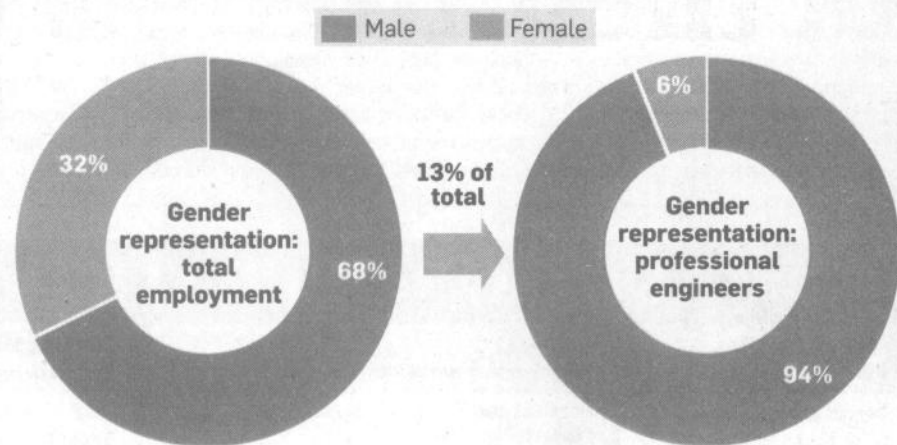


Basic education failing engineering sector

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Employment profile by gender



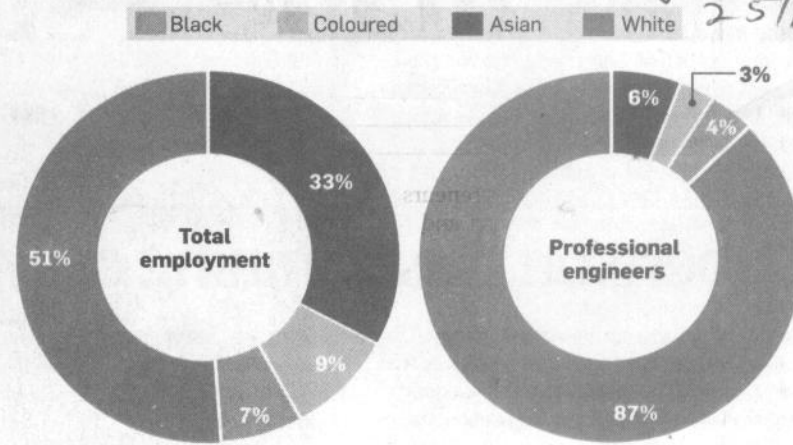
Source: Consulting Engineers SA

Graphics24

87%

A bi-annual survey indicated that 87% of employed professional engineers in the country were white and 94% were male

Employment profile by race



Source: Consulting Engineers SA

Graphics24

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The quality of the country's basic education is one of the main reasons the engineering sector is struggling to transform.

This is according to Consulting Engineers SA (Cesa) CEO Chris Campbell, who spoke to City Press shortly after the organisation released its Bi-annual Economic and Capacity Survey for the period July to December 2016.

"The obstacle is first and foremost getting more young people in the pipeline. I think the issues that we have in basic education in getting young black learners and facilities and teaching commitment to be able to excel at maths and science, which are the foundations

for studying engineering, have been a setback, in my opinion," he said.

He said the industry loses some practitioners to the financial services sector.

According to Campbell, the organisation has attempted to improve its pace of transforming the sector through the Young Professionals' Forum, which is headed by Amanda Masondo-Mkhize, as well as the Business of Consulting Engineering programme.

He said the latter was meant to skill engineers to run viable engineering businesses instead of going on to study business courses such as MBAs and later being tempted to join banks and other financial services institutions.

The bi-annual survey indicated that 87% of

employed professional engineers in the country were white and 94% were male.

"The appointment of black executive staff - including black, Asian and coloured staff - measured by the contribution of black executive directors, nonexecutive directors, members and partners as a percentage of total executive staff increased to 45.7% from 40.8% and 39.5% in the previous two surveys. The appointment of black executive staff has steadily increased from 28.1% in the June 2012 survey. This shows real significant progress in terms of industry transformation," Campbell said.

Competition in the industry had seen some companies charging fees that were too low, leading to the Competition Commission's

ruling outlawing the Engineering Council of SA's fee guidelines, which stated the recommended fees charged in the industry, he added.

"Regulation issues, including the procurement of consulting engineering services, remains one of the biggest challenges faced by the industry.

"Unrealistic tendering fees remain a concern for members, while the extended time it takes in which to finalise a proposal is affecting profitability in the industry," Campbell said.

The industry does not have inflation-based updated fee guidelines and Campbell said Cesa was engaging National Treasury on the issue.