woman engineer, leader



Jane Wangari addresses colleagues during a meeting.

proactive interventions.

## What are some of the challenges you faced as you grew into your career?

First, being a male dominated industry, women are sometimes looked down upon and not given equal opportunities compared to their male colleagues with similar expertise and knowledge. I have also had to let career progression opportunities pass me by so I could take care of my family. Balancing my role after having a new baby has also been challenging. You know how it gets with a new born. Long sleepless nights, then you are having this big meeting the following day where you are expected to be at your best regardless. The men miraculously sleep through it all. I wonder.

## We are witnessing more women working within the construction sector, can you point out some of the misconceptions preventing women from joining the industry?

One misconception is that women can't work on job sites. This is not true as there are variety of positions available for women, the number of

women in managerial positions is also rising as well with many companies being more deliberate about diversity and inclusion.

They also say women are paid lesser in construction industry. This is a fallacy. On the contrary, the pay gap is much less in construction sector compared to other sectors with women earning almost the same amount as their male counterparts.

## Your company is also investing in women, especially with the recent Women on the Wheels initiative. Tell us about it and what it hopes to achieve in the long run?

Bamburi as a company is big on empowering women and this was one of the programmes put in place to do just that. I am honoured to have been among the team that was behind its inception. The programme aims at bridging the employment gap of women in the transport and logistics industry, specifically trucking by training women on road safety. After undergoing the training, the women get employment with our logistics operations partners, such as Isuzu. In December last year, 17

women truck drivers graduated from the programme and were placed with our transporters and are now permanently employed. We recently launched a class of another group of women. Ideally, we are looking to have a minimum of 100 women trained and placed every year.

## You are also the Geocycle Director, what does the role entail?

I oversee that the waste collected from various parts of the country are disposed of correctly in respect to regulatory standards and in alignment to our sustainability goals. As part of our commitment to a zero-waste future, Bamburi Cement through our Geocycle Kenya wing, collects biomass, such as risk husks and other hazardous wastes, such as waste oil and waste tyres and co-process them in our cement kilns. At our kilns, they are used as substitute fuels while simultaneously contributing to the circular economy agenda instead of being dumped at landfills. Yearly, Bamburi Cement collects over 10,000 rice husks from Mwea and Ahero irrigation schemes. Since 2017, we have also been able to collect and safely dispose about 900,000 litres of waste oil in the cement kilns. Further ridding the environment of hazardous waste.

## How important is it for the country to take advantage of the rapidly growing construction?

Our urban population increased to 15 million in 2020 compared to 12 million in 2015. Necessitating increased demands for homes for the growing population and infrastructure development for a growing economy to ease movement of goods and services is vital. This has essentially led to upward growth in the construction industry. The construction industry needs to be receptive to employing women now more than ever lest we experience skills shortage in the industry similar to what has been plaguing the UK for a while now.

## BRIEFLY

## Mob descends on NMS affordable housing bidders in Jericho estate

by Wahinya Henry  
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A team of prospective investors keen on placing bids to put up new houses under the affordable housing programme filed for dear life in fear of an irate mob that had allegedly planned to lynch them.

The bidders had arrived early in the morning in Jericho estate, one of the 10 old estates in Nairobi targeted for demolition by Nairobi Metropolitan Services (NMS) to inspect and identify open spaces proposed for putting up new buildings.

Deputy director of housing and urban renewal at NMS Marrion Rono dispatched on May 10 a team of officials led by senior official, David Kiboi to the ground accompanied by the bidders.

But as mayhem reigned, protesting tenants held hostage for three hours Kiboi and his team inside Ofafa Jericho Social Hall as the bidders who had been ordered to stay in a separate room left with ough notice.

Inside the hall, boos and heckling drowned the voice of reason as tenants and youths claiming to be the offsprings of original owners of the old houses heckled Kiboi, with efforts to calm down the tenants backfired.

Attempts by district officer, David Sanga, chief Jacson Ngunyi, in the presence of estate officer Veronica Maina to calm the tenants for the meeting to proceed also fell on deaf ears.

Neither was the chairman of Jericho Lumumba Residents Association Walter Ogoli spared. Shouts of words, such as 'traitor' rent the air in his attempt to explain the position of his association, which has not toed the line by Ofafa Jericho Estate tenants who have rejected the houses be demolished and instead be renovated.

There was relative calm or truce when the host and called by the area welfare group John Kimani and his association counterpart, John Muganda and Peter Mbugua of Lumumba Residents Association, rose to speak.

"Residents here have rejected the demolition of the houses. We demand nothing short of renovation," Kimani thundered as Kiboi declined to receive a petition to deliver to major general Mohammed Badi, the NMS director general demanding he reverse the demolition plans.

He charged that NMS had treated residents as non-citizens, singling out Rono for being high handed and not prepared to listen to grievances raised by tenants or respond to official communication to NMS.

"By dispatching people to the ground and sidelining us means demolition of the houses had already been pre-determined in board rooms by the rich bent on uprooting the poor from state houses," he said as the gathering cheered him on.

## DÉCOR BY BETTY MUINDI @BETTYMUINDI

# Let your space ooze elegance with bold brass

We all like to decorate our homes in the best way possible according to the trends and our creativity. Brass is metal that is closely related to Indian roots, but has been widely embraced by other cultures. Moreover, the rich antiques that are used to decorate the home are also mostly made up of Brass. Brass is back in the trend of home décor. If this is a style that you would want for your home, here is the best way to go about it

### 1. Mirrors and frames

Incorporate brass antique frames and mirrors to spruce up your walls. Antique frames and mirrors instantly add sophistication to any room. On dark walls, brass and copper can make a bold statement. The unique design stands out and the brightness of the metallics provides



a fantastic contrast to the darker backdrop.



### 2. Urli or Bowls

Copper urli or a brass Urli is a unique and attractive item for home décor. Its ravishing look embellishes the interiors of your home décor. Fill the urli with water and add fresh flowers for a gorgeous addition to your table setting or float a few tealight candles in it to light up your space. To enhance the fragrance in your home, add a few drops of your favourite essential oil or

rosewater to the water in the urli. With its antique charm, it can be a great collectable or showpiece in your living room or balcony. You can place this Urli on a teapoy in your living room, in your front yard or garden.



### 3. Brass planters

Brass planters can add a charm to your home décor. Moreover, it could be placed indoors also as they are dirt free. If you have spacious living room, Brass planters could be placed on a stand in the corner of your living room or near the couch.

### 4. Brass Flower Vase

Decorating interiors with flower vases is common, but a delightful way to add a charm and sense of peace to your home décor is to as antique brass and copper containers. The easiest way to incorporate warm metallics is to use them as a table centerpiece. For example, you can use a 1910 antique copper milk can,

add some colorful flowers - and voila, immediate metallic warmth. Teapots work perfectly for something on a smaller scale. Place some beautiful real or artificial colourful flowers inside the vase.

You can also place the vase on the corner shelf of your living room, low shelf of a TV stand, on a shelf that is near to the couch.

