

100
INSPIRATIONAL WOMEN IN MINING
2024

WOMEN IN MINING UK FOREWORD

Conversations around the urgent need for critical minerals to help the world shift to a low carbon economy have entered the mainstream. Governments across the world are putting critical mineral policy front and centre of their manifestos, the automotive and tech sectors are urgently assessing their supply chains and mining companies are grappling with how to supply what is needed responsibly. It is estimated that to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 we will need capital investment of up to US\$800 in projects focused on cobalt, copper, lithium, nickel and rare earth metals¹. What is often missing from these conversations is the women and people who will help us to achieve this.

Women in Mining UK (WIM UK) is delighted to present the sixth edition of the “100 Global Inspirational Women in Mining” (WIM100). This is an Initiative that has been running for over a decade which helps to celebrate and showcase the breadth of female talent within the mining industry, and to identify role models for future generations.

Given the sector’s central role in this shift to a low carbon economy, the WIM100 allows us to celebrate the women who are breaking barriers and driving the innovation needed to support this one in a generation change. It highlights the achievements of women at all levels and in all roles – from those working at site, in local communities and in head office. Their diverse experiences and perspectives enrich the industry, driving advancements in sustainability, safety, and community engagement.

According to the World Bank², women make up only 15% of the global mining workforce, a number that has remained flat since the 2022 WIM100 edition. According to the World Bank, this can be explained by the unique challenges

facing women in the industry such as safety concerns, exposure to hazardous materials, extreme working conditions and the higher risk women face of sexual and gender-based violence.

We are also seeing a trend, especially in the United States, of companies scaling back their diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives, including incentives in executive compensation. This includes the US auto maker Ford and tractor maker Deere & Co. amongst others.³

This is why it is critical that the mining industry leads from the front and continues to push for gender diversity. For one thing, it just makes business sense. According to the World Bank, companies with gender-diverse leadership are 25% more likely to outperform their least-diverse peers. This aligns with our own research, developed alongside Arch and White & Case, which found that listed mining companies with one or more women on the board have consistently outperformed those with fewer or none⁴.



Gina Jardine
Chair



Dr. Stacy Hope
Managing Director

There are great examples of positive action being taken across the industry including by Rio Tinto following the publication of their Everyday Respect Report, Newmont's targets for gender parity at their Ahafo North project in Ghana and Vale's commitment to Gender Equality⁵.

We would like to see this become the norm. We are calling on the wider industry to keep prioritising diversity, equity and inclusion and to be the sector that shows others how it is done. We recognise that material change takes time, we want to see companies setting targets, prioritising psychological safety and setting and implementing company policy that puts DEI at the centre of how a company operates.

By sharing stories, fostering mentorship, and advocating for equal opportunities, we can inspire the next generation of female leaders in mining. Together, we can create an environment where everyone, regardless of gender, can thrive and contribute to a more inclusive and equitable industry that responsibly provides the critical minerals we so urgently need.

Let us, as an industry, celebrate the trailblazers and champions who have paved the way and commit ourselves to supporting and uplifting women in mining. The future is bright, and it is female.

1 <https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/energy/breaking-barriers-for-women-in-mining>
2 <https://www.ft.com/content/1b317991-ef8c-4f1b-bcca-f80ac68fa6c>
3 <https://www.iea.org/reports/global-critical-minerals-outlook-2024/executive-summary>
4 <https://www.whitecase.com/insight-our-thinking/changing-face-mining-executive-summary>
5 https://www.icmm.com/website/publications/pdfs/social-performance/2023/factsheet_it-starts-with-us.pdf?cb=59969

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INTRODUCTION

Since its founding in 2006, Women in Mining (WIM UK) has been working tirelessly to make the mining industry a rewarding and inclusive place for women.

This edition of the WIM100 is kindly sponsored by BMO Capital Markets, BCG (Boston Consulting Group), Innomotics and Stratum International. The WIM100, first launched in 2013, has focused on celebrating inspirational women and highlighting their transformative contributions to mining globally.

They are trailblazers, problem-solvers, and advocates who have broken barriers to create a more sustainable and inclusive industry.

Now in its sixth year, the WIM100 brings together a list of 100 women, living and working across the world and helps us to shine a spotlight on their impact on our industry. It also allows us to profile the female role models who will help inspire a new generation of women to join the industry.

Each year, we continue to see an increase in the number of inspirational women nominated to be a WIM100. In 2022, we received nominations for 570 women, whereas in 2024, we received 1,348 nominations for 570 individual women from 59 countries. This saw the WIM UK team working for over six months to select the 100 finalists.

The women in this book have been selected due to their inspirational actions. This includes being a trailblazer and making positive and impactful changes so the industry can operate in a more safe, sustainable and inclusive way; a commitment to advocating and empowering those working in the mining industry and beyond; and perseverance in the face of adversity. Their stories provide inspiration and valuable insight for all.

We believe the recognition and celebration of these inspirational women and their stories are integral to changing attitudes in the sector.

WHAT MAKES A WIM100 WOMAN?

SHE'S A TRAILBLAZER

A WIM100 woman is a pioneer. She is an innovator. She makes positive and impactful changes so that the industry operates in a way that is responsible, sustainable, and inclusive.



SHE ADVOCATES, EMPOWERS AND CREATES A BETTER ENVIRONMENT FOR FUTURE LEADERS

A WIM100 woman is a proactive advocate in the mining industry, fostering inclusivity and empowerment, while creating opportunities for others and ensuring a diverse talent pipeline from entry-level to leadership positions.



SHE RISES UP TO THE CHALLENGES SHE FACES

A WIM100 woman is resilient and determined. She has the courage to speak up, challenge the status quo and break barriers.



**THANKS TO THE
GENEROUS SUPPORT
OF OUR PARTNERS
AND MEMBERS.
MEMBERSHIP IS
FREE AND OPEN
TO EVERYONE,
REGARDLESS
OF GENDER
OR LOCATION.**

JOIN US

Attend our popular events and networking forums. Membership is free and open to everyone regardless of gender or location.

Visit www.womeninmining.org.uk/register to sign up and join.

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X @WIM_UK

ig @women_in_mining_uk

yt Women in mining (UK)

Image courtesy – Philip Mostert

ABOUT WOMEN IN MINING UK

Women in Mining UK (WIM UK) is a non-profit volunteer organisation dedicated to promoting the employment, retention and advancement of women in the mining industry by:

- Advocating and speaking for women in the mining sector
- Informing industry participants of the challenges and opportunities women are finding in pursuing careers in mining
- Offering thought leadership, analysis and research on the business case for diversity, inclusion and the economic advancement of women in the sector
- Building a strong international network to progress career aspirations
- Supporting the development of mining policies vis-a-vis a gender lens
- Working with leading conference organisers, through our initiative #WIMvoice, to showcase the breadth of female professional talent and ensure diversity of speakers
- Supporting professional development. Initiatives include a partnership with Women on Boards UK for Non-Executive Director aspirants
- Hosting regular educational and networking events for our members
- Working with universities and other organisations to raise awareness of mining as a career choice for women. We are proud to sponsor post graduate scholarships at the Camborne School of Mines at the University of Exeter and Imperial College of London, as well as organise paid summer internships in conjunction with mining companies
- Celebrating women's success by sharing their stories with our "100 Global Inspirational Women in Mining" publications and across our social media channels

FOREWORDS FROM OUR SPONSORS

BMO



William Smith
Head of International
BMO Capital Markets



Gary Mattan
Head of Investment &
Corporate Banking EMEA
BMO Capital Markets



For the fifth consecutive edition, BMO is once again proud to celebrate the accomplishments and contributions of the 100 Global Inspirational Women in Mining. We invite you to read their stories and learn more about the incredible impact that diverse talent has on the metals and mining sector.

BMO is driven by a single purpose: to Boldly Grow the Good in business and life. Our Purpose reinforces our commitment to progress for a thriving economy, a sustainable future and an inclusive society. Through a broad spectrum of programs and partnerships, we are committed to driving inclusion and an equitable future for all.

This year, BMO held its 20th Equity Through Education Trading Day and raised over C\$1.5 million toward post-secondary educational support for thousands of diverse and bright students around the world.

Our Equity Through Education program continues to benefit many women through several partnerships including Financial Women's Association, VersaFi, The Brokerage and Imperial College London. BMO has sponsored an annual scholarship at Imperial College London, since 2015 to support the next generation of women as they pursue a degree in Metals and Energy Finance.

To all the women featured in this year's publication, we congratulate you. BMO is honoured to be a part of your inspirational journey and we look forward to following your continued success.

BCG



Jolien Van Goethem
Principal



Adrian Schulte Steinberg
Managing Director & Partner



The mining industry continues to face complex challenges and opportunities. In 2024, five major trends are reshaping the sector:

- **Energy Transition and Geopolitical Tensions and Cost Imperatives:** The global shift to renewable energy and electric vehicles is increasing demand for critical minerals like lithium, copper, and nickel. Supply tightness, along with resource nationalism and protectionist policies, is reshaping global trade patterns while requiring to keep a tight grip on cost – allowing for flexibility in case of unforeseen change.
- **AI and Productivity Gains:** While AI has great potential, many companies struggle to harness its full value. Those who succeed are integrating AI with business strategies and driving workforce engagement to foster continuous innovation.
- **Sustainability and ESG Priorities:** ESG performance is now essential for shareholder value. Companies are embracing circular economy principles and focusing on cost-efficient ways to meet emissions and sustainability goals.
- **Exploration Drive:** As mineral demand rises, exploration is critical. Companies are investing in technology, partnerships, and efficient processes to speed up discoveries and secure future supply amidst rising costs and declining ore grades.
- **Talent Shortages:** The industry faces a significant skills gap, especially in high-demand roles. Companies are adopting a holistic approach to workforce development, emphasising reskilling, collaboration, and long-term talent pipelines.

Successful mining companies are adapting by diversifying their portfolios, investing in AI and digital tools, and embedding sustainability into their core strategies. They are also building resilient supply chains, accelerating exploration efforts, and nurturing talent through innovative skilling programs and inclusive work cultures. By leveraging new technologies and partnerships, these companies are positioning themselves for long-term growth and leadership in a dynamic global landscape.

BCG continues to be a proud partner of Women in Mining UK. The achievements of this year's inspirational women demonstrate the critical role of diverse leadership in navigating the evolving landscape of mining, and we believe their impact will help drive meaningful change across the industry.

INNOMOTICS



Ivonne Maruri
Vice President for
Sustainability and DEI



Oliver Beck
Senior Vice President
for Solutions

INNOMOTICS

Empowering Diversity for a Sustainable and Inclusive Future: Innomotics Joins the 2024 WIM100 Initiative.

At Innomotics, we believe that true innovation and sustainability come from empowering our employees, customers, and partners. Together, we are working towards a more decarbonized and inclusive world.

Our commitment to fostering a culture of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) is unwavering. We are dedicated to creating an environment where every individual is respected, valued, and given the opportunity to unlock their full potential. By promoting a fair, open, and inclusive atmosphere, we ensure that everyone has equal opportunities to thrive.

It is with great pride that we announce Innomotics has joined the “100 Global Inspirational Women in Mining” (WIM100) initiative for its 2024 edition. This step highlights our strong dedication to delivering value not just to our customers, employees, and investors, but also to society and the environment. We recognize that empowering inclusion is essential to achieving a positive and sustainable impact.

By partnering with WIM UK and supporting their WIM100 initiative, we reinforce our commitment to this transformative cause. We know that the best solutions for our diverse markets come from diverse perspectives, and that this wealth of ideas can only be unlocked through collaboration and teamwork.

The global mining industry has made significant strides in embracing DEI, and organisations like Women in Mining are playing a pivotal role in advancing these goals. We are honoured to be part of an initiative that not only identifies and celebrates women leaders in mining but also inspires future generations with stories of success, fostering a more inclusive, prosperous, and sustainable industry.

Together, we are building a future where diversity drives innovation, and inclusion powers growth.

STRATUM INTERNATIONAL



Nichole McCulloch
Managing Director

On behalf of Stratum International, I am thrilled to congratulate this year's 100 Global Inspirational Women in Mining. These remarkable women show that diversity and inclusion (D&I) are not just ideals to aspire to but essential drivers of success in our industry. Projects like this, and groups like Women in Mining, continue to spotlight the challenges that women still face. While this is a time to celebrate, we cannot become complacent. Women continue to face harassment, assault, and discrimination, and in certain operating jurisdictions, their rights are minimal or ignored. It is up to all of us to make our industry – and the wider world – a safer, more inclusive place for everyone. This is not only the right thing to do but also makes strong business sense.

With growing competition for talent, the need for inclusive workforces has never been more pressing. Yet women make up only 8-17% of the global mining workforce and 13% of C-suite positions, despite representing nearly half of the world's population. This underrepresentation highlights the need for our sector to re-evaluate its talent strategies and showcase how women can make significant impacts in a dynamic industry that leads in innovation and drives the transition to a low-carbon world.

At Stratum, we believe inclusion goes beyond ticking boxes – it's about creating environments where diverse perspectives are actively sought. Diversity means little without inclusion. Our work with clients focuses not only on filling board and executive roles today but also on identifying emerging talent across sectors and geographies, unrestricted by gender, age, ethnicity, or background. Having been involved in the inaugural 100 Global Inspirational Women in Mining book in 2013, I now proudly support this initiative as the owner of a female-led business dedicated to advising and placing top-tier, diverse talent.

Sponsoring the 100 Global Inspirational Women in Mining aligns naturally with Stratum's values and our commitment to fostering diversity in leadership. We are honoured to recognise these women's contributions and look forward to continuing our work in helping the mining sector build a brighter, more inclusive future.



Image courtesy of Charlotte Knee Photography



IN MEMORIAM

WIM UK IS HONOURED TO HAVE CELEBRATED THE INSPIRATIONAL WOMEN WHO HAVE DEDICATED THEIR LIVES TO CHANGING THOSE OF OTHERS.

THE WIM100 Alumnae bid farewell to three women who were leading lights in our industry. We want to take this opportunity to shine a spotlight on all that they achieved:



KRISTY CHRISTENSEN

(WIM100 2020)

Kristy was named as a WIM100 in 2020 due to her advocacy around improving working conditions for women at mine sites. She started her career at a coal mine in North Goonyella in Queensland, Australia where she was one of the only underground geologists on site. Initially she was banned from attending underground training because the trainer did not believe a woman should be working underground. She faced other challenges such as no female toilets on 12-hour shifts and having to wear PPE designed for men.

In 2018, she founded a female inclusion consultancy, **Shesfreetobe**, which focused on helping companies to create a workplace where women can thrive through better health, safety and wellbeing policy. According to her friend and colleague Kit Wilson, 'Kristy was also one of the bravest people I have known. She could walk into any organisation, often full of big burly blokes standing at the back of the room with their arms folded, and within a short space of time she would have them nodding in agreement and making suggestions on improvements in their workplace.'

Tragically, Kristy was diagnosed with stage 4 cancer in 2022 and according to those who knew her best, she bore the diagnosis with courage and characteristic cheerfulness. She will be deeply missed.



REBECCA BWEUPE-SIWALE

(WIM100 2022)

Rebecca was a second-generation miner brought up in the Copperbelt, Zambia. She led the way for women in Zambia, becoming the country's first woman engineer and the first female miner at Mopani Copper Mines. After obtaining her MBA from Cleveland State University, she moved to the US to work with Freeport McMoRan before joining FLSmidth in 2012. Throughout her career she was passionate about diversity and inclusion. She was a founding member of Woman in Mining Utah, and was the inaugural Chair of the Society for Mining, Metallurgy & Exploration Inclusion and Diversity Committee. Her passion, determination and leadership made her a deserving WIM100.

She touched the lives of so many of her colleagues and supported many throughout their career journeys. She is survived by her three daughters Suwi, Willa and Hannah. Her impact and legacy in our industry will continue to live on and while she is gone, she will certainly not be forgotten.



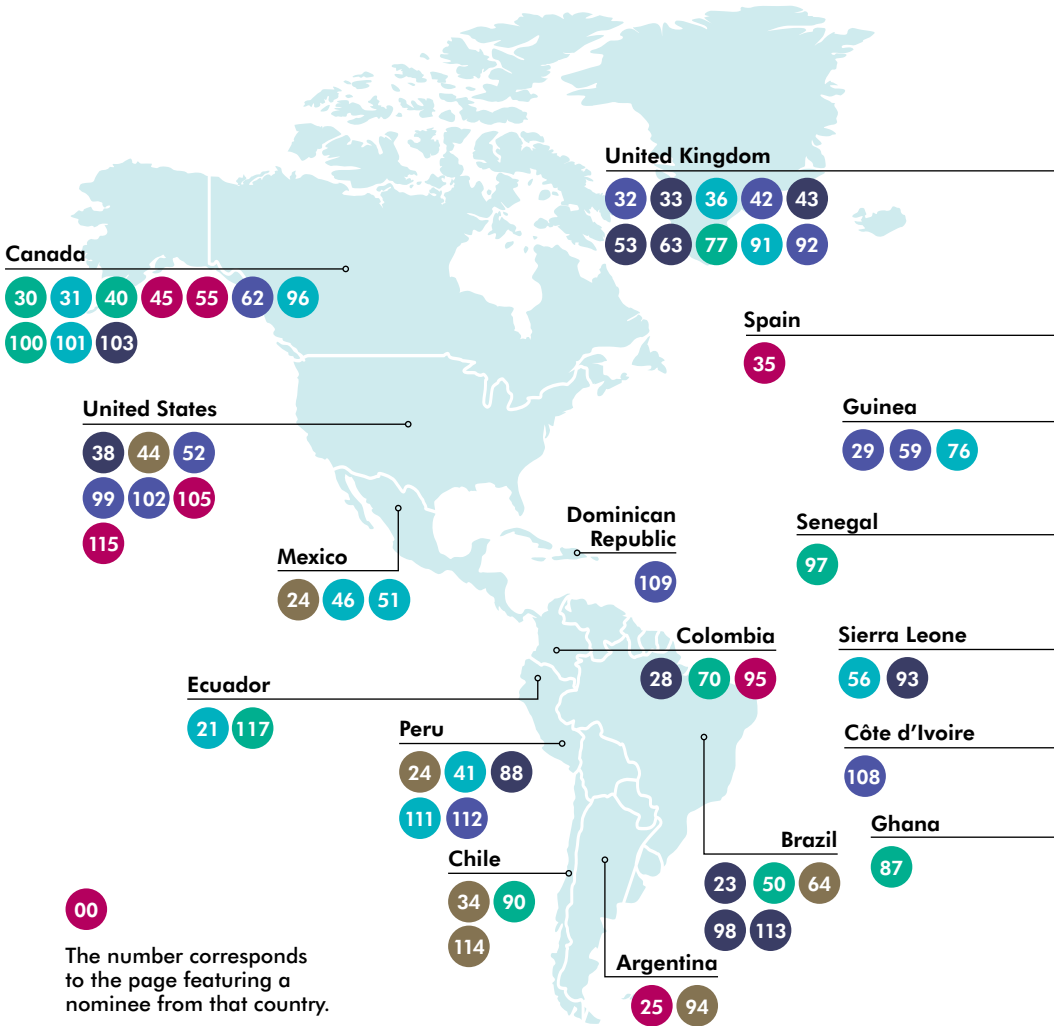
MARIANNA BOZA

(WIM100 2022)

Marianna was a fierce advocate for the mining industry's contribution to the social and economic development of local communities. This extended to her passion for supporting women working in the industry. With three friends, she formed Women in Mining in Colombia in March 2019 and acted as President. One initiative she was proud of was WIM Colombia's Champions Programme, encouraging men in leadership to promote and implement actions to foster gender diversity and inclusion. Equally rewarding was the opportunity to bring the International Finance Corporation Gender Tool Kit to Colombia, with the support of the Canadian Embassy, enabling companies to be trained by the IFC on how to pursue gender equality initiatives.

She believed that in promoting inclusivity not just as an ethical imperative but as a smart strategy for business growth. Her passion and commitment will always be remembered and her legacy globally and in Colombia will live on.

THE GLOBAL DISTRIBUTION OF OUR 2024 WIM100s



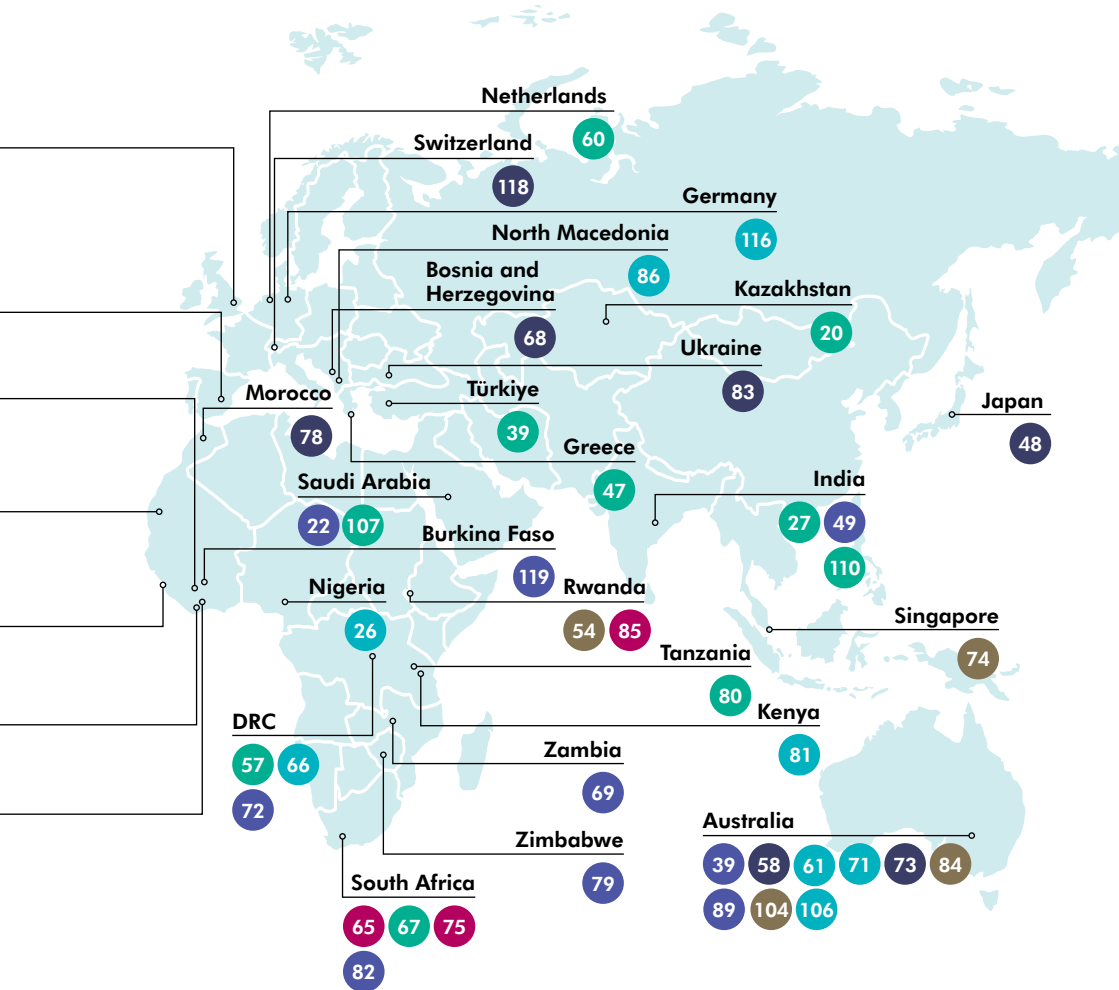




Image courtesy of Charlotte Knee Photography



2024 EDITION OF THE 100 GLOBAL INSPIRATIONAL WOMEN IN MINING

Congratulations

Sophia **Adamopoulos**

María Isabel
Aillón Vázquez

Baydaa **Almajed**

Juliana **Andrade**

Elizabeth **Araux Sánchez**

Mercedes **Arguello**

Comfort **Asokoro-Ogaji**

Gayatri **Bandi**

Claudia **Bejarano**

Maggy **Belen Romero
Arribasplata**

Maria Cristina
Bertoni Ferreira

Beth **Borody**

Laura **Brooks**

Abbi **Buxton**

Angélica **Cabrera**

Marta **Cerati**

Emma **Chapman**

Banu **Çolak**

Wendi **Cooksey**

Susie **Corlett**

Silvana **Costa**

Ruth **Escobar Juárez**

Katherine **Evans**

Katie **Fedosenko**

Linda **Figueroa**

Catherine **Fitzgerald**

Karen **Flores**

Vithleem **Gazea**

Yuki **Ghantous**

Helen **Gibson**

Nathalia **Gomide**

Ana Maria
Gonzalez Herrera

Deanna **Hall**

Naomi **Hodgkinson-Lee**

Katarzyna **Janik**

Anne **Johnson**

Esther **Kandeh**

Godelive **Kanga**

Michelle **Keegan**

Fanta **Keita**

Anastasia **Kuskova**

Virginia **Lawson**

Jillian **Lennartz**

Maria Elisa **Lloyd**

Camilla **Lott**

Nkanyezi **Luthuli**

Diamante **M. Kafuti**

Innocentia **Mahlangu**

Vildana **Mahmutovic**

Mfikeyi **Makayi**

Marcela **Marín Rincón**

Danielle **Martin**

Marie Anne
Mazangu Kumbi

Ashley **McCarthy-Griffiths**

Zanna **McComish**

Robyn Sally **Mellet**

Denise **Molmou**

Kathryn **Moore**

Hanane **Mourchid**

Faith **Mutete**

Mariam **Mwaiswelo**

Michelle **Mwambela**

Candice **Naidoo**

Olena
Neroda-Nikolaichuk

Bianca **Newcombe**

Henriette **Niragire**

Katerina **Novakova**

Grace **Ofori-Sarpong**
Akuffo

Deysi Angelica
Olarte Quispe

Anita **Parbhakar-Fox**

Solange **Pérez**

Lisa **Pinney**

Louise **Porteus**

Hannah Rebecca **Pratt**

Mercedes **Rodriguez**

Giovanna **Romero**

Brooke **Rudolph**

Rokhaya **Samba Ep Diene**

Ana **Sanches**

Melissa **Sanches Rocha**

Yuksel Asli **Sari**

Jackie **Scales**

Jessica **Scanlan**

Sonia **Scarselli**

Jessica **Simpson**

Corinne **Smit**

Julie Xiuli **Song**

Nadia **St Jean**

Pauline **Tahi Mongnin**

Megan **Tibbals**

Anjna **Tiwari**

Julia **Torreblanca**

Nataly **Vasquez Alzamora**

Aline **Veloso**

Fernanda **Vergara**

Cristina Maria **Villegas**

Tanja **Winter**

Claudia Silvana
Wisum Yankuam

Alicia **Wright**

Payidwendé Priscille **Zongo**



“ I have worked in several countries, and I feel invigorated every time I immerse myself in a new culture and meet new professionals.”

SOPHIA ADAMOPOULOS

Company: Caravan Resources
Title: Group Chief Geologist – Operations
Country: Kazakhstan

A postcard from a fellow geologist was the catalyst for Sophia’s mining career. She bought a one-way ticket to Kalgoorlie, Western Australia and spent seven years learning about mining and progressing up the career ladder. In her late twenties she moved to Argentina as a Senior Project Geologist. She says “I loved immersing myself in a different culture and learning the language. This job led to other international jobs.”

Sophia has now been working in the industry for 20 years, specialising in resource drilling and mining geology at open pit operations. Her experience ranges from brownfield exploration to commissioning and setting up systems for mining. She has a talent for introducing automation to processes, maximising profit, promoting a safe culture and developing high-performance teams.

As a leader, her team knows she has their back. She doesn’t micromanage and allows her team to grow ideas into workable solutions, so they feel heard and valued. Sophia fosters an environment of constant exchange, asking her colleagues to contribute their opinions for discussion. Sophia is proud of supporting and training local geologists that asked for her help. In Laos, through professional development, she created a geology team that was made up of nationals and in Kazakhstan she trained up her successor, again leading to the nationalisation of the team.

Her biggest career challenges have come from the impact of external factors such as the 2008 financial crisis and the drop in gold price. Sophia says, “career paths are forged through a combination of luck, right time right place, accepting risk and change, reputation and perseverance. Dream big and focus on a path to get there but expect a lot of curve balls.”



“Graduating as a lawyer and finding a meaningful purpose in connecting legal practice with social impact has shaped my career.”

MARÍA ISABEL AILLÓN VÁSCONEZ

Company: Pérez Bustamante & Ponce Abogados

Title: Partner

Country: Ecuador

Throughout childhood, María Isabel watched her mother championing women’s rights and leading economic empowerment initiatives. This inspired her to become a lawyer, believing it would give her the opportunity to make a positive impact on society.

In her early days she was hesitant but says, “I was fortunate to have generous male mentors, and I was able to break through gender and generational biases.” María Isabel works in the country’s largest law firm, and was the first female partner, co-leading the Energy and Natural Resources Department.

She leverages her career to empower women and promote diversity in the industry. One initiative close to her heart, is co-founding WIM Ecuador, creating an organisation that is a model for gender equity in the extractive sector. She led the first survey on women’s employment and gender pay gap and pioneered the presentation of a gender public policy paper for the mining sector to the Ministry of Energy. She says, “granting the first scholarship from our Soy Minera programme to a young leader, the daughter of artisanal miners, touched me deeply and made me proud of the impact the organisation is having.”

In her personal life, María Isabel says facing her mother’s cancer diagnosis during the pandemic and just as the WIM Ecuador was launching was daunting. “Becoming a caregiver for a loved one is one of the hardest yet most meaningful experiences. It has taught me to value health, life, and family more than ever before; and the importance of maintaining hope, even in the toughest times.”



“By focusing on their learning, skills, and growth, I was able to elevate performance and ensure our team stood out in our business unit and throughout the entire organisation.”

BAYDAA SAAD ALMAJED

Company: Ma'aden
Title: Budgeting & Planning Manager
Country: Saudi Arabia

Baydaa believes her credentials as a Chartered Accountant and a Fellow of the Saudi Organization for Certified Public Accountants underscore her commitment to the highest standards of financial management and accounting practice. Her decision to move into mining was inspired by a keen interest in financial management and the strategic role resources play in the global economy.

In her first position as a Senior Financial Analyst, she made a concerted effort to not only excel as a Finance Manager but also to grasp the fundamentals of mining engineering. She sees this dual focus as crucial to performing her role effectively, though it remains a significant challenge.

As Budgeting and Planning Manager, with a focus on optimising financial performance and supporting the company's growth, Baydaa is particularly proud of building and developing her team to become one of the best across the entire Ma'aden organisation.

Baydaa is a trailblazer who consistently pursues personal development and excellence across all her projects. She not only excels in her immediate responsibilities but also extends her leadership to empower other young women, setting a precedent for future leaders, breaking barriers and paving the way for a more inclusive and empowered workplace.



“Experience has taught me the importance of flexibility, innovation and resilience, preparing me to confront challenges with confidence and competence.”

JULIANA ANDRADE

Company: Equinox Gold
Title: Human Resources Coordinator
Country: Brazil

Influenced primarily by her mother, who had been working at the National Mining Agency since the age of 18, Juliana began her mining career at Ferrous Resources in 2008 through an internship in the Human Resources department. Almost three years ago, she joined Equinox Gold Brazil as Corporate Human Resources Coordinator and took on the challenge of establishing the Diversity and Inclusion department from scratch.

With limited resources, she was able to develop a comprehensive strategy, action plans, and quick wins that demonstrated the value of the project, persuading senior management to commit support to the initiatives. Equinox employs 1,800, including 100 young professionals—over 60% of whom are now women, reflecting Juliana’s impact. In her role overseeing People Development and Internal Communications, she integrates diversity and inclusion into training, while also prioritising minority hiring for young professional to build a future leadership base with more diverse profiles.

Juliana says, “currently, women only make up thirteen per cent of our workforce and nine per cent of leadership positions. We know that our strategy will bring results in the medium to long term, and it will be much more sustainable than bringing women from other regions to work in our remotely located mines.”

Juliana is inspired in her role by Equinox’s VP of Administration and Finance, Angela Vasconcelos, who was also recognised as a WIM100 in 2022. “She is a strong and powerful woman who challenges those around her. Beyond her exceptional technical skills, she has an ability to combine firm leadership with empathy, creating a work environment where excellence, diversity and well-being are equally valued.”



“ I recognise and thank every woman that has fought for the rights we have now. I hope that one day we won't have to fight anymore.”

ELIZABETH ARAUX SÁNCHEZ

Company: Universidad de Sonora
Title: Retired Professor of Mining Engineering
Country: México

Elizabeth has dedicated her life to the promotion, development, and empowerment of women in the industry. Through her 35-year academic career, Elizabeth has demonstrated unwavering commitment to her community and a deep love for her work.

She had to fight for her first job as an operational geologist at the Sonora Barite Mine as women were not allowed in operations. Aged 22, Elizabeth asked to speak directly with the mine manager and to persuade him that she had the skills to take on the role. Moving to the Universidad de Sonora, she faced further discrimination but nine years later was leading Mining Engineering at the University. She secured funding for new laboratories and equipment, developed the academic programme, and achieved external accreditation for the university's technical qualifications.

Elizabeth created the “*Pabellon Minero Infantil*” (Children's Mining Pavilion) initiative, taking it to rural communities across Mexico to teach children about mining. She has organised hundreds of scholarships for students at the Universidad de Sonora, many of whom had participated in her initiative. She has written two books about the experiences of women in mining, authored books on geology, published numerous research papers and wrote the children's book “*Una Nave Especial Inigualable*” (A Unique Spaceship) to inspire girls to study STEM.

Elizabeth says that “working as a university professor with the associated administrative responsibilities, at the same time as raising my two children, was demanding in time and energy. But both roles were equally important to me.”



“ In my experience of leading teams and managing projects, I’ve learned that taking the initiative and getting things moving is crucial to achieving results.”

MERCEDES ARGUELLO

Company: Acantita Ecomineral S.A.S
Title: Senior Geologist
Country: Argentina

The mountains of Córdoba were Mercedes’ place of discovery and triggered her decision to study geology. Her first role gave her a solid foundation in materials analysis and gold and silver exploration, as she was part of the team that opened the world class Cerro Negro mine. Later she joined the Santa Cruz provincial government, as Director of the Cadastre and then became Undersecretary of Geology. She now works as a Consulting Geologist and teaches environmental management at the University of Buenos Aires, as well as mine safety at the National Technological University.

Mercedes says her work at the Government of Santa Cruz was a significant undertaking. She was committed to implementing advanced mining practices, developing an environmental monitoring and management platform, introducing the first mine closure law, promoting exploration, and encouraging women’s participation in the sector.

Mercedes’s influence was pivotal in introducing the Mine Closure Act in Argentina, where she conducted extensive consultations and developed an evidence-based approach to demonstrate the law’s necessity, ultimately gaining consensus. For Mercedes, motivating companies to invest in exploration is complex due to financial and economic risks. As a result, she and her team emphasised the need for “a strategic approach, collaboration with diverse actors, and effective communication to achieve meaningful and lasting changes.”

To increase the role of women, Mercedes participated in the introduction of equal opportunities policies and highlighted achievements made to foster a more inclusive environment. Mercedes says, “my passion for geology and mining has kept me motivated, along with my commitment to sustainability and safety in the sector.”



“ Sustainable development is not just about preserving the environment, but about creating opportunities for all, especially the most vulnerable.”

COMFORT ASOKORO-OGAJI (PhD)

Company: Richflood Group
Title: Group Managing Director
Country: Nigeria

Comfort 's career choice was inspired by a deep commitment to sustainable development and a passion for making a tangible difference in communities impacted by mining activities.

Comfort is the visionary behind the Richflood Group, an environmental and social governance consulting firm which conducts due diligence for mining and other investment projects. She is also the founder of the Initiative for Women Miners in Africa, dedicated to empowering women, and she established the Africa Minerals and Miners Centre, to provide resources and support for miners across the continent.

Comfort has a significant track record in the development and implementation of management plans for over 200 mining projects across Africa. This work has solidified her commitment to working with mining communities.

Comfort is inspired by community activists who tirelessly advocate for the rights and well-being of marginalised groups. Ensuring that all stakeholders are aligned and working towards sustainable outcomes requires negotiation skills and technical knowledge. Her approach is to foster strong relationships, be transparent in communication, and advocate for solutions that balance economic, environmental and social interests.



“ It was essential for me to put in the physical and mental energy to get to grips with operations.”

GAYATRI BANDI

Company: Tata Steel Ltd
Title: Manager Mining, Bhelatand A. Colliery
Country: India

Gayatri made history as the first ever female mining engineer, working underground, at the Jharia Coalfields in their 117-year history. Her passion for mining engineering grew through sixteen courses, three projects, a fellowship, and an internship over four years. Being awarded the Roberton Medal for Mining Engineering by Mining, Geological, Metallurgical Institute of India solidified her path in the field. Choosing hands-on experience over data roles, she became Manager Mining at Tata Steel Ltd.

She is already making an impact. While working to improve underground mine ventilation, she applied her expertise and ability to manage harsh conditions, conducting ventilation surveys in some of the toughest and most challenging return airways in the mines. Her advocacy for fall cleaning and technical engagement resulted in ventilation improvements and respite for the colliery workforce.

Gayatri played a crucial role in the technical evaluation of the Babupara mine, a key asset Tata Steel was bidding for in the coal mine auctions. She took a technically innovative approach to mining, in conjunction with the conservation of vital forest cover above the coal seams which showcased her commitment to both technical excellence and responsible mining practices.

Outside of work and academia, Gayatri is a formidable sportswoman having participated in tournaments from a young age. She was a regional level swimmer and discus thrower during her school days. She was also a national level tennis player, winning the Banaras Open Tennis Tournament in 2019. It is therefore no surprise that Gayatri is quoted saying, “Rafael Nadal is one of my role models owing to my passion for tennis.”



“ Do the maximum possible, not the minimum necessary. Results are important but how they are achieved is also important.”

CLAUDIA BEJARANO

Company: Cerrejón – Glencore
Title: President of Cerrejón
Country: Colombia

Since joining Cerrejón as an intern 40 years ago, Claudia Bejarano has stood out. She is proof that it is possible for a woman to complete the journey from an entry-level role to senior leadership in a traditionally male dominated industry. As the first woman to manage a large open pit mine in Colombia, today she leads a workforce of over 12,900 employees and contractors.

Claudia's mantra is “do the maximum possible, not the minimum necessary.” During her career she has taken this approach when managing complex integration projects to deliver positive change and organisational transformation. In 2020, Claudia led the company's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the resolution of a 90-day industrial strike.

She also promotes equity and diversity at Cerrejón, working to implement equal opportunity policies that aim to support the recruitment of local community members. Today 44% of Cerrejón's Executive Committee and 12% of all employees are women.

Claudia's commitment to excellence and innovation is driving the implementation of new strategies and technologies aimed at enhancing Cerrejón's operational efficiency and competitiveness. Thanks to her leadership, the site has addressed several challenges and is working to deliver benefits for workers, their families and the local community.



“Throughout my career, I have pursued sustainable solutions for stakeholders and the environment.”

MAGGY BELEN ROMERO ARRIBASPLATA

Company: Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú

Title: Mine Planning Engineer

Country: Guinea

Maggy works as a mine planning engineer in Guinea, West Africa and rotates back to her home Peru. She is one of the few female expatriates, the sole Peruvian, and only Spanish speaker on site, and risen to both professional and personal challenges.”

Two interconnected events have been the drivers behind her career: first, the impact of mining on Peru’s economy, and its pivotal role in economic development and community advancement; and secondly, scientific research to find innovative solutions to mitigate environmental impacts caused by mining.

After graduating as a Mining Engineer from Pontifical Catholic University of Peru, Maggy immersed herself in research to address these environmental challenges. Her work on the removal of heavy metals from mining-affected effluents and soils using native Andean plants earned her the recognition of Distinguished Researcher from the National Council for Science, Technology, and Technological Innovation.

Achieving a balance between her professional and personal life has been a challenge. To manage this, Maggy sets clear boundaries to make the most of her time at home, disconnecting from work and reconnecting with family. One of the ways in which Maggy disconnects is through her passion for tending to her collection of over 100 cacti and succulents: “These plants have taught me valuable lessons in patience and care. Cacti grow slowly, requiring minimal but consistent care. Watching them thrive reminds me that growth, whether personal or professional, takes time and perseverance.”



“That’s the secret to DEI: leaders that believe and invest the time and effort to develop talents in the organisation.”

MARIA CRISTINA BERTONI FERREIRA

Company: Vale Base Metals Ltd

Title: Logistics Director

Country: Canada

With 26 years’ experience, Maria Cristina is recognised for her structural expertise that delivers significant cost reductions and sustainable supply chains. Her career trajectory, from executive assistant at Kodak Brazil to Logistics Director at Vale Base Metals in Canada, is evidence of what is possible through continuous learning and excellent work.

Recognising her potential, a supportive Kodak manager guided Maria Cristina’s growth in supply chain roles. Leaving Kodak as Logistics Director, she joined BASF and, was appointed as its first, female Vice-President. She then transferred to BASF Germany for five years, and there she was introduced to mining. Cristina then moved to Canada, first to work with Yamana Gold and then moved to Vale Base Metals.

Throughout her career, Maria Cristina has championed diversity and inclusion: at Kodak in Brazil, she helped create the Diversity Forum; at Yamana she supported the company’s the first sponsor for the Artemis Initiative, an association of women entrepreneurs in the mining industry; and at Vale Base Metals She broadened her focus to include support for victims of domestic violence alongside gender, race, and religion.

Reflecting on her career, she says, “often the only female executive at the table, and a Brazilian one, being heard was just of the many hurdles I faced. More importantly, I have many fond memories of the unforgettable leaders that supported me along the way and the incredible peers and team members that are still part of my life.”



“ I have been dedicated to promoting greater gender equality and socioeconomic development across all aspects of the mining sector.”

BETH BORODY

Company: Femina Collective
Title: Founder & CEO
Country: Canada

Beth is an extraordinary figure in the mining industry, known for her dynamic leadership and relentless advocacy for diversity and inclusion. As the founder of the Femina Collective, she has created a platform that challenges the status quo and provides a nurturing environment for women to grow and thrive. Beth’s unwavering commitment to her values and her ability to inspire and support others make her an exceptional role model.

While working in international development in Sub-Saharan Africa, Beth witnessed how mining could serve as a catalyst for social good and, when done responsibly, its potential to bring about positive change. Since returning to Canada in 2015, Beth has “been dedicated to promoting greater gender equality and socioeconomic development across all aspects of the mining sector.” She has advocated for responsible mining practices that benefit communities and contribute to an equitable and sustainable future.

Being a young woman in mining, Beth experienced the challenges all too familiar to women in the industry. She stayed resilient, focused on her goals, and sought support from mentors and allies who believed in the value of diverse voices in the industry. She continues to advocate for greater inclusion and respect for women in mining so that future generations do not face the same barriers.

Beth’s ability to connect with individuals, recognise their potential, and encourage them to pursue their aspirations is remarkable. Her unwavering support and mentorship have empowered countless women to break barriers and achieve their dreams, making her a beacon of inspiration in a traditionally male-dominated field.



“ I was very interested in human rights from a young age. Working with companies on sustainability and human rights was a natural progression of these personal interests.”

DR. LAURA BROOKS

Company: Vale Base Metals
Title: Sustainability Director
Country: United Kingdom

Dr. Laura has 25 years of experience in the sustainability sector and holds a PhD in business and human rights from the London School of Economics. She started her career in the NGO sector, working in the Rwandan refugee camps following the genocide.

Dr. Laura says that two of her biggest career challenges were working in the Rwandan camps and leading the community response to COVID-19 at Anglo American. They both stand out as being intellectually, emotionally and physically demanding. The sense of purpose in the work and collaboration helped to overcome these demands.

She worked at KPMG advising businesses on sustainability strategy and implementation across a broad range of sectors and geographies before joining Anglo American as Group Head Sustainability Integration and Impact. She was responsible for driving the delivery of the group-wide, Sustainable Mining Plan commitments which deliberately set out ambitious environmental, social and governance goals for 2030.

Dr. Laura joined Vale Base Metals as Sustainability Director in October 2023, responsible for driving delivery of the company's sustainability commitments, setting direction and embedding sustainability across the business. Her leadership has provided strategic focus, global perspectives, and a human-centred approach to delivering results.

She leads by example, equally showing boldness and sensitivity. She creates safe, productive and encouraging spaces that represent diversity which include and empower voices sometimes excluded in the mining industry.



“ Though I have worked in the mining sector for almost 20 years, I am still surprised when people aren’t as passionate about positive social change and impact as I am.”

ABBI BUXTON

Title: Independent Social Impact and Gender Consultant

Country: United Kingdom

Abbi’s career started in policy research at the International Institute for Environment and Development, learning to apply the values of inclusion, participation, voice and diversity to her work and to mining. But becoming a single mother was the impetus to focus on the rights of women and gender equality in the sector.

Abbi has led on the Gender Based Violence work across DeBeers Group. In a short space of time, she galvanised leaders globally to address this issue, inspired them to take action and driven systemic change. The programme that launched with a two-day workshop for mine, corporate affairs and human resources leaders, evolved to employing social facilitation and reflection tools and creating a new way of thinking about the sector’s work and its impacts. With a topic as complex and sensitive as gender-based violence, she believes this foundation was critical to the programme’s success.

Abbi believes the sector still has a long way to go in prioritising social issues and, to drive this forward, the need to employ different tools and ways of engaging. When addressing the complex and nuanced issues such as gender and race, she has learned to share her passion and knowledge in ways that meet people where they are in their own journeys or beliefs. “By taking more time to engage, to listen and to build relationships, we could all make a huge difference in the culture of mining and its impacts.”



“ I think one of the biggest challenges we face as women in our careers is that sometimes we do not have sufficient self-belief in our abilities.”

ANGÉLICA CABRERA

Company: Teck Chile
Title: General Manager, Carmen de Andacollo
Country: Chile

Having studied Chemical and Process Engineering in the UK, Angélica's first posts were in chemical and gas companies. On returning to Chile her focus moved to Health, Safety, Environment and Communities (HSEC) from the operational and technical side. She says, “the history and tradition of mining in Chile really appealed to me and I wanted to be part of that world.”

Angélica has experience in mining projects, setting up and standardising management systems, being the environmental lead for a major construction project, and is now General Manager. She thinks her wide experience gives her an interesting perspective with regards to the collaboration needed in an industry that now has not only performance at its core but also HSEC and people.

One of her standout achievements was implementing the gender Change Management Programme for Teck Chile. This not only made changes to infrastructure, selection and development and training processes and but also generating cultural changes through some difficult conversations. “We were able to highlight the challenges that women were facing at all levels of the company and the role our male colleagues could play in this transformation. It has been a privilege to see how the conversation has changed and how a shift in our culture adds value to our business.”

In her personal life she says, “my mother and father have always been role models for me. Their resilience in the face of adversity when with two small daughters, they had to move to a country that they did not know, learn to speak a new language and reinvent their lives, is truly inspiring.”



“ My challenge was being a young, foreign, woman who came from a country without a great mining tradition.”

MARTA CERATI

Company: AMINER – Asociación de Empresas Investigadoras, Extractoras, Transformadoras Minero-Metalúrgicas, Auxiliares y de Servicios

Title: Executive Manager

Country: Spain

From being inspired to work in FMCG marketing by a family friend, who was one part of the duo who invented the Kinder Egg, to working in explosives and mining, is an unconventional career path.

Marta studied Economics and Business aiming to follow her parents into a career in business. She joined Maxam, one of the largest explosives manufacturers in 2013 to develop international projects, after which she became responsible for Marketing and Communication of the civil explosives subsidiary. Her fascination with the sector led her to qualify in the speciality in demolitions in 2018. This made it possible for her to participate in the demolition of Puertollano’s thermal cooling tower in Spain. Remembering this landmark event she says, “so many months of preparation work and, in a few seconds the tower disappeared. I can’t quite express how I felt!”

Currently serving as Executive Manager of AMINER and Secretary General of the Mining and Minerals Hall, Marta is known for her teamwork, public-private partnerships, and forging alliances between companies in the mining sector. She participates in industry meetings, collaborates with universities and other entities to raise mining’s profile and improve its perception. In 2023, she represented AMINER at the Morocco-Spain Mining Forum, a bilateral meeting, to strengthen trade relations between the two countries and share their experiences.

Marta’s profile has grown steadily and with that has come into roles of greater importance throughout the last ten years. This has given her greater exposure both within Spain and internationally. She has clearly demonstrated that women have a place in mining, and it’s not on the sidelines.



“ My job gives me the best of both worlds – experience mining first hand at our operations whilst also being involved in capital markets.”

EMMA CHAPMAN

Company: Teck Resources
Title: Director Investor Relations
Country: United Kingdom

Emma started her career as an Investment Banker and Corporate Broker in London, but, finding her work increasingly focused on the mining sector, moved to the investor relations team at Anglo American. On being offered the role of Head of Investor Relations for Anglo American Platinum (AAP) she relocated to South Africa. More recently, Emma returned to London as Director Investor Relations at Teck Resources where she was instrumental in articulating the company's separation plans, ultimately resulting in a sale of its steel making coal business.

Emma has set new standards for listed company investor relations in the sector. She combines her knowledge of mining operations with business acumen to articulate the investment case for a company. She provides investors and analysts with a wealth of information to make informed decisions. She understands the importance of providing accurate feedback – positive and negative – from investors market to the leadership team.

Reflecting on her career, Emma says her biggest challenge was “taking the leap and starting a new job, in a new country at the age of 29 when I moved to Johannesburg. I felt out of my depth, alone and at times scared! But I embraced the situation and made the most of every new experience – making lifelong friends, explored a beautiful new country, and progressed my career by having real on the ground experience. I came with an open-minded attitude, a willingness to learn and enjoyed every minute!”



“Founding Women in Mining Türkiye was a big turning point for me.”

BANU ÇOLAK

Company: Women In Mining Türkiye
Title: President
Country: Türkiye

Banu is a seasoned professional with over twenty years' experience in Türkiye's gold mining sector. Banu's mining journey began when she joined Alacer Gold. Banu has faced resistance and problems throughout her professional life but has worked fearlessly to drive women's empowerment in the Turkish mining industry. She has continued to focus on the bigger picture of a more inclusive industry, undaunted by the roadblocks and challenges.

During the pandemic, Banu founded Women in Mining Türkiye to bring together the best women in the industry in order to address the challenges she and her female colleagues continue to experience. Through WIM Türkiye, she not only supports all women in mining but works to attract young mining and geological engineering students to the industry. She has very strong ties with the earth sciences student societies at Türkiye's universities and promotes the participation of young people in WIM Türkiye. She also leverages her network of national and international connections to keep up to date with sector developments.

Banu strives to promote equality in the sector, working towards making it more inclusive. Through her leadership and by example, she empowers others to do the same and contribute to the ongoing progress and inclusivity of the mining sector. By highlighting that women have a place in every aspect of the industry, she is promoting equal opportunities for them in both the sector and life in general.



“ Dear Rock Lady, thank you for coming to my class. I want to be a magical whatever engineer when I grow up. I learned so much from you!”

WENDI COOKSEY

Company: FLSmidth
Title: Metallurgical Lab Manager
Country: United States

Wendi's passion is educating young adults and professionals about extractive metallurgy, mining and the exciting opportunities it offers. Armed with an engineering degree in mineral processing and extractive metallurgy from the Colorado School of Mines, Wendi worked in the United States, Canada, Mali, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, and French Guiana. After focusing on her career for 20 years, she moved to Oregon (a state with no hard rock mining) with her husband to follow his career.

During this career break, in addition to having a baby, she used her available time to establish Your World Rocks, a non-profit minerals education organisation. With a board of amazing women scientists and mathematicians, they lead hundreds of free classroom presentations on the importance of minerals. Wendi feels rewarded when she receives notes from students.

Wendi's outreach work has continued after returning to the mining industry as a Metallurgical Lab Manager. Wendi has started several non-profits to provide STEM and mining education to primary education students in Oregon and Utah. She also served as the Chair for the Mineral Education Coalition as part of the Society of Mining, Metallurgy, and Exploration. Through her work, she has provided educational resources to students and over 5,000 teachers across the United States.



“Debunking stereotypes became my core competency. I built my career working underground just after the law had changed to allow women to work in these roles.”

SUSIE CORLETT

Company: Iluka Resources, Mineral Resources and Aurelia Metals Ltd

Title: Non-Executive Director

Country: Australia

As a geologist in the early 1990's, Susie was one of the first women in underground operations. She has played ground-breaking roles in developing responsible mines. She spearheaded the implementation of ESG practices, through global roles in mining finance and partnering with multilateral organisations. As a non-executive director of major mineral producers, she remains at the cutting edge, overseeing novel solutions for the energy transition and circular economy and enshrining nature-positive practices.

Her career, she says, “has been unparalleled in its richness, diversity and fulfilment. From geology my career has taken me to working in global mining finance and private equity across 24 developing nations. Spearheading best practice in sustainable development and shared value creation has been one of my most fulfilling parts of my roles.”

Susie has driven the positive change needed to create safe and inclusive workplaces, removed structural barriers for minority groups, and advocated to prevent sexual harassment at work. When Susie joined the industry, female representation was around 12%. She saw it as vital to lead generational change, which she considers one of her greatest achievements. Female participation in Australia is now about 24%. However, for Susie, “as an industry, we have a long way to go.”

She says “family has, and always will be, my priority. There are few greater joys than sharing a meal with family and friends. Ocean swimming at sunrise comes a close second. Being in awe of nature, surrounded by a mad menagerie of animals is my happy place.”



“ I spent time learning how to speak the industry language so that I could communicate value in a way that people would understand.”

SILVANA COSTA

Company: Teck Resources
Title: Director, Social Performance
Country: Canada

After completing a degree in Community and Regional Planning, Silvana moved to Vancouver. Her supervisor encouraged her to go into the Mining and Mineral Processing Engineering Programme at the University of British Columbia and participate in the Sustainability Working Group.

Silvana’s academic research on mining communities revealed troubling conditions for women and indigenous people. Her work contributed to practical improvements to camps and accommodation schemes in Canada and abroad. After completing her PhD, Silvana worked at the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources leading the development of a mining sustainability framework for the Province of British Columbia (BC).

Silvana’s advocacy has been extensive: supporting and empowering Indigenous Communities to develop their own impact assessment tools, leading the development of the Social Responsibility Principles for the Association for Mineral Exploration BC, developing a social closure programme, leading the creation of a Human Rights Due Diligence programme and a Reconciliation Action Plan, and managing corporate Social Performance and Indigenous Relations programmes. Her achievements led her to be recognised by the Association for Mineral Exploration BC Robert R. Hedley Award for Excellence in Social and Environmental Responsibility (2021).

Reflecting on her career, Silvana says “as a sustainability professional in the late 1990s, I faced significant industry resistance to social responsibility, shared value, and environmental requirements. I spend a lot of time learning to communicate in the industry language and educating others on the importance of sustainability.”



“ It’s been just over 25 years since I joined the world of mining and every day I feel privileged for the development and growth opportunities it has given me.”

RUTH ESCOBAR JUÁREZ

Company: Sociedad Minera Cerro Verde S.A.A.
Title: Head of Innovation
Country: Peru

A talk on future careers by the engineer father of a classmate inspired Ruth to study industrial engineering. On the first day of her course, a professor said it was impossible to study two degrees simultaneously. Ruth took on the challenge to study both Engineering and Economics, achieving outstanding results for both in seven years.

When Ruth joined Cerro Verde, she worked across several teams before taking up her current position leading the company’s innovation management system. This system now has over 9,980 employee-registered ideas, aligned with the company’s strategic goals. For fourteen years, she has promoted the annual award for teams with the most valuable ideas for the business. The results have led to twelve patents and ten distinctions at the National Society of Mining, Petroleum and Energy’s Innovation and Technology Awards.

Ruth is an active member of WIM Peru and currently leads its national innovation workgroup. She is frequently invited to speak at academic events and shares her experience and insight with students and professionals. To foster and embed respect for equity and diversity, she stages activities for children and adolescents. She has published three books, sharing her experiences and proposals on how to design, implement, and optimise innovation strategies, two of which are focused on mining innovation. In early 2024, after several requests for formal consultancy, she founded her own consulting firm, “Innovación Trascendente Consultores.”

Ruth says, “my father, believed in me and created my “you can do it” mindset. My mother, my brothers and sons are all examples of perseverance, integrity, and unconditional love. Their support drives me to give my best every day and strive for a better world.”



“ The leaps I’ve made in the availability of women’s PPE, not just in the United Kingdom but globally, has been phenomenal.”

KATHERINE EVANS

Company: Bold As Brass

Title: Women’s Safety in Heavy Industry Specialist

Country: United Kingdom

Katherine had worked offshore mudlogging, before landing the job of graduate geologist at one of the last underground coal mines in the United Kingdom. “I loved it; the feeling of tribe, the smell of the rocks, the tiny tunnelling world where a pocket of sweets and a funny story was everything; I’ve been searching for that feeling of camaraderie in every role I’ve had since. I haven’t found it.”

Katherine sees putting women’s Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) on the map as her biggest achievement. Women’s PPE has been available in the United Kingdom since the 2010s, but not stocked by distributors nor bought by employers. She says, “To those who aren’t affected by poorly fitting PPE, the focus on women’s kit may seem frivolous. I get online abuse, nasty in person comments, and lot of ‘it’s not a fashion show, love.’ That’s absolutely correct, this isn’t about fashion, it’s about safety and about being able to physically achieve the tasks that make up your role.”

In 2022, Katherine founded Bold as Brass group to fight for gender equity in the mining, quarrying and other heavy industries. She is using her influence to bring to light longstanding issues, such as harassment and suitable welfare facilities as well as appropriate PPE. Her “Free the Bogs” campaign, showing photos of women’s onsite toilets used as storerooms or locked and inaccessible, has struck a chord.

As Katherine explains “there are more layers to this than people realise. With the correct PPE we allow women to do their jobs properly, survive in mining and build a thriving career. Having women in teams brings diversity of thought and a different lens; innovation improves, the bottom line grows and staff retention increases.”



“ Working in the mining industry with a non-technical background has sometimes been a challenge, both in terms of how I was perceived and my confidence.”

KATIE FEDOSENKO

Company: Teck Resources Limited
Title: Director, ESG Engagement
Country: United Kingdom

Katie was first exposed to mining whilst working as a journalist with an NGO in Australia where she saw the big impact the industry could have – both negative and positive. When she returned to Canada, excited by that potential of making a positive impact, she took a one-year contract with Teck Resources in corporate communications. Eleven years later, she is still with Teck, now focused on sustainability.

In her time with Teck, Katie says three projects stood out: “co-leading the update of our sustainability strategy in 2018/19; integrating sustainability into our technology programme in 2021; and since 2022, establishing and leading our London office’s external engagement.”

Within two years of moving from Vancouver to London with her family, Katie has single-handedly built Teck Resources’ profile in Europe as a leader in the ESG space. She tirelessly engages with, and crucially listens to ESG experts to better explain Teck’s strengths, and help come up with solutions for where it falls short. She is well respected and is regarded as a leader in European mining, speaking at major industry gatherings, and pushing for improvements across the sector. She recognises the challenges that the mining industry faces but is a true believer in the power of the industry to be part of the solution for the energy transition.

Katie’s ability to turn even the most hostile critic into a firm believer is well known and she does this through patient, fact driven narrative. She demonstrates that kindness, compassion, empathy, care and humility can be very effective in achieving great outcomes for your team, organisation and society at large.



“ My graduate school advisor taught me the importance of guiding and supporting others in achieving their goals, a value I carry forward in my own career.”

LINDA FIGUEROA

Company: Colorado School of Mines
Title: Professor and Director, Tailings Centre
Country: United States

Linda's journey into environmental engineering began during her freshman year of college, immediately drawn to the prospect of applying science and engineering principles to tackle environmental challenges. Joining the Colorado School of Mines as a faculty member over 30 years ago, she had the opportunity to focus her expertise on environmental issues with the responsibility of co-developing a new graduate degree programme in Environmental Science and Engineering.

Today, as a professor of civil, environmental, and mining engineering and as Director of the Tailings Center, she continues to expand this work. Her career has been marked by significant contributions to research in remediation and reclamation for mining, and she has played a pivotal role in developing and teaching some of the earliest environmental engineering courses.

As a first-generation, economically disadvantaged Mexican-American college student, she was fortunate to have mentors who enabled her admission into top-tier private universities. Her first big challenge was not having her father's encouragement to pursue a career in science and engineering. Linda says, "it was my high school counsellor who pushed me to apply to top-tier STEM schools."

At the time, Caltech had only recently started admitting women, and she struggled to find a supportive community. On transferring to the University of Southern California, she was the only woman in her civil engineering graduating class. Linda cites these early experiences, and the ongoing challenges of being a woman as the driver for her "to give back by mentoring the next generation of women and people from underrepresented groups in STEM."



“The mining industry made the most sense, because metal deposits are a product of essentially, volcanoes, and exploration has a lot to do with chemistry.”

CATHERINE FITZGERALD

Company: South Pacific Metals
Title: President and Chief Geologist
Country: Canada

Catherine wasn't exposed to geology until her first year at university, but on learning about volcanoes, she chose to study the geochemistry of undersea volcanoes and hydrothermal vents. After seven years in university and gaining a master's degree, she needed to change direction, and the mining industry made complete sense.

In her first role, as well as performing detailed mineral analysis at the microscope for several hours a day, she co-managed twelve others performing the same work. Moving away from the microscope, she slowed down, which included underground mapping while several months pregnant with her first child. After spending 20 years exploring and defining deposits, she has shifted into managing the portfolio.

Catherine works hard to provide a positive workspace, ensuring communication and that people have agency and a sense of empowerment. She is confident in her worth, has the courage to speak up, go after what she wants from a career perspective, while at the same time ensuring this is balanced with the requirements of parenting. Even with her busy schedule, and being a single mom, she finds the time to help other women.

Her breadth of experience gives her unique skills to understand what needs to be done. She has managed to be a successful mining executive, geologist, industry volunteer and mentor to young female geology students, with the aim overall of making a positive impact on the mining space. She shares her experiences with young women and students, works to highlight the positive impacts of mining with the public, and to show others that gender diversity and having confidence as a female leader will only make this industry better.



“ I am inspired by the positive impact this great industry has on my country’s economy, communities and people’s lives.”

KAREN FLORES

Company: Mining Chamber of Mexico (CAMIMEX)
Title: CEO
Country: Mexico

With a background in business and economics, Karen Flores has 17 years’ experience of working in Mexico’s mining industry, in both the public and private sectors.

From 2007 to 2014 she worked at the Undersecretariat of Mines at the Ministry of Economy occupying different positions including Director of Analysis and Information and Coordinator of Advisors. In 2014, she joined Agnico Eagle’s Mexican division, leading Institutional and Government Relations. As of September 2019, she has been CEO of the Mining Chamber of Mexico (CAMIMEX), the first woman to hold the position at the country’s oldest business chamber.

As CEO of CAMIMEX, Karen represents an industry that is a key part of the national economy, worth over \$15 billion, which provides livelihood to more than three million families. During her tenure, she has promoted an agenda focused on ESG best practice, with particular emphasis on inclusion and equity in the industry. In a highly male-dominated environment, she is using her position to foster gender equity and equal opportunities in the sector, and to inspire women and girls. She says, “I feel a lot of responsibility to my other female colleagues and the important things is to leave the door open for them.”

Karen is proud of her decision to move to a position within government where she gets to work directly in the mining industry. She recognises the challenges that come with coordinating her personal and professional life, especially as mining often requires spending long periods on site and far from home. Karen manages this challenge “with discipline. It’s important to have discipline not only in your work but as well in your life.”



“My passion for mining and metallurgy engineering was driven by a fascination with transforming raw materials into tangible products.”

VITHLEEM GAZEA

Company: Hellas Gold S.A.
Title: Mining & Metallurgical Engineer,
Environmental Manager
Country: Greece

For Vithleem, working at the Kassandra Mines for the past thirty years has been a rewarding experience. Moving to the area as a young engineer, she had to address the community concerns on the impact of the mine. For Vithleem, “this was deeply personal, as I wasn’t just an employee. I was also a mother, neighbour and friend within the community. I felt a profound responsibility to advocate for others. Today, there is a harmony, a hard-earned achievement that has been incredibly rewarding.”

As Environmental Manager, Vithleem was responsible for developing and implementing Hellas Gold’s environmental monitoring system. She is also responsible for rehabilitation and reclamation projects for past mining activities. Vithleem and her team have “removed four million tons of tailings and are currently restoring 30 hectares of the old tailings pond. I take great pride in the Olympias Plant Nursery, growing plants to rehabilitate our operating areas.” She has also participated in several research and development projects published in more than 20 international journals and conference proceedings, and gives university lectures.

One of Vithleem’s greatest influence was Professor Antonis Kontopoulos, “his deep knowledge and passion for mining, metallurgy, and environmental stewardship guided my early career, and he taught me the importance of balancing technical expertise with a commitment to sustainability.” Outside of work, Vithleem says, “swimming helps me stay active and clear my mind, while walking allows me to explore new areas and appreciate nature. These activities help me recharge and maintain a healthy balance.”



“One of my biggest challenges was my own bias. Unknowingly, I was putting a limit on what I thought I was capable of, and what was possible.”

YUKI GHANTOUS

Company: BHP
Title: Japan Country President
Country: Japan

An inspiring leader, Yuki is known for her “can do” attitude, excellent project delivery and cross-culture communication skills. She came into mining from the government sector in Australia when she joined BHP in 2011. She led various marketing improvement and commercial transformation initiatives, including four years spent in Singapore, before taking up her current role as BHP’s Country President for Japan in 2020.

Many Japanese companies recognise the significance of gender diversity, however the progress in creating a diverse workplace has been slow. Yuki says “the work that I am most proud of is the Inclusion and Diversity journey that we have led, as a team, with our local community in Japan. Through our work at BHP, we identified an opportunity to engage key partners and developed a strategy to advocate for gender diversity and share our learnings with stakeholders.”

Yuki and her team’s consistent effort over the last three years have raised awareness, started conversation and taken tangible actions towards gender equality. To date, more than 500 people have participated in this journey in some way. Yuki worked with the Australian Embassy in 2023 to host the first Women in Energy and Resources event to bring female professionals in the energy and resource industry together.

According to Yuki, “BHP encourages us to excel both professionally and personally, with a better work-life balance, supported by fully embedded flexible working. This environment coupled with a great culture of trust makes it easy to manage and balance my professional and personal priorities.”



“It’s an unusual career path but I love mining and want to spend the rest of my career working in this industry!”

HELEN GIBSON

Company: Komatsu
Title: General Manager, Underground Soft Rock
Country: India

As an established human resources professional, Helen joined Komatsu looking for career development opportunities. She became hooked on mining and then seized the opportunity to move from human resources to a customer-facing project in Norway. This led to several opportunities working overseas in services then strategic account management roles and finally to her current role as General Manager for India. She also graduated from the Camborne School of Mines with a master’s in Mining Engineering, simultaneously studying for three years whilst working full time, something she felt “formally solidified what I was learning in practice.”

Helen is Komatsu’s first female General Manager in the soft rock business. In the last two years, she has overseen extensive restructuring and built a strong, local team and integrated successfully with the local community and customers. The company has now started to manufacture underground equipment and introduced India’s first underground-to-surface Continuous Miner, bringing a new age of smart mining in India.

With frequent international travel, striking a balance is a challenge but Helen finds cycling to be a good way to mentally switch off. She says, “I usually travel internationally with a bicycle so that I can blend my two loves – mining and cycling – and experience the sights, sounds, smells and weather of the place I’m visiting on two wheels.”

Reflecting on her career she says “I suppose the change from Human Resources to General Manager of India is quite significant, but I have never thought of it that way. Each step in my career has been a logical progression to get me to where I am now. I never had any ambition to be doing this job, I just raised my hand for opportunities on the way.”



“ I am passionate about connecting people, their interests, ideas and businesses, to make a better world.”

NATHÁLIA GOMIDE

Company: EY Brazil
Title: Manager – Excellence Centre for Mining and Metals
Country: Brazil

With a vision to connect Brazil with rest of the world, Nathália pursued a degree in International Relations. After working in chambers of commerce and local government, she became a Multisector Commercial Analyst for the British Government in Brazil. A year later she was leading its department for Business Development with the Mining industry.

In 2018, she found WIM UK in her database and was amazed. She wanted to promote it in Brazil, as the diversity, equity and inclusion agenda is crucial for her. She says “I convinced my manager, as part of the mining forum we were hosting, to include a Women in Mining event and bring women leaders together to discuss their role in the sector. This successful event was the beginning of the Brazil chapter of WIM.

During the pandemic, she leveraged her role with the British Government to organise virtual dialogues on the implementation the Global Industrial Standards for Tailing Management (GISTM) in Brazil, bringing together specialists from the industry, academia, government and civil society.

In 2023, Nathália’s, moved to EY to manage their Excellence Centre for Mining and Metals in LATAM, and promoting strategic solutions for a better mining industry. She says, “I believe that I can make the change, working in the sector, to promote a more responsible, diverse and inclusive mining industry.”



“Equality and the inclusiveness of women in this sector has been my biggest challenge.”

ANA MARIA GONZALEZ HERRERA

Title: Independent Mining Consultant
Country: Mexico

Ana Maria Gonzalez Herrera cites chance as the main factor for her career in mining but says she quickly fell in love with the sector, particularly working with mining communities and institutions. In 1997 when appointed Country Manager at Minefinders Corporation, Ana became the first woman to hold this position in Mexico. Ana has broken gender barriers, demonstrated her ability to excel in leadership roles traditionally dominated by men and is known for her advocacy for women’s representation and leadership in mining. In 2019 she was named Mexico’s Women in Mining (WIM) President.

She takes a pioneering approach to navigating complex challenges through a combination of strategic planning, effective communication and resilience. Ana develops innovative solutions, anticipates potential issues and implements pre-emptive measures to mitigate risks. Her commitment to exemplary corporate governance and her dedication to sustainability have set new standards for responsible mining practices.

As Mexico’s WIM President, Ana was able to make women more visible in the sector and turned WIM into a national movement promoting women in mining. Ana uses her platform to raise awareness about the importance of diversity and inclusivity, advocating for policies and practices that create equal opportunities for all individuals to thrive.



“ I’m proud to be the Health & Safety Manager for Kinross Nevada and I’m dedicated to advancing safety practices and setting lasting standards in my field.”

DEANNA HALL

Company: Kinross Gold
Title: Health & Safety Manager
Country: United States

Deanna started work at Kinross Round Mountain soon after graduating high school. She worked in the process department for nine years where she held multiple roles. She was accepted into the Continuous Improvement (CI) Leadership development programme and in 2018 she transferred to Bald Mountain as a CI Facilitator.

In 2022, Deanna became Bald Mountain mine’s Health and Safety Superintendent in what proved to be a professional challenge. She does not settle for how things have always been done and challenges those around her to think and act differently. She successfully built relationships with the mine’s operational leaders and pulled hourly employees into safety programs to enhance their effectiveness.

Deanna’s work has been recognised by the Nevada Mining Association as Trainer of the Year in 2013 and Health & Safety Manager of the Year in 2023. For four years, Deanna travelled to Washington D.C. as member of the Women in Mining Coalition, advocating for and educating legislators on all aspects of mining.

Deanna demonstrates personal resilience, acknowledging her transformation from being introverted and shy to confidently presenting to large audiences. She has adopted two nephews and has raised them single-handedly for over five years. She says her approach to overcoming challenges “is rooted in self-reflection and emotional maturity. I learned to value myself beyond my professional achievements and to set healthy boundaries, understanding that adversity often serves as a catalyst for personal growth. My parents instilled in me a deep sense of service, which I carry into my professional life every day.”



“Tailings storage facilities are the single greatest risk on any mine site. Improving their design, management, operation and closure has been my career long objective.”

NAOMI HODGKINSON-LEE

Company: Zurich Insurance
Title: Senior Risk Engineer – Tailings
Country: United Kingdom

With over 20 years working as a tailings design engineer, Naomi is now Senior Risk Engineer with Zurich Insurance and one of the few female risk engineers in the mining sector. She has taken her hands-on site experience of working in mines, from Siberia to Burkina Faso, and many places in between, to review and assess the risks of tailings storage facilities (TSFs).

Utilising her experience as tailings engineer and with Zurich’s extensive TSFs data, Naomi is developing new tools for the insurance industry to better quantify the risk of tailings failures. She has pioneered a TSF-specific risk review, which has added an unprecedented level of insight to Zurich’s underwriting. She has created a set of risk improvement actions that enables mining companies to improve the technical operation of their TSFs.

Despite being a rare example of a female engineer within insurance, Naomi is not hesitant to be an assertive female face. The conversations with the onsite teams can be complex and at times difficult, especially when the hard truths come from a woman. By working with the operators and having Zurich’s influence and commitment behind her, Naomi is driving change to reduce the risk of TSFs worldwide.

Her experience of working on sites predominantly run by men has taught Naomi “there is great benefit from listening to different perspectives, understanding someone’s concerns and learning from other’s experiences. But there is also the importance of having a belief in your own knowledge and skills and knowing when to stand your ground.”



“ I can confidently say, the tough decision to shift from a scientific career to industry was one of the best professional choices I’ve ever made.”

KATARZYNA JANIK

Company: Luma Services
Title: Technical Project Director
Country: Rwanda

Katarzyna is from Silesia, a region in Poland with a deep-rooted history in coal mining. Although mining runs in her blood, she initially leant towards humanities before discovering a passion for materials and metal extraction. This led her to a master’s degree in Metallurgy and Materials Science and doctoral studies, where she desired something more hands-on. In 2018, she became a Technology Specialist at Luma’s Polish ferroalloy smelter, and a year later, she found her calling: developing tin smelting technologies in Rwanda.

As Technical Project Director at Luma Services and President of the smelter’s Management Board, she is deeply involved in operations and helping shape the company’s future. By integrating scientific rigour into every facet of operations, Katarzyna is leading a paradigm shift in sustainability and environmental responsibility. Her achievements include implementing a zero-waste production strategy by redesigning and reprocessing every smelting by-product and integrating renewable energy throughout the minerals processing chain.

Katarzyna has a commitment to gender equality that extends beyond rhetoric, working to dismantle barriers and create a more inclusive workplace. As a graduate of the International Women in Resources Mentoring Programme, she has a focus on equality and gender empowerment in the artisanal and small mining sector in the African Great Lakes Region.

For Katarzyna, “balance starts with having a safe and comforting space at home, where I can spend quality time with the people I love. It’s also about giving myself permission to express my emotions, even at work. I genuinely love what I do, but it can be demanding, requiring intense focus and quick thinking.”



“Starting my PhD so late in life means I am unlikely to be a research superstar, but probably makes me a good advert for life-long learning.”

ANNE JOHNSON

Company: Queen’s University
Title: Assistant Professor, Sustainability
Country: Canada

Anne’s journey to her current position is unconventional, but uniquely qualifies her to unravel the complexities of the social dimensions of mining. After completing a degree in Art History, Anne trained as an elementary school teacher then enrolled in courses in Computing Science. This led to a university job as a programmer and researcher, and she eventually completed a Computing Science degree. After a serious injury, her masters of Education was put on hold for 15 years. Through resilience and determination, she completed her masters, followed by a PhD on the social and policy side of mining, and built a new academic career, all while recovering and raising two young daughters.

Anne is a leader in integrating the social dimensions of mining. She piloted the first gender-based research within the Canadian mining industry and is driving the development of sustainability-focused courses in the mining engineering curriculum across Canada. Anne is very proud to have been chosen as Chair of Canadian Institute of Mining, Metallurgy and Petroleum’s (CIM) Canadian Mining Schools Education Committee, something she says, “is entirely due to my wonderful students.” Through her work on this committee, many mining schools have added sustainability to their curriculum, exposing hundreds of students to the subject of responsible resource extraction.

Anne says, “I am lucky to have a very supportive husband, and I have learned to tolerate a messy house. I like to cook, am working on training my dog to be a therapy dog and I am now nana to a little boy and hanging out with him is the best!”



“My mother is my role model. Despite her critics, she fought to send me to school and build the foundations of what I am today.”

ESTHER KANDEH

Company: Women on Mining and Extractives (WoME)
Title: Executive Director
Country: Sierra Leone

In places where traditional beliefs limit women, Esther is an advocate for change and women's rights. Born in Sierra Leone's 'diamond-infested' Kono District, Esther witnessed child labour, environmental degradation, gender discrimination and inequality in the distribution of mining resources. Equipped with an education in Gender Studies, Project Management and Development Studies, Esther was ready to start on her mission to empower women.

Esther set up Women on Mining and Extractives (WoME) in 2013, an NGO dedicated to combatting economic disparity, social marginalisation and the vulnerability of women in mining communities. Currently, WoME works with close to 1,000 women in different mining communities. From a grassroots advocacy group, she has transformed WoME into a prominent civil society organisation.

Beyond her work as Executive Director of WoME, Esther set up the Women's Alliance on Natural Resources Governance in Sierra Leone, a national coalition of 100 plus women from diverse backgrounds, committed to sustainable resource management and environmental stewardship. She founded the annual "Make It Real" conference, geared towards inspiring young girls in mining communities to unlock their full potential, and ran the First Female Artisanal Mining Conference in 2022. She is a board member at the Global Greengrants Fund, a member of the Kimberly Process and is an active participant on other national and international platforms dedicated to issues of natural resource governance and environmental sustainability.

Esther says her biggest challenge has been "gender discrimination, as our culture is built on patriarchal systems. Advocating that women deserve equal rights and benefits gets lots of criticism from the community, sadly sometimes from other women."



“Fighter against injustice.
I always like fairness although
the world is not fair.”

GODELIVE KANGA

Company: Mutanda Mining SARL (Glencore)
Title: Legal Superintendent
Country: Democratic Republic of Congo

Starting in 2014 as a lawyer at the Lubumbashi Bar, Godelive Kanga joined Glencore’s Mutanda Mining SARL (MUMI) in 2018 and started her journey in the mining industry. As a lawyer, Godelive Kanga, is known to be fair and clear headed when making decisions.

Godelive says, “when giving advice, even to directors, I sometimes have to say “no” which is not always appreciated.” When this happens, she maintains dialogue to ensure her colleagues understand her advisory role on the risks involved. This professionalism earned her a nomination as Top Fifty Female Lawyers Having an Impact in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

It is also her willingness to fight for other women in the industry that makes her inspirational. With the aim of justice for everyone, Godelive started advocating for equity for women working at Mutanda, ensuring their voices were heard throughout the company.

One of her many initiatives, was securing a quota for female employees to attend external events – national and international. In 2023, she introduced a mentorship programme with local universities enabling several women from MUMI to mentor female students interested in the mining industry. She is the current president of the company’s women’s group supporting, promoting and encouraging other women to pursue available opportunities.

Courageous, resilient and always willing to do the right thing, Godelive has faced many challenges, but has never backed down and worked hard to qualify as a lawyer. As a woman advocating for her own work-life balance, she says “I always pause and evaluate the boundaries between my professional and personal life. I avoid work while it is personal time and vice versa.”



“ I took to the skies, gaining my private pilot’s licence and flying around Australia. Little did I know this was an early step toward joining the space sector.”

MICHELLE KEEGAN

Company: AROSE (Australian Remote Operations for Space and Earth consortium)

Title: Director

Country: Australia

Michelle always saw mining as a career path that could give her opportunities to travel, to explore and work with diverse group of people across the globe on sites and in the office.

Michelle started as a mining engineer in operations, and for over 30 years, she has worked in technical engineering, commercial management, strategy and innovation, capital projects, new markets and optimisation roles for large mining and chemical companies. In 2016, she took the role of VP Strategy Asia Pacific at one of the largest global explosives manufacturers. She then brought her mining and strategy skills to the table at South32 where she created and led a new role in the company, designing their next generation mine blueprint.

She is now the programme director on the design of Australia’s first lunar rover for the Australian Space Agency’s Trailblazer programme. The link between the natural resources and space sectors was a white space in Australia prior to her joining AROSE. Her strategy has not only built this business but, thanks to her development of the Resources Advisory Board, has created a forum for the most innovative companies in the Australian resources sector to leverage space technology into mining. She’s been recognised by NASA for creating opportunities for the Australian mining and METS sector in the global space sector.

Michelle says, “each new chapter in my career has come with trepidation, each time facing the challenge of the unknown. It’s the challenge I thrive on, the ability to continue learning and growing, and moving forward.”



“During work time, I focus on work and when I am with my family, I enjoy them because every second is precious to me.”

FANTA KEITA

Company: Rio Tinto Simfer
Title: Community Relation Mine Manager
Country: Guinea

Ever since she was young, Fanta wanted to work somewhere she could make a difference. After graduating as an agricultural engineer, she worked for almost eight years with NGOs in socio-economic development. On seeing a role at Rio Tinto that matched her areas of expertise, she made the move to mining to help communities local to the mines.

Her focus is on addressing issues faced by women, including educating them about their rights, training, employment opportunities, and providing financial support through microfinance and entrepreneurship. By organising regular community consultations and encouraging women's participation in developing company policies, she ensures their voices are heard. She has overseen many successful programmes and is currently exploring projects such as market gardening, fish farming, and vocational training for midwives.

Amongst other successes Fanta has: facilitated capacity building of local entrepreneurs which has now enabled the creation of more than 100 companies, nearly 30 of which have contracts with Simfer and its suppliers; created community growth funds for women's small and medium enterprises (SMEs); constructed an enterprise centre to foster women's entrepreneurship; and supported young people in agriculture, enabling them to create their own businesses and have direct contracts with catering companies.

Outside of work, Fanta works with the “Novo” project which supports access to formal education and functional literacy for vulnerable children, providing them with an opportunity to learn. To relax she “likes going to the movies with my husband and child, shopping and going to the dance club on weekends.”



“My vision for Sirius is to become the backbone of ESG data management in metals and mining, empowering every sustainability team.”

ANASTASIA KUSKOVA

Company: Sirius
Title: CEO & Founder
Country: Netherlands

In her ten plus years working in mining and metals, Anastasia has made a significant impact. As former Head of Sustainability at Eurasia Resource Group (ERG), she was one of the leaders behind the Re|Source battery materials traceability platform backed by Glencore, Tesla, and Umicore. Now, as Founder and CEO of Sirius, she combines her deep industry knowledge with innovative AI technology to address the most pressing challenges of the industry. With her team, they have deployed the “Sustainability Twins” platform to improve sustainability data management across the industry.

Anastasia is leading the way in transforming the sector. Focusing on innovative solutions, she is challenging traditional industry practices and setting new benchmarks for environmental stewardship. Her leadership as a female entrepreneur in a male-dominated field has established her as a pioneer, inspiring change and promoting gender diversity within the tech and mining sectors.

Anastasia says one of her most rewarding achievements was co-building Re|Source, turning a wild idea into reality with a small but determined team. This experience ignited her passion to create Sirius, a platform now supporting hundreds of sustainability leaders across the industry. “I didn’t set out to be in mining – it kind of found me. Now, a few years later, I can’t imagine doing anything else. It’s exciting, challenging, and full of opportunities to make a real impact.”



“ I was lucky to have some industry greats as technical mentors, work for some great leaders and have a supportive family, all instrumental to my career.”

VIRGINIA LAWSON

Company: Glencore Copper

Title: General Manager, Metallurgical Processing

Country: Australia

Scientific curiosity and love of problem-solving directed Virginia into Engineering. She has worked in many parts of mineral processing operations, projects and research, and in 2019 became General Manager Metallurgical Processing at Glencore Copper.

Affectionately referred to as the *'Abuela de Flotacionâ'* (Grandmother of Flotation), she is credited with many successful installations globally and raising the technical capability of a generation of mineral processors. Virginia is highly respected in the field of mineral processing, including for championing new technology in the mineral processing. The combination of her enthusiasm, technical capability and hard work was instrumental in shifting industry opinion on flotation technology.

Virginia set a precedent at Queensland's Mount Isa mine, as the first mother to return to an operational role on part-time basis. She was instrumental in developing policies and procedures for women returning to the workforce and was a key contributor to the launch of Glencore Australia's internal diversity and inclusion programme. She mentors young professionals, participates in student and WIM events, and international conferences.

She says "I am proud of the combination of projects I have designed, constructed and operated as well as the people I have mentored and developed along the way. I am also proud of doing this in conjunction with raising four children. Challenges present in many forms but having a sense of humour, a sense of purpose and supporting family and peers has helped me overcome them."



“ I’ve always wanted to have a positive impact, to ensure my time in this world counts for something good.”

JILLIAN LENNARTZ

Company: First Majestic Silver
Title: Director, ESG
Country: Canada

Jillian pivoted from being an academic in climate science to working in the space between science and business. She is now an acclaimed corporate sustainability practitioner with a decade of experience applying science to industry.

Since 2020 she has found a home in mining, working to change the often-negative perception of the industry to one that can be seen as a force for the betterment of the world. Jillian has pioneered initiatives including being part creator of the first ever corporate mining podcast “Why We Mine”, shedding light on the challenges and opportunities for the mining industry. She says, “we will need significant mineral resources to move societies into a high-tech future. The minerals we use to make such transformative products should be produced in a responsible way.”

In 2024, Jillian brought together nearly the entirety of Canada’s silver miners to realise the opportunity that silver will play in the transition towards a low-carbon and digital future; silver being the single most electrically conductive metal in the world. She wrote a national strategy for the silver miners to follow and has led direct engagement with the federal government, advocating for silver as a critical mineral.

Early in her career, Jillian suffered an injury that permanently altered her professional trajectory, forcing her to re-evaluate her options considering her new limitations. She says this was not the only roadblock she has experienced as a professional, but “it was the first and most impactful, and has shaped my approach to all subsequent challenges. To this day, when faced with a challenge I will pause, take time to recover, evaluate the situation and find a path forward that best aligns with my resources and goals.”



“Achievements, both large and small, have shaped my career and continue to inspire my dedication to making the mining industry a safer and more inclusive place for all.”

MARIA ELISA LLOYD

Company: Anglo American
Title: Risk and Assurance Governance Principal
Country: United Kingdom

With over 20 years' experience as an accountant and certified internal auditor, Maria's career has focused on operational and enterprise risk management, and safety in mining. Growing up in a mining community in Brazil certainly influenced her decision to go into the industry and she is now the fifth generation of her family in mining.

Maria cites several milestones that have shaped her professional journey. These include: a secondment to South Africa to support the implementation of the SOX programme; joining the Group Risk team and playing a major role in the implementation of the Enterprise Risk Management framework; transitioning to Operational Risk Management and specialising in major hazard and critical control management.

Maria is very active in promoting diversity and inclusion in the mining industry. She says, "one of the biggest challenges has been navigating my role as a woman. As an internal auditor, I had to travel alone to remote places which required a great deal of resilience and adaptability."

Returning to work after maternity posed challenges, but recognising they were shared, she advocated for policies supporting employees returning from leave and work-life balance for all parents. This has led to initiatives such as establishing breast pumping stations in operational areas. Maria says, "this experience taught me the importance of resilience, cultural sensitivity, and the power of advocacy in driving positive change."



“Sustainability has always been my way of seeing mining for the past 23 years.”

CAMILLA LOTT

Company: Vale
Title: Corporate Sustainability Director
Country: Brazil

Camilla joined Vale as an environmental trainee and quickly recognised the opportunity for mining to transform communities and protect the environment. Camilla is now the Corporate Sustainability Director, globally responsible for sustainability performance.

Camilla has played an integral role in production management operations, having established the social performance model for the company.

She led negotiations with indigenous communities neighbouring Vale's thirteen operations in Brazil, securing Free, Prior and Informed Consent and resolving historical disputes.

She initiated a community safety program that became a key performance indicator (KPI) for leadership bonuses and designed Vale's community grievance mechanism. She worked in project implementation in Mozambique for eight years where in addition to her role she was CEO of the Vale Mozambique Foundation, developing and implementing social programmes.

During the Brumadinho tragedy, Camilla led the humanitarian aid response for victims whilst interacting with a multitude of other stakeholders. At a time of great pain for the community, she found the emotional and physical stability to deliver on her responsibilities.

Camilla is a source of inspiration because of her resilience and exceptional ability to face challenges with determination, coupled with her aptitude for establishing connections with a diverse range of people. Camilla not only leads by example but also empowers and encourages those around her to reach their full potential, creating a work environment that inspires innovation, collaboration, and personal and professional growth.



“ My job is continuously evolving and allows me to be innovative as I solve different business problems and learn new things every day.”

NKANYEZI LUTHULI

Company: Glencore Ferroalloys
Title: Team Lead Group Procurement
Country: South Africa

Nkanyezi has been a supply chain professional for fifteen years. Her first job was as a project administrator for mine rehabilitation and closure at the Water Affairs Mining Directorate. She then moved into supply chain within the private sector before joining Barloworld Equipment (Caterpillar dealer in southern Africa). Between 2016–2017, Nkanyezi led the company’s procurement transformation project, responsible for policy development and its implementation at over fifteen sites.

Since joining Glencore Ferroalloys as Group Procurement Team Lead, she has doubled the size of her team, driven significant savings and focused on efficiencies and fraud prevention. She is Deputy Chair of Glencore Ferroalloys’ Women in Mining Head Office Committee and is a Fellow of the African Institute for Supply Chain Research, providing mentorship and participating in research.

Nkanyezi has not only faced gender discrimination throughout her career, but also encountered racism. She explains, “when confronted with a tough situation I remain professional and maintain my composure. I am very proud of my culture and identity, so when someone is racist, I don’t let them get to me but ensure I spend very minimum time in their space.”

Nkanyezi cites her grandfather as one of her role models. “He came to South Africa as a migrant mine worker in 1930s from Mozambique. He always encouraged us to work hard and treated us as equals. We all learnt to do the same chores, there was never such thing as that is for boys and this is for girls.”



“ I chose to follow my passion , even if it was extremely difficult at first, with people trying to prove that I was wrong and that I would eventually realise it!”

DIAMANTE M. KAFUTI

Company: Barrick Gold Corporation
Title: Senior Exploration Geologist
Country: Democratic Republic of Congo

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, Diamante’s name is synonymous with excellence and innovation. Her technical skills are awe-inspiring, with a mastery of geological mapping, geophysics, structural interpretation, 3D geomodelling, and the intricate art of preliminary mineral resources estimation. Diamante embodies the essence of leadership and inspiration. Yet, she is grounded, cherishes collaboration and nurtures a culture of knowledge-sharing and camaraderie with her peers and stakeholders.

In choosing to study geology, Diamante faced cultural barriers in her community and family. Diamante remembers that “some folks looked at me as if I was ruining my life rather than simply marrying and having children.”

She has excelled in the growing DRC gold mining environment and was the first female geologist to join Kibal (now Barrick Gold). There, her outstanding performance includes the development of echelons while overseeing greenfield operations. She has extended the mine’s lifespan, through numerous discoveries and expansions, by several years.

Diamante has grown her team to include more than 15 female geologists and is working to increase the number of women in technical roles in the company. She also visits schools to encourage the next generation of women to pursue STEM subjects. Diamante says “my presence encouraged many dads in distant communities where I worked to send their daughters to high school and education rather than waiting for marriage. Realising that your fight was worthwhile and that the cost you paid would enable future females to advance is so rewarding.”



“The dynamic nature of the mining industry, coupled with the opportunity to work on projects that have a tangible impact on the world, continues to inspire me.”

INNOCENTIA MAHLANGU

Company: Hatch
Title: Project Manager
Country: South Africa

With a degree in civil engineering, Innocentia joined Hatch and built a strong technical foundation in railway engineering, which included developing logistics solutions for transporting mineral products. Now, aged 35, Innocentia is a globally recognised and award-winning engineer, project manager professional, author and TedX speaker. She has a master’s degree in engineering, is a professionally registered engineer and has an MBA.

At the start of her career, often as the only woman in the room, Innocentia realised she looked different and didn’t fit in. Rather than changing herself to fit the mould, she decided to reshape the mould to fit her. “I realised that my voice mattered and learned to be comfortable with what I brought to the table. We require diversity of thought to solve the world’s toughest problems and we will only thrive when we embrace our diversity.”

Innocentia believes in being the change she wishes to see. When she realised women had limited access to mentorship and role models, she established SHEngineers to advocate for women in male dominated industries. When she realised the lack of female voices in the industry, she authored “Unleash Your Unique Advantage”, a book dedicated to advancing women.

Innocentia is fearless and believes that by being visible, she indirectly encourages others to reach their potential. Her work has been recognised through numerous local and international awards. These include being named as one of the top 200 young South Africans, one of 150 Global Women Leaders and in 2022 received the Global Rising Leader Award, conferred by the prestigious, international Project Management Institute.



“ It’s about enjoying what you do and making sure to understand the bigger picture.”

VILDANA MAHMUTOVIC

Company: Adriatic Metals Ltd
Title: Head of Sustainability
Country: Bosnia and Herzegovina

Fascinated by the environment since elementary school, Vildana was looking for a career that involved innovation and engineering. With a degree in Chemical Engineering, she found her niche working in sustainability. After working as environmental impact assessment expert for six years, she spent almost three years working alongside the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) on various projects. In 2020 she moved to Eastern Mining as Environmental and Social Manger before being appointed Head of Sustainability at Adriatic Metals in 2022.

Working in environmental protection in Bosnia presents unique challenges. It is a developing country that, due to war, experienced a collapse in its mining industry. As a result, in some cases, the industry relies on outdated technologies which pose major environmental protection issues. According to Vildana, “as our industry modernises, we have the unique opportunity to apply up to date sustainability good practice. It is precisely this challenge that motivated me to stay in Bosnia, when many young people are leaving, and to contribute to the development of my country.”

Vildana’s ability to integrate modern sustainability practices into mining operations is already making an impact. She has set the benchmark in applying high standards and balancing business needs with social impact.

She says, “my most significant achievement is balancing my personal life with my professional aspirations. Personally, I am proud mother of two, with a third on the way. Professionally, I have managed to build a successful career while also completing my master’s thesis and receiving accolades for my work.”



“ I was the first Zambian given the opportunity to run the largest mining and construction equipment company in the country.”

MFIKEYI MAKAYI

Company: KoBold Metals Africa
Title: Chief Executive Officer
Country: Zambia

Although history was her initial choice, permission from Mfikeyi's mother to study in the United States was conditional on an engineering degree. After completing a BSc in Civil Engineering and a master's degree in environmental engineering, she began working as a civil works supervisor on a Copper Process Plant in north-western Zambia. She then moved to the mining division, worked in drilling and blasting, became a certified production driller and acquired the necessary blasting certification. She then joined the Internal Audit division, conducting audits of operations in Zambia, Panama, Mauritania, Finland and the corporate offices in the United Kingdom and Australia.

In 2017 she joined the mining services sector when Barloworld Equipment Zambia (Caterpillar dealer in southern Africa) offered her the role of Assistant Operations Manager, and subsequently Country Manager. There was responsible for the sales, and aftersales strategies for key copper and emerald mining accounts in Zambia.

On April 5th 2023, history was made when KoBold Zambia announced the appointment of Mfikeyi as their new CEO, the first woman in Zambia to head a major mineral exploration company. KoBold is at the frontier of new technology in mining, using artificial intelligence to discover the materials critical for the electric vehicle and renewable energy.

Mfikeyi says, "I endeavour to ensure my personal time builds my self-development into other areas and interests beyond mining. A deliberate mental separation aids performing well, in both my professional and personal life goals, as they feed into each other. I leverage good habits in both to foster a symbiotic relationship."



“ I always dreamed of working in a mining company. I like big challenges and that’s what I saw in this sector.”

MARCELA MARÍN RINCÓN

Company: Mineros Aluvial
Title: Strategy and Organisational Development Manager
Country: Colombia

Starting as a Production Engineer at Kimberly Clark, Marcela joined Mineros Aluvial 16 years ago fulfilling her dream to work in mining. It is here, that Marcela was able to contribute to strategic processes for the growth of both the industry and the organisation, across areas ranging from human resources, culture, communications and technical projects.

She is now the Strategy and Organisational Development Manager. In her role, Marcela has relentlessly championed gender equity and community empowerment. Through her leadership, she has overseen the increase of female participation across the workforce from 8% in 2020 to 11% in 2023. She has taken concrete actions to increase the visibility of women and minorities, through initiatives such as the “Somosmujeresmineras” network for inclusivity and empowerment. Marcela set up the Heart of Gold volunteer programme in 2021 to facilitate the development of the communities where Mineros operates.

As part of the top management team at a mining company, Marcela is an inspiration for girls and university students in the region. Her outreach work is truly inspirational and includes local gender-focused implementation of NASA’s “Ella es Astronauta” programme. Thanks to her leadership, for the first time three girls from her region have been selected to visit the space centre in Houston, USA.

Personally, Marcela says that “being mother to my two children has been one of my biggest challenges but, with the unconditional support of my husband, also one of my greatest achievements.”



“ I saw the contribution that mining can make to peoples’ lives. So I wanted to be involved in work that optimised the positive contribution of mining for people nearby.”

DANIELLE MARTIN

Company: International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM)
Title: Co-Chief Operating Officer and Director of Social Performance Global
Country: Australia

From leading field campaigns in remote Papua New Guinea to now holding a C-suite position, Danielle Martin has changed the industry’s approach to social performance. As Director of Social Performance at ICMM, her energy and determination have impact well beyond her team, influencing social performance at mining assets worldwide.

In 2022/23, Danielle led the development of ICMM’s new membership commitments on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. These include actions to eliminate all forms of harassment and unfair discrimination in the workplace and set out steps to achieve gender equity in mining. At a time when climate change and environmental issues seemed to be the major focus of ESG efforts, she put the ‘S’ firmly on the agenda. She refused to accept the de-prioritisation of social issues and ensured CEOs commitment to these vital initiatives.

Despite the responsibilities of her role, from working with the CEOs of the world’s largest mining companies to playing an active role in project decisions, Danielle always finds time to interact with colleagues and has a knack for making people feel seen and heard. Danielle credits the championing of excellent female leaders for some of her ‘breaks’ and says “I hope that I can pay that forward with people I work with. I’ve had some great female and male bosses – and some terrible ones! But I’ve learnt something from each of them. But mainly, I’ve looked to my mum who has always risen above adversity with dignity and a smile. I try to emulate her.”



“ I have demonstrated my ability to manage complex situations, debunking that women are too emotional to handle such demands.”

MARIE ANNE MAZANGU KUMBI

Company: Kamoto Copper Company (Glencore)
Title: Processing Plant Mechanical Superintendent
Country: Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

Marie Anne's passion for technology was inspired by her electronics technician uncle. Just before she entered secondary education, the all-male technical schools opened admission to girls, and she was able to pursue her dream. This spurred her to earn a diploma in Electromechanical Engineering from the Polytechnic Department at the University of Lubumbashi.

She began working underground as a maintenance technician at Atlas Copco DRC. She joined the Kamoto Copper Company as a maintenance planner for six years, then worked at a copper processing plant for two years before becoming Mechanical Superintendent, a position she has held for three years.

Marie Anne has disproved the gender and cultural bias that technical fields are reserved for men, and has successfully executed high-risk operations with exceptional safety performance, achieving zero fatalities and no work-related accidents. She has led her team to world-class maintenance practices through technical training, fostering a housekeeping culture and driving continuous improvement.

She has achieved this through her strong leadership, cultivating trust and fostering a sense of ownership and accountability among team members. Marie Anne says, "I have confronted the challenge of dismantling traditional gender stereotypes that often-rendered women's contributions in the mining sector invisible and undervalued. My proven competence and resilience have earned me respect and I lead with confidence in a male-dominated environment."



“ To be a successful leader you don't need to be a technical expert. Your role as a Leader is to empower your team and remove roadblocks to enable them to deliver.”

ASHLEY McCARTHY-GRIFFITHS

Company: Stanmore Resources
Title: Business Improvement Principal
Country: Australia

Ashley is passionate about solving complex challenges through combining technology and engineering. Before the age of thirty, Ashley had set the technological direction for BHPs Coal Operations in Australia and was the first female Maintenance Supervisor in a workshop of over 600 Maintainers at Caval Ridge Mine. Simultaneously, she led an NGO, The Power of Engineering, highlighting careers in STEM and Mining. She now leads Stanmore Resources Business Improvement capability.

A major influence on Ashley's career was her Manager in a digital transformation project who came from Corporate Affairs and had a limited background in technology. Ashley didn't think there would be much she could teach her but says "I have never been so wrong, and my first lesson was not to underestimate people."

At Caval Ridge, Ashley faced the challenge of replacing a well-respected leader with a wealth of experience and technical knowledge. She shifted the culture from relying on one individual and created an inclusive environment. She tripled her team's female representation and increased indigenous representation by 10%. In this environment, she built a high performing team showcasing diversity in action.

Ashley has been recognised for her contribution to the Australian mining industry and advocate work for building a diverse STEM workforce: from invitations to present at the Engineering for Australia Taskforce, to the National Women in Engineering summit and presentations to over 3,500+ high school and university students across Australia.



“ I discovered that I loved the dynamic nature of the industry with its complex problems to solve and down to earth people.”

ZANNA McCOMISH

Company: BHP

Title: Vice President Potash Sales & Marketing

Country: Singapore

Zanna started her career in finance and quickly found herself working in the mining sector. She moved to BHP in 2009, starting in Group Acquisitions & Divestments in Melbourne and London. Zanna is now Vice President of Sales & Marketing for Energy, Carbon and Potash, accountable for global procurement of traded fuels, power and carbon solutions. She is instrumental in BHP's efforts to transition to low emissions energy and built a team investing in nature-based carbon solutions. She is also building the outbound sales team to support the Jansen Potash Mine development in Canada.

Zanna has had the opportunity to work across many strategic and commercial roles for BHP in Australia, United Kingdom and Singapore before arriving at her current position. She states that she is “most proud of the tangible outcomes my team has delivered to support decarbonisation, increasing the penetration of renewable power at our operations and developing low carbon fuel options. We also built a commercial capability to understand the nascent carbon markets and procure nature-based carbon credits for compliance purposes.”

Zanna is a humble, energising and passionate leader, who takes pride in developing her talent and diversity. Her current team of 40 reflects this passion with over 50% female participation, 40% female leadership, and over ten different nationalities. As Executive Sponsor of the employee resource group in Singapore, Gender Equity Matters (GEM), she is a visible role model and passionate about empowering women in mining. Through GEM, she works, with a driven team of colleagues, to advocate for a safe and inclusive work environment, actively challenges and co-designs HR policies, and raise awareness on gender equity topics.



“ Working on a mine is similar to playing a team sport – you quickly realize that no task can be accomplished alone, and success is only possible through teamwork.”

ROBYN SALLY MELLETT

Company: OMI Solutions (Pty) Ltd
Title: CEO & Founder
Country: South Africa

Growing up on a farm, Robyn had dreams of becoming a vet but, with a B.Sc. in Geography, she started her career as an environmental scientist at an underground mine. “I loved the fast-paced environment, the hum and buzz of machines, and how my colleagues became like family. I discovered a passion for mining, especially sustainable closure, improved biodiversity and the well-being of people.”

In 2017, Robyn left mining to work in Afghanistan for the Wildlife Conservation Society but had to return to South Africa after her colleague was kidnapped by militants. Undaunted, and with just four Rand in her bank account, she started OMI Solutions (OMI), an environmental and agricultural engineering consultancy. In addition to the expected regulatory and advisory services, OMI has a niche focus on bees, both the protection of their habitat and their role in remediation. In 2019, the company launched its first research trials and by 2020 had established an apiary farm, which is expanding across South Africa.

Originally working from the back of her car, in just five years Robyn has built a solid business employing 32 people, of which 70% are women, and achieving Broad-Based Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) level 2 status – the second highest procurement recognition score a company can receive. She has been recognised as Standard Bank of South Africa’s Lady Entrepreneur of the Year and has participated in the diversity and sustainability panel at United Nations’ COP 28.

Robyn says, “building a business with zero investment into an international competitor has required both my team and me to make many personal sacrifices. I will be forever grateful to each and every employee who has contributed to our success.”



“ In itself my work requires a certain type of courage, to go out into the field, in remote areas, to have the patience to search and find species and work tirelessly for conservation.”

DENISE MOLMOU

Company: Rio Tinto Simfer
Title: Flora Specialist
Country: Guinea

Denise is a pioneer in the field of mining botany, contributing to a better understanding of biodiversity conservation on mine sites. As a specialist in monitoring threatened plant species, Denise has conducted numerous research and has collaborated on conservation initiatives integral to the management of ecological systems.

During her conservation work on the Simandou project for Rio Tinto Simfer, she discovered the *Saxicolella deniseae* (named after her) in 2018 and *Anacolosia deniseae* in 2021. She has contributed significantly to scientific publications and co-authored works on plant conservation, earning her recognition in the scientific community. She is now working in partnership with Kew Gardens in the United Kingdom, to finalise her PhD.

Denise's ground-breaking work has left an indelible mark on the mining sector. Her expertise and passion for botanical research have enriched understanding of the ecosystems the industry operates in and set a standard of excellence for environmental stewardship.

Denise Molmou cites her mother, who works with medicinal plants, as her inspiration. "My favourite memories are of going with her as a child to collect plants. She taught me their names and gave me the passion that I have today for plants, for their qualities, for their identification and for their protection."

Married with two children, she says it takes organisation and support to continue with her field work. "I often go on missions and I depend on my husband and my family to allow me to further my career and follow my professional passions." She also owns and manages an agricultural farm and remarks "You might say that my hobby away from work is more work."



“The dialogues remind me that I enjoy what I do, that what I do is important, that I am making a difference and that it is worthwhile.”

KATHRYN MOORE

Company: University of Exeter
Title: Senior Lecturer in Critical and Green Technology Metals
Country: United Kingdom

Kathryn's early fascination with landscape, the rock cycle and palaeontology shifted whilst at university to a focus on igneous and experimental petrology, and ore deposits. This was a perfect platform from which to investigate the geological concentration of critical minerals. However, once employed in the field of Critical Minerals, "I quickly realised the majority of issues, relating to security of supply are mainly not geological. I started working collaboratively using multi-disciplinary approaches to address raw materials production challenges."

Her most significant achievement was leading a consortium in a €7 million EU-funded research project investigating how to rapidly access raw materials from small and complex ore bodies in the event of a supply shock. The project ended in 2020 and, raising as many questions as it answered, caused Kathryn to reorient her research. She has continued with geological and industry-oriented investigations, but now considers how research creation processes can be used to rethink resource extraction across the mining life cycle and in the circular economy. Her new work, in collaboration with social scientists and engineers, interrogates how structures of care can be usefully developed to support mining practitioners and communities.

As well as being a mother of three, with part of her personal journey aimed towards a more sustainable future, Kathryn crafts her own clothes and home furnishings using recycled and deadstock materials in a 'slow fashion' approach. She says, "I find that there is a feedback loop between my creative hobbies and my work, in reconsidering where and how mining sits in modern and future imaginaries."



“ You cannot succeed in your mission if your teams don't trust you.”

HANANE MOURCHID

Company: OCP
Title: Chief Sustainability & Innovation Officer
Country: Morocco

When Hanane was young, many of the men in her family were engineers in mining and heavy industry. She was fascinated by the size and significance of mining operations and was determined to become part of this “inaccessible domain.”

Starting as an engineer, Hanane has been an agent for change during her seventeen years at OCP. She has been the first woman to hold several roles at OCP including Plant Production Lead, Plant Director and Executive Director. She is now Chief Sustainability Officer and member of their strategic committee. Hanane takes pride in “having created trust and collaboration among my teams of mostly men and being the first women to be director of a Phosphate Transformation Plant.”

In her current position, Hanane rolled out the sustainability framework, leading to a shift in external stakeholders' perception of the company's ESG performance. Since 2018, she has been leading a programme to embed the relevant United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, setting bold commitments and creating a real cultural shift within the company. The results have been impressive: increasing renewable energy use to 89%; launching wastewater treatment plants; setting a carbon neutrality roadmap; launching twenty policies; and producing the first certified sustainability report. In 2021 The World Business Council for Sustainable Development recognised Hanane with the Excellence Award at the Leading Women Awards.

Hanane cites her mother as her role model. “She taught me how to be brave, courageous and count on myself, from a very young age. She taught me that men and women are equal, and that career choices and independence are non-negotiable.”



“ My public health background and passion for mining enable me to contribute meaningfully to both fields, advocating for women’s empowerment and sustainable practices.”

DR. FAITH MUTETE

- Company:** Founder of Resilient Women in Mining Association and President of WIM ZIMBABWE
- Title:** Director and Mine owner, Country Representative WIM AFRICA
- Country:** Zimbabwe

Dr Faith already had fifteen years of experience in public health, when she decided to take on the major challenge of formalising her mining business. Today, Faith’s entrepreneurship, advocacy for women in mining, social responsibility and support for miners’ health distinguish her as a visionary leader.

Dr Faith established the Resilient Women in Mining Association, which evolved into WIM Zimbabwe, to support women across the sector. She has helped small scale women miners become aware of their rights, especially in situations of gender-based violence and discrimination, and provided advice on the mining licensing processes.

As a public health advocate and recognising the health challenges faced by miners, Faith’s dedication to supporting miners with TB and HIV has set a new standard for workplace wellness initiatives. Known for her commitment to operating legally and sustainably, she has encouraged miners to practice land reclamation, even supplying them with trees for planting.

Faith says she has managed to balance her full-time health sector work and managing the mining ventures by building a strong team of highly qualified personnel and allowing the mine business to operate independently. “Delegating responsibilities and trusting my team has been essential to maintaining focus on both aspects of my career.”



“ Together with the community, we chose initiatives that took their priorities into account and, one at a time, we have achieved these community development programmes.”

MARIAM MWAISWELO

Company: Mamba Minerals Corporation Limited
Title: Sustainability/Camp Manager
Country: Tanzania

With an academic background in teaching community field studies at St. John's University of Tanzania, Mariam decided to apply her theoretical knowledge to practical work. She joined Mamba Minerals in 2015 during the exploration phase of its Ngualla Rare Earth Project in southwest Tanzania. In this remote, impoverished area, Mariam's first mission was to build acceptance for the project with local stakeholders.

Mariam has built excellent community relations for Mamba Minerals overseeing the delivery of initiatives that have transformed the lives of the 12,000 people. This has included the construction of classrooms and housing for teachers; sponsorship of the annual Nane Farmers Festival; funding for a local medical clinic; and provision of water bores to provide safe water. The reconstruction of 45km of road to the community has facilitated safe, year-round road access, enabled the establishment of the first regular bus services, materially reduced travel times and costs for farmers to market their produce.

With no prior mining experience and stepping-up to lead the exploration and development camp, Mariam is proud of what she has achieved in eight years. She says, "my focus is to ensure that even if Mamba Minerals were to ease their operations, that the community development will be sustainable. For example, I am currently working with the community to update traditional farming practices."

All this has been achieved against the backdrop of a culture where men dominate not only in the workplace but also community life. Mariam advocates for equal opportunities, builds networks, and gender diversity in the industry. She says, "I am fully supported by the company in my endeavours to progress women's development in our communities."



“ My career has spanned NGOs, academia, and government roles but my mission has been constant: a responsible extractive sector that uplifts the lives of communities.”

MICHELLE MWAMBELA

Company: Association for Women in Energy and Extractives in Kenya (AWEIK)

Title: Programmes Manager

Country: Kenya

In her last year of law school, Michelle interned at a not-for-profit that campaigned for environmental justice in communities living around large scale mining and processing areas. This inspired her to pursue a career dedicated to community and advocacy work. She now has almost a decade experience in legal, project management and stakeholder engagement.

Michelle works with the Association for Women in Extractives and Energy in Kenya to improve the lives of artisanal and small-scale miners in gemstone and gold mining. This includes collaborating with national and county governments to ensure occupational safety, health and the environment (OSHE) regulations are monitored and upheld in artisanal mining areas. She has also published OSHE training curriculums to promote sustainable practices, and is a champion for ending sexual, gender-based violence in mining.

Michelle mobilised the support needed from diverse mining community stakeholders to ensure that artisanal women miners voices were heard during discussions on the amendment to the Mining Act of 2016. Michelle is truly an advocate for fair practices in mining, which has been further exemplified by her participation in the successful negotiation of Kenya's first Community Development Agreements (CDAs) between the largest mining company in the country and three affected communities.

Michelle says, “I am inspired by women artisanal miners whose resilience and drive, despite the myriads of challenges they face, including poor pay, gender based-violence, health and safety risks and lack of access to markets, keeps them going for the sake of their families.”



“ My approach is to be the mentor that I didn’t have when I began my career.”

CANDICE NAIDOO

Company: Paramount Tracks
Title: Managing Director
Country: South Africa

As a Managing Director, Candice’s role includes overseeing operations, strategic planning, and project management. Under her leadership, Paramount Tracks has become a highly regarded mining service and manufacturer powerhouse on the African continent, with international expansion on the horizon.

Candice believes mentorship is fundamental to career development and her approach is “to be the mentor that I didn’t have when I began my career.” She credits her Group CEO for his mentorship. “His business vision, strategic mindset, strength and support has provided me with the foundation I required to develop into the woman you see today. He presented me with an opportunity, and I ran with it.”

Skills development is an important objective for the organisation and Candice has used her position to create employment and education opportunities. In addition to setting up a mentorship programme and mentoring young women herself, she has introduced the Paramount Mechanical Engineering Graduate Programme and a successful company internship programme. Looking to skills transfer, the company arranges for key employees to go abroad and train with international brands. They then return to South Africa and teach people within the company. She has also advocated for fully paid maternity benefit for female employees.

Candice Naidoo is the epitome of a mature leader and leads by example. She believes in giving back into her community, and combines her strong family values, faith and passion for learning, by imparting knowledge to others, such that they can grow and improve their lives.



“ I always dreamed of becoming a driver, but life initially led me down a different path as a hairdresser.”

OLENA NERODA-NIKOLAICHUK

Company: Ferrexpo Yeristovo Mining
Title: Pit Truck Vehicle Driver, Mine Haul Truck Driver
Country: Ukraine

Olena’s career took a significant turn when Ferrexpo offered her the chance to train as a dump truck operator. When she first set eyes on the heavy dump trucks her excitement was indescribable, “I couldn’t wait to get behind the wheel and experience the scale of these trucks.”

In 2018, Olena was one of five women selected for a pilot project to train as drivers removing rock mass from the mine. However, the pilot group experienced push-back from male colleagues, from not being taken seriously to harassment. They were constantly told “that women did not belong in this profession and could not handle such heavy machinery.” Yet, the group was not discouraged and over the next six months demonstrated that they could drive dump trucks more safely than some of their male colleagues.

Olena dedicates time to speaking at events advocating for gender equality and the female drivers of tomorrow that she is helping to train. She is involved in improving working conditions for her colleagues, especially meeting the different needs of female drivers regarding access to restroom. She is clear on one thing: the more women who speak up, the faster this process will be.

Olena admits that “balancing work and personal life is quite difficult, especially with the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. The constant shelling impacts my emotional state, and I am deeply worried about my husband, who serves in the Ukrainian armed forces.” But she remains “passionate about demonstrating that women can excel in this field. Seeing the shift in attitudes and knowing that my work is contributing to changing perceptions fills me with immense pride.”



“As the primary carer for three children there is a perception that I can't work. Despite this I have maintained my career, Chaired MetSoc and developed MetFest!”

BIANCA NEWCOMBE

Company: OptiFroth Solutions
Title: Principal Metallurgist
& Geometallurgical Specialist
Country: Australia

Unable to work in an on-site production role after the birth of her first daughter, Bianca considered leaving the industry. Instead, she negotiated one of the industry's first flexible work arrangements, allowing her to both work and complete a PhD, whilst having another two daughters. Bianca then decided to start her own consulting business, OptiFroth Solutions, so that she could work on her own terms.

As a woman in the industry, Bianca has encountered unconscious bias and discrimination. After moving into consulting and seeing the gaps in practical education for young professionals, Bianca, started metallurgist conference MetFest! Bianca's aim was to create a forum where students and young professionals could showcase their work in a low-pressure and supportive environment. The success of the first event has led to it becoming an annual institution, spread across Australia. Metfest was held in Orange NSW in 2016.

She also founded a fermented food and drink business, Bianca's Kitchen, making live cultured vinegars and probiotics drinks. What started as a hobby business won six medals at the 2024 Australian Food Awards and seven medals at the Sydney Royal Fine Food Competition.

Bianca has also been recognised for her achievements in 2023 with Australia's Exceptional Women in Resources Award. Her passion for passing on knowledge is evidenced by the publication of over 20 technical papers in peer-reviewed journals and conferences, across the globe. As a long-standing member and past Chair of the AuslMM Metallurgical Society she has implemented change to promote the industry, better represent women and enable access to knowledge for all demographics.



“Applied chemistry can be used to solve real-world problems, so I apply my expertise to make informed decision in mineral processing and handling.”

HENRIETTE NIRAGIRE

Company: LuNa Smelter Ltd
Title: Quality Control Manager
Country: Rwanda

Henriette 's unwavering dedication to excellence, environmental sustainability, and gender empowerment sets her apart in the mining industry and the broader community. With a passion for analytical chemistry and mineral analysis, Henriette chose a career in mining. She now heads up Rwanda's premier certified mining and metallurgy laboratory –the first. During her time as an environmental facilitator at the Rwanda Natural Resources Authority, she collaborated with mine inspectors and miners on the adoption of sustainable practices. In her current role, she is developing digital mine identification profiles, which will be shared via blockchain infrastructure, enabling real-time traceability for minerals originating from the African Great Lakes Region.

At LuNa, Henriette implemented an ISO-compliant laboratory management system (ISO 17025:2017) that improved the accuracy and reliability of mineral analysis, enhancing compliance and credibility. To improve mineral analysis techniques, she refined laboratory procedures, resulting in more precise mineral composition studies, contributing to better decision-making in mineral analysis. To maximise team success, she has trained and mentored junior chemists and technicians, enhancing their skills and precision.

As a mother of two, Henriette balances her professional career and family with grace and determination. She says that “achieving this balance, particularly in a male-dominated environment, has been a significant challenge. Mentorship and management support have contributed to my success at both work and home and, when wanting help, having a clear picture of what I needed.”



“Growing up in a town where most people worked in the mine, I was always surrounded by conversations about the industry.”

KATERINA NOVAKOVA

Company: Central Asia Metals (Sasa Mine)
Title: Office Support Coordinator
Country: Republic of North Macedonia

Despite graduating with a degree in Russian translation, over the years, Katerina gained invaluable experience in different roles, each offering new challenges and opportunities for growth. Today, she is Office Support Coordinator, responsible for facility maintenance and ensuring a safe and well-organised workspace, including the implementation of eco-friendly practices to create a sustainable work environment.

Katerina is a crucial part of operations and something of an unsung hero. Experienced in leading teams, she creates a positive atmosphere and is known for optimising internal communication processes, enhancing efficiency, and fostering a positive work environment. She is adept at conceptualising, organising, and executing a wide range of events – from corporate meetings and site visits to social gatherings – that exceed expectations.

She balances everyday tasks with executing complex projects. This has included several large renovations of common areas, where she managed detailed planning and resource coordination. Appointed to manage an important and confidential project, with no previous experience, she successfully aligned different departments and upper management and came up with a solution the entire team was willing to get behind. Other initiatives have improved working conditions on site. She designed and implemented mine hygiene procedures creating a cleaner and safer mine. The thoughtful introduction of lockers for personal belongings, was much appreciated by the miners.

As a mother of two girls, Katerina makes sure to spend quality time with her daughters and supportive husband. She says, “I cherish quality time with my family, whether we’re playing games, watching movies or going on fun outings together.”



“ One of my biggest achievements was becoming the first female professor in the field of Mining/Metallurgical/Minerals/Materials Engineering in Ghana.”

DR. GRACE OFORI-SARPONG AKUFFO

Company: University of Mines and Technology (UMaT)
Title: Professor Metallurgical/Minerals Engineering and Dean of Planning and Quality Assurance Unit
Country: Ghana

Born into a family of limited formal education, Dr. Grace found it hard to convince those around her that she could rise above the traditional limitations and societal definition of who a woman should be. Despite STEM subjects being an extremely male-dominated discipline, she was motivated to take up the challenge to study engineering and become an inspiration for other girls.

Dr. Grace studied Metallurgical Engineering and gained a PhD in Energy and Minerals Engineering. She then went on to start her career in academia as a lecturer in 2002 and became a professor in 2020. With over 20 years of teaching and about 100 technical publications, she has served as an Acting Pro-Vice Chancellor of the University, the first and only woman to hold this position.

Her innovative research in mycohydrometallurgy, particularly in utilising fungi for gold extraction, establishes her as a frontrunner in advancing sustainable mining practices. Grace is also a passionate advocate for gender equality and empowerment: she collaborates with mining companies to have mentorship programmes, coding and robotics training, and breast and cervical cancer screening.

In 2017 she was the only woman from Sub-Saharan Africa to win the OWSD-Elsevier Foundation Award for Early Career Women Scientists in the Developing World and two years later she was one of eight people, the youngest and only female, inducted into the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences.



“ I remember my childhood when my father told us about mining activities. Growing up, I felt a strong connection to the role mining played in economic and social development.”

DEYSI ANGELICA OLARTE QUISPE

Company: Southern Peaks Mining

Title: Junior Mine Engineer

Country: Perú

Deysi was motivated to study for a career in mining by her father and through reading about the Compañía Minera Buenaventura of Peru. With experience in mine planning and operations, working for the Reliquias and Nueva Recovered Mining Project, Deysi currently works as a Junior Mining Engineer for Southern Peaks.

At university, she excelled academically and was committed to promoting mining as a career for women. She received a scholarship from Amatas Mineros Peru and attended the Planning and Mining Summer School at the University of Chile's Delphos program. She was also recognised as 'Mujer Roca' (Rock Woman) by the Canada-Peru Chamber of Commerce.

As a woman joining the industry in Peru, Deysi encountered a range of challenges: from ill-fitting PPE not designed for women to gender bias from male colleagues. "When I was given the opportunity to work as a Mine Supervisor, I barely had two years of work experience. I was supervising 30 men, many with more than ten years of manual mining experience. Key to overcoming the, not unnatural, resistance was listening to the team's needs; demonstrating they were key pieces in the mining operation; and celebrating our achievements as a team."

Deysi is a professional with a strong empathy for women in the mining industry. She has taught Quechua (a native language of Peru) to over 50 mining professionals. Additionally, he has organised several events bringing together prominent women in the sector, academia, and the public.



“Bringing attention to the global issue of the need for better mine waste management has been perhaps my greatest career achievement.”

ANITA PARBHAKAR-FOX

Company: Sustainable Minerals Institute,
University of Queensland

Title: Associate Professor/Group Leader –
Mine Waste Transformation through
Characterisation (MIWATCH)

Country: Australia

Associate Professor Anita is renowned for her groundbreaking work in the management of mine waste. An undergraduate research project on geogenic arsenic pollution opened her eyes to the connection between mineralogy and human health. This evolved into academic work on environmental geochemistry and the impact of mining activities on local environments, followed by a move to Australia for her PhD.

With the growing demand for minerals essential to the energy transition, mine waste has emerged as a valuable but overlooked resource. As a result, Anita established MIWATCH at the University of Queensland in 2021. Its focus is on secondary prospectivity and characterising Australia's mine waste to find new critical mineral resources for the energy transition. She and her team have created the mine waste atlas of Australia and characterised over 70 sites with some showing potential to become viable mining projects.

Anita regards driving the global issue of better mine waste management as perhaps her greatest career achievement. Initially it was challenging to convince people of the need to do better with the industry's waste. Despite some implying that it wasn't proper geoscience she demonstrated that the solution to better mine waste management is entirely geoscientific requiring an understanding of surface processes, aqueous geochemistry and mineralogy. She is proud to see her 'war on mine waste' mission grow in importance internationally.



“ I have always loved what I do, whether it’s my job or my volunteer work, so I am constantly engaged in activities aimed at creating a better world.”

SOLANGE PÉREZ

Company: BHP Escondida
Title: Maintenance Manager
Country: Chile

Solange wasn't clear what she wanted to study, but she wanted to have an impact. It was when working at a printing company on a mining safety campaign that she became determined to join the industry. As a young mother she worked and studied simultaneously. After finishing her degree, she was recruited by BHP Escondida as a repair engineer, then was promoted to Superintendent of the largest concentrator plant in the world. She is now the Maintenance Manager, one of the first both at BHP Escondida and in Chile.

Solange says that BHP Escondida “developed my core skills and knowledge of its production processes so I could become the first woman to lead the maintenance area. I have been able to grow with the company, and I am grateful to apply my skills to creating production processes that do not harm people or the environment.”

Solange is concerned for the communities where the company has influence. As the first female manager of Puerto Coloso, from where copper concentrate is shipped, Solange has made incredible impact having, in just two years, rebuilt trust with the local fishing community with whom BHP had little relations with. Solange has a very distinctive leadership style: she trusts people completely, provides them with the resources they need to move forward, follows up and then expects them to meet their commitments. She empowers other women to take on positions of greater responsibility and does the same outside the organisation, mentoring young professionals. She is also a lecturer at engineering faculty of the Universidad Alberto Hurtado, a university for students at high social risk.

For Solange it is “important to motivate others and myself to perform everyday tasks exceptionally well.”



“The Coal Authority is an incredible organisation. It’s an honour to have responsibility for managing the legacy from Great Britain’s coal mining past.”

LISA PINNEY MBE

Company: The Coal Authority
Title: Chief Executive
Country: United Kingdom

Lisa is from Cornwall’s tin mining and china clay region, where mining heritage was part of the landscape in which she grew up. Following a degree in Environmental Science, she joined the Environment Agency. In her 20 years there, she became their youngest female Executive Manager and was key national spokesperson for the organisation. Her final role there was as a Director of the West Midlands, a region with significant mining history.

She is now Chief Executive of The Coal Authority, the public body managing Great Britain’s coal mining legacy, including subsidence damage claims, mine water pollution prevention, and other legacy issues. It supports wider mining remediation and low carbon opportunities, such as mine water heating. Since joining The Coal Authority, Lisa has brought a stronger focus on environmental and social value to how the authority works and has increased external engagement. Her work has been so pivotal to the United Kingdom that she was awarded an OBE in 2014.

Lisa is passionate about diversity and inclusion, having transformed the organisation’s culture into one that is more open and inclusive. She has designed recruitment practices to support diversity by advertising roles on diverse platforms and emphasising skills rather than experience in job descriptions.

Lisa established the Women’s Network and Rainbow, Race Equality, Accessibility, Family and Carers and a Men’s networks have followed. “Coming out as lesbian was challenging personally and professionally. I’ve used my learning, and the stories of others, to influence change and improvements for everyone.”



“I’ve carved out a space for women and championed diversity. In Nigeria, we trained women to drive trucks and provided them with the separate accommodation they needed.”

LOUISE PORTEUS

Company: Thor Explorations Ltd
Title: Environment and Social Manager
Country: United Kingdom

Leading scientific diving expeditions for a marine NGO in Belize, sparked Louise to pivot from an established career in town planning, focused on environmental impact assessments, towards social development and a master’s degree in development planning at University College London. For the next decade, she worked internationally on World Bank projects but grew frustrated by the lack of implementation. In 2006, Louise moved into mining to secure the necessary funding, ensure environmental compliance and integrate social benefits into projects. “This work was fulfilling as, finally, I witnessed positive outcomes for communities.”

Eight years ago, Louise took her 30 years of global experience across 50 countries to Thor Explorations Ltd. As an Executive Committee member, her expertise was pivotal in securing the trust of international funders and facilitating the establishment of Thor’s Nigerian gold mine. Being part of the decision-making process has allowed her “to ensure that community benefits and environmental management are embedded in our projects from the start.”

Taking the Segilola Gold Mine project from concept to full operation in five years is a career highlight for Louise. Significantly, transparent community development agreements, to benefit over 11,000 people, were put in place prior to construction.

“I grew up in a close-knit coal mining community in Australia, where unions fought for safety, promotions, and community benefits. My grandfather, who started in the mines at 14, became a Deputy Mine Manager through grit and determination. His journey inspired my commitment to upskilling local workers – men and women – on our Nigerian mining project.”



“ My professional goals are to impact government legislation and mining regulation to improve environmental performance and prevent activities that lead to senseless war.”

HANNAH REBECCA PRATT

Company: National Minerals Agency
Title: Assistant Mining Engineer
Country: Sierra Leone

Hannah was born in Sierra Leone at the beginning of the decade long rebel war. As a child, she suffered the bitter experience of war: her home was burnt and the children she played with disappeared. As she grew older, she learned that one of root causes of the war was her country's natural resources –namely diamonds and precious minerals. This motivated Rebecca to become a mining specialist, and she went onto graduate from the University of Sierra Leone's new degree course in mining engineering. Whilst interning at one of the country's largest miners, she was exposed to the issue of the environmental impact of mining, especially caused by illegal activities.

Hannah is now playing a pivotal role in addressing the perennial issues of illegal mining and corruption. In her first two years as the Mining Compliance Engineer in the Kono region, she increased the number of licenses for legitimate artisanal mining from a yearly average of 300 registrations to over 700. To reduce corruption, she put in place an incentive package for her team to persuade illegal miners to become licensed and adhere to government regulations, especially on environment, health and safety issues.

Through the Saturday Club run by Sierra Leone Women Engineers' (SLWE), Hannah mentors secondary school girls and facilitates workshops for engineering students. In 2024, she has been recognised as one of the top 30 Future Mining Leaders in Africa's Mining Industry by the University of Cape Town.

Hannah's strength and resilience in the face of adversity is awe-inspiring. She is passionate about maintaining a productive work-life balance and keeps the social aspect of her life active. "When I'm not at work, I am a fashion designer, lifestyle enthusiast, event planner and entrepreneur, and I love to party and spend quality time with family and friends."



“ I believed in inclusion and equity and I put it on the agenda, even if it was a topic that people didn't talk about.”

MERCEDES RODRIGUEZ

Company: Panorama Minero
Title: Events Director and Institutional Affairs
Country: Argentina

Joining the industry in 2003, Mercedes became passionate about creating opportunities for women in mining and securing the development benefits that the industry could bring to communities.

For more than two decades, Mercedes has been a conciliatory figure and a prominent voice for women in mining in Argentina. She uses her energy and capacity to engage numerous stakeholders on the need for inclusion and empowerment of women, both in the mining industry and in local communities, working tirelessly for their visibility.

Mercedes is the Director of Events and Institutional Relations at Panorama Minero, a globally renowned mining magazine. Since 2012, she has been an integral part of WIM Argentina, and is now its Executive Manager. Since 2018, she has added the role of Community Manager at the Argentine Institute of Computing to her impressive repertoire.

In her role at WIM Argentina, she is working with more than 40 companies in the construction of healthy work environments and is ensuring that female university students can continue their studies through a WIM scholarship system. Her concern is not only on women's professional and social advancement in sector but also their emotional and physical well-being. She has researched the caregiving demands on women and campaigned for better mine site conditions, including comfortable breastfeeding facilities and work clothes suitable for women of all sizes, including during pregnancy.

As a mother of two she understands the day-to-day challenges of mothers in the industry “I don't think there is a perfect balance, but I try to be the best version of myself.”



“ I am inspired by the need to promote social justice and improve the quality of life of the most disadvantaged people of Colombia.”

GIOVANNA ROMERO

Company: Aris Mining
Title: Senior Vice President Corporate Affairs and Sustainability
Country: Colombia

Giovanna started her professional life working on environmental issues at a time when they were nascent in Colombia, with the first environmental law being passed in 1993. From this, her career evolved to focus on social and governance issues and sustainable development, which saw the potential opportunities the mining sector could offer to the people of Colombia.

Working with Aris Mining since 2022, Giovanna and her team have implemented innovative projects across the environment, gender equality and education, which have been designed to promote development in the company's areas of operation. She has developed initiatives for the coexistence of medium and large-scale gold mining with traditional, artisanal, and small-scale mining, including formalising illegal miners. She has initiated projects in energy conversion, implementation of good mining practices, reforestation and conservation of water resources. Giovanna and her team have also improved the road and educational infrastructure, supported sports training and encouraged local, recreational activities. They have improved health of communities with the donation of medical supplies and equipment as well as prevention campaigns and workshops.

In her personal and professional life, she has faced many challenges, because in the areas where she works, there are countless social, environmental and governance issues that arise daily. Giovanna was a victim of a terrorist attack on civilians. Reflecting on this she says “that this experience was a challenge that allowed me to reinvent myself in the way I perceived life. It taught me about obstacles and limitations. It gave me a deep learning about setting goals, overcoming challenges, achieving the desired result and along the way having an attitude of gratitude, hope, illusion, strength and resilience.”



“ I’m proud to work for the KPMA because I believe this industry demonstrates some of the best responsible mining practices that benefit the communities.”

BROOKE RUDOLPH

Company: Klondike Placer Miners’ Association (KPMA)
Title: Senior Advisor to the Board
Country: Canada

Fifteen years ago, Brooke Rudolph found her way north looking for adventure. She started working in a placer gold mine on Dominion Creek, Yukon and quickly fell in love with this niche mining industry. Over the next ten years she worked various roles – expediting, health and safety, construction, project management – and was then offered the role of KPMA Executive Director.

During her tenure as Executive Director, Brooke was the industry representative for consultations with Territorial, Federal and First Nation Governments on New Minerals Legislation, Indigenous Land Use Planning Processes, the Yukon Water Board’s Public Hearing on Placer Mining in Wetlands.

With the support of family and community, Brooke is proud of raising her twins while working full-time. “Spending the summers driving the goldfields was the best way to spark real engagement with the industry as it faced multiple changes in governance and regulatory law. Over the past eight summers, the twins, dogs and I travelled to over 75 operations. Because the Yukon’s placer mining is family-based, our mines often have kids on site, not to mention a meal and welcoming place to stop.”



“ My career choice was inspired by the role of geosciences and geology in our day-to-day life and the fact that few women were involved in the mining sector.”

DR. ROKHAYA SAMBA EP DIENE

Company: National Geological Survey of Senegal (SGNS)
Title: General manager
Country: Senegal

Dr. Rokhaya is an influential figure in the Senegal mining industry. She began with a degree in geological engineering, followed by a doctorate in geology before entering the public service in 2000 as a geophysicist with the Ministry of Mines, holding successively more senior positions. She was appointed Director-General of the National Geological Service of in July 2022. She is also President of the Organisation of African Geological Surveys (OAGS). She was a key figure in setting up the National Geological Service and says, “one important aspect was leveraging my position at OAGS to carry out a major international benchmarking study.”

Since 2010 she has been raising the profile of Senegal’s mining sector as president of the organising committee for the Senegal International Mining Show, a meeting place for prominent experts, speakers and institutions from all over the world. A founding member of WIM Senegal, she has made a significant contribution to improving the living conditions of women in mining areas and women’s rights. Her active involvement in professional associations and not-for-profits, including in the Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, has provided her with powerful platforms to advocate for women’s leadership in mining and she has communicated a vision of geoscience that promotes its environmental, economic and social dimensions and the necessity for inter-state cooperation.

Dr. Rokhaya cultivates a sense of self-confidence in those around her, taking their opinions into account when making decisions. She delegates to young people to challenge them and to gain experience and self-confidence. She also has an innate ability to recognise talent. This is evidenced through the number of the staff she trained now holding strategic positions in the Ministry of Mines.



“ I think balance it is about being our best and ‘in the moment’ in each situation, professional or personal, without suffering or being too hard on ourselves.”

ANA SANCHES

Company: Anglo American Brazil
Title: CEO
Country: Brazil

Ana Sanches was born in a mining area, but her first experience of mining was joining Anglo American as their Finance General Manager in 2012. She was promoted several times before being made CEO of Anglo American Brazil in 2023. This is also the second time she has been made a WIM100 which reflects the huge impact she has had on the industry.

Reflecting on the leadership role she has in mining, she says “I feel responsible and empowered, every day, to continue improving mining to become more sustainable, while working to improve society’s perception of the industry through active listening and communication.”

For Ana, there is nothing more rewarding than seeing people growing, developing and bringing their best to work and to their lives. She feels a sense of great achievement when “I see my team delivering great work, feeling challenged but also motivated to keep contributing and becoming better professionals each day!”

One of the biggest challenges in her professional life was “when I moved from Brazil to London during the pandemic to work at the company headquarters, with a multi-cultural team, global and cross-commodity responsibility. It ended up being one of the best moments in my career and certainly due to the great and amazing people I met in this journey, who helped me to navigate through the challenges and turn them into opportunities.”

What Ana most enjoys doing outside of work is “spending quality time with my dear husband, two children, other family members and our friends. I also love cooking and travelling to our beach house in the northeast coast of Brazil.”



“ I’ve motivated myself to excel and prove others wrong, though I wish it didn’t always require so much effort just to get a seat at the table.”

MELISSA SANCHES ROCHA

Company: Kymera International
Title: Vice President of Global Procurement
Country: United States

Growing up near her uncle’s auto repair shop in Brazil, Melissa was always around tools. This sparked her interest in production processes, leading to an engineering degree. In 2021, Melissa joined Kymera International and began focusing on the mining industry, using her expertise to shape global procurement strategies and work with suppliers in mining operations worldwide.

Melissa has been instrumental in driving positive change and setting new standards for sustainability within the mining industry. She was architect of Kymera International’s Responsible Sourcing programme that was recognised with an Ecovadis silver medal, in the top global 3% of the entire industry.

One of Melissa’s most remarkable attributes is her commitment to continuous learning and leadership development. Since the early stages of her career, Melissa has dedicated herself to the study of leadership, recognising its importance in driving organisational success and fostering a culture of excellence. Moreover, Melissa’s experiences as the only woman in the room during negotiations within the mining segment underscores her resilience and determination to break down barriers and pave the way for greater gender equality and diversity within the industry.

Reflecting on her career, Melissa said “growing up in Brazil with limited opportunities and achieving a leadership role in the United States is something I’m proud of, especially as a Latina. Having my husband and children by my side makes it even more special.”



“The application of artificial intelligence to solve mining problems is an evolving field. It requires understanding of mining and the fundamentals of machine learning.”

YUKSEL ASLI SARI

Company: Queen's University
Title: Assistant Professor
Country: Canada

Asli's fascination with solving complex problems and a special interest in artificial intelligence (AI) drove her to explore how AI could be applied to complex engineering challenges, and specifically in the mining industry. Her undergraduate degree in Computer Science was followed by a master's and PhD in Mining Engineering, with a focus on mine planning. Throughout Asli's career, she has focused on advancing computer applications in the mining industry. She has developed tools for open pit mine planning and stope optimisation. She has also designed mathematical models for dig-limit optimisation, open pit mine planning with landfilling option and to determine stope limits.

A significant career highpoint was the establishment of the Intelligent Mining Systems Lab at Queen's University. Here Asli leads research on developing novel approaches to increase the efficiency of mining operations, decrease equipment downtime, reduce the carbon footprint and enhance mine safety.

“Through extensive research, determination and fostering key collaborations, my lab has developed machine learning solutions for a range of mining challenges. We have made significant strides in integrating AI into many areas including mine dispatch, asset management, geomechanics, mine automation, comminution and flotation.”

Her work has been recognised with several prestigious awards, including the SOSICIP Community Fellowship, the Gold Medal in Graduate Research Excellence award and the Hydro-Quebec Scholarship.



“Equity is an action,
diversity is a fact and
inclusion is a choice.”

JACKIE SCALES

Company: Teck Resources
Title: Chief Inclusion Officer
Country: Canada

As an openly gay, neurodiverse woman navigating multiple male-dominated industries, Jackie has faced numerous challenges head-on. She embraced these as opportunities to champion Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) authentically, not just as a superficial checkbox initiative. Her approach is inclusive and respectful, focusing on building trust and shifting behaviours without compromising her authenticity. She has learned from both success and failure, refining a business case for DEI that demonstrates tangible benefits in culture, retention, and productivity.

Jackie says “being the only female, out lesbian, out neuro-diverse person at the table for most of my career was a challenge. I would approach situations from a learning perspective and try (not always easy) to separate intent from impact and use situations as learning moments for all involved. I wasn’t always successful. Importantly, I learned to show up both in the moment and with reflection after, and not leave a situation unresolved.”

Championing DEI for over fifteen years, Jackie is the Director of Inclusion and Diversity at Teck Resources. A sought-after advisor in the mining industry, Jackie, formerly led Deloitte’s DEI practice, actively contributes to not-for-profits. She drives progress as an active member of the Mining Industry Human Resources Council’s Inclusion and Diversity Advisory Board. She has also served as a member of the Mining Association of Canada’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Working Group. In 2023 Jackie’s achievements were recognised through inclusion in the Women’s Executive Network’s Top 100 in 2023.



“ Share your story! Our industry is full of amazing people doing innovative work, and sharing these stories can be powerful.”

JESSICA SCANLAN

Company: MineLife Media LLC
Title: Principal
Country: United States

Jessica stumbled into mining by accident. As a student of geological engineering at Montana Tech, she visited the Underground Mine Education Center. Despite initial nervousness, the moment she turned on the cap lamp in the darkness, she was hooked.

After college, she spent five years as a grade control geologist at an underground mine and began sharing mining stories on social media, which eventually led to a job offer in social media marketing. She realised that while communication with the public and stakeholders is increasingly critical, many industry players weren't leveraging social media channels effectively. This led her to start MineLife Media, a social media agency, to encourage the mining industry to use social media to educate and interact with their communities and public.

One of her biggest challenges was transitioning from working on-site to the communication space. Having built her personal brand and career around working underground and wearing a hard hat, she felt disconnected from the industry she was passionate about. Jessica questioned her relevance in discussing mining when she wasn't actively on site. However, she realised the importance of communication for the industry – from interacting with communities and stakeholders to inspiring the next generation of miners and keeping our current workforce engaged and supported.

“While I may not wear a hard hat every day, I can use my voice to encourage others to think about communication, change the industry from the inside, and support them in their goals. It's not about shifting public perception to meet our needs; it's about evolving our industry to better engage with the world.”



“ I am proud of changing the culture of my organisation, motivating people to different ways of working, leveraging new technologies and new ideas for improvement.”

SONIA SCARSELLI

Company: BHP
Title: Vice President, Exploration
and Vice President, Xplor
Country: Canada

For Sonia, the mining industry offered her the opportunity to combine her scientific mindset and passion for travel. It has given her a strong knowledge of the macro environment, strong business acumen and a greater understanding of the resources critical to develop society. After graduating in Geological Science from Perugia, earning a PhD in Geology from ETH Zurich, Sonia started her career at ExxonMobil United Kingdom. She also has an MBA from the London Business School.

As the youngest Vice President of Exploration, and, since 2022, Vice President of BHP's Xplor – BHP's six-month accelerator programme for early-stage explorers – Sonia is redefining the landscape of mining exploration. She recognises the complex hurdles facing mining in the energy transition, particularly the need for faster discovery. Drawing on accelerator models in other industries, Sonia created, launched and now leads the first mining accelerator programme. The programme provides junior exploration companies with the funding, technology and business support they need to accelerate and de-risk their opportunities. Another of Sonia's initiatives is a pioneering, strategic partnership with Amazon Web Services that uses generative artificial intelligence to reduce data analysis time from months to seconds and achieves greater drilling precision.

Sonia says “my job is demanding; I am a single parent and I am constantly making decisions about where I need to be. I evaluate this on a case-by-case basis, and make sure I am where I can add the most value, whether at home or the office. Outside of work, I love the mountains and I climb, I run, and I practice yoga and Pilates. I am an avid reader and always carry a book with me. Good food and wine are a must!”



“Being chronically curious has always helped me. In new roles, I always ask “Why do we do it that way?”

JESSICA SIMPSON

Company: BHP
Title: Global Head of Indigenous and Local Procurement
Country: Australia

Jessica’s fascination with people, their connections and their stories led her to study journalism, but she later transitioned into community development. She has spent over 18 years bringing external voices and perspectives to the mining industry table. At BHP since 2011, she worked in Corporate Affairs, Environment, Technology, Pandemic Response, Procurement before becoming Global Head of Indigenous and Local Procurement. Jessica has combined a passion for social value creation with her interpersonal skills to make large-scale sustainable changes within BHP and the greater mining industry.

One of Jessica’s more intensive and rewarding periods was leading the Covid-19 pandemic response for BHP Mitsubishi Alliance. To prioritise the safety of our team, keep the industry operating and work with internal and external stakeholders was a highlight. With a purposeful focus on local and indigenous procurement she has overseen BHP’s Indigenous procurement spend increase 83% year on year to over US\$600 million and local procurement to over US\$3 billion.

Being promoted to BHP Communities Manager while on parental leave with her first child and being given the opportunity to study while on leave with her second, showed Jessica “that leaders can create a more inclusive and higher performing workplace. I have tried to pay that forward with my own teams and others I have mentored.”

With her gender-balanced team, Jessica’s leadership style is open, honest warm and shows a genuine commitment to uplifting others, building capability and helps people reach their full potential through opportunities for visibility and progression.



“ I didn’t choose mining, it chose me. But it didn’t take long for me to know that I would make my career in this industry.”

CORINNE SMIT

Company: Newmont
Title: Head of Sales and Marketing, Global
Country: United States

Corinne’s career in mining was not deliberate. When she joined PwC in Vancouver as a young auditor, she was assigned to work within the mining practice.

Initially working in the finance and accounting space, she wanted something more market driven and took opportunity to transition into the commercial space, looking after the sales of the products the mines produced. More than a decade after this transition, Corinne heads up Sales & Marketing at Newmont dealing with a variety of clients and challenges across multiple jurisdictions. She moved countries to join Newmont in January 2020 at the start of the pandemic. Despite the challenges brought on by the pandemic, she successfully supported the Goldcorp integration with Newmont and built a high performing Sales & Marketing team, all remotely.

For the past three years, Corinne has also been the Treasurer for the International Zinc Association and was appointed a Board Director at Pan Global Resources in 2023. Corinne is an active member of WIM Denver and very involved with the organisation of networking and learning event: in addition to organising 50th Anniversary Gala, Corinne initiated the “Sip & Swing” golf and networking event.

Corinne has built a remarkable career in the mining sector. She is approachable, kind, and generous, always eager to share her knowledge with others new to the sector. Her career path proves other women around the world, that you can be successful in mining without changing your feminine personality.



“ I believe in working hard and playing hard. When working, I stay focused and prioritise efficiency, which allows me to achieve more in less time.”

JULIE XIULI SONG

Company: Fortescue
Title: Group Manager China Relations
Country: Australia

Xiuli's 40 years in the industry is testament to her resilience, determination, and expertise. Her decision to take a degree in Mechanical Engineering was influenced by her mother who worked in the steel industry and her mechanical engineer father. A pioneering, female leader, her passionate "can do" attitude is complemented by robust cross-culture communication skills.

She spent 13 years working for the China Metallurgical Information Centre, the primary source of global mining and steel industry information in China. In 1996 she was awarded an Australian government scholarship to pursue an MBA in Canberra, which broadened her business perspective and marked her transition from a technical to strategic and roles.

After returning to China, Xiuli spend 20 years working for Rio Tinto, where she spearheaded the creation of partnerships to advance sustainable development. This included establishing a research centre with Tsinghua University, bringing together Chinese and global experts to focus on resources, energy, and sustainable development. The collaboration has resulted in over 90 research papers on sustainability and numerous policy recommendations.

In 2017, the Rio Tinto relocated her to Australia, before she moved to Fortescue Ltd, as Group Manager China Relations. Her role in developing Fortescue's China stakeholder engagement strategy exemplifies her forward-thinking approach to navigating complex geopolitical landscapes.

A mentor taught Xiuli the invaluable skill of saying "no", particularly challenging for her as a Chinese individual. She says, "this lesson has been pivotal in helping me stay focused on top priorities and to work more efficiently.



“ I try to show up with authenticity, be myself at work and feel fortunate to be passionate about, and love, what I do.”

NADIA ST JEAN

Company: Barrick Gold Corporation
Title: Regional Exploration Geologist
Country: Saudi Arabia

Growing up in Ontario, Canada, Nadia’s career choice of geology was inspired by a love of travel, a curiosity about other cultures and a desire to work outdoors. Working with technical experts and highly skilled consultants convinced her to follow a career as a technically focused geologist. She explains “there is a tendency to push geologists towards a managerial role and I was never interested in that; my preference is to mentor and train whilst guiding exploration decisions through science and strategic targeting.” She made a concerted effort to work in many different companies, different teams, different districts and cultures. She believes the best technical geologists are the ones who are adaptable, humble and well rounded.

In 2022, she became a hard rock geologist in Saudi Arabia, one of the few females in her team, and the only woman working with male Saudi nationals. Despite the country’s lack of women in the industry and pushback from some colleagues, Nadia has persevered and pushed through the cultural barriers to build meaningful and respectful working relationships with her counterparts. She takes great care of the young Arab geologists in her team and focuses on their professional development and enrichment of their technical skills as exploration geologists and treats them as equals.

She is very excited to be sponsoring the first Society of Exploration Geologists student chapter in Saudi Arabia. Nadia is inspired by every woman in the industry, no matter their role. She says, “I have been heavily influenced by a small handful of men who I would term “advocates”; men who recognise talent and hard work regardless of gender, race, nationality and push those individuals forward.”



“ Breaking barriers, I have become a respected figure in the industry. Recognition as a leading metallurgist is a testament to my dedication and expertise.”

PAULINE TAHI MONGNIN

Company: Perseus Mining – Yaoure Gold Mine
Title: Senior Metallurgist Superintendent
Country: Côte d’Ivoire

As the first Ivorian student to receive a scholarship to the International Cooperation Exchange in Morocco, Pauline originally planned to study tourism. The turning point came when she was browsing a careers brochure and discovered Extractive Metallurgy. Despite scepticism from her parents, who believed she had chosen a path to unemployment (there were no active mines in Côte d’Ivoire at the time), she remained steadfast. Since graduating in Extractive Metallurgy from the Institute of Mines of Marrakech she has never been unemployed, now with 30 years of experience and heading the Metallurgy team at the Perseus Yaoure Mine since May 2021.

As the country’s leading female metallurgist, Pauline is a pioneer, highly respected and renowned across Côte d’Ivoire mining. Most of the metallurgists (national and expatriate) have learned their trade from her and the younger generation call her Tata Pauline (aunt). Her expertise lies in gold ore processing and plant commissioning, and she has a record of successfully bringing facilities online and optimising operations for maximum efficiency. It is extraordinary to note, with the exception of just two mines, that Pauline has participated in the start-up of all gold processing plants in Côte d’Ivoire.

Overcoming the physical and mental challenges of mining, she demonstrated resilience and strength. Pauline says that “every day of my working life presents a challenge, which makes it both worthwhile and alluring. I have had the opportunity to participate in the start-up of plants, implemented procedures and standards to enhance production, and trained young local recruits, bringing them up to speed within a few months. It is a real pleasure to leave your mark wherever you go.”



“ I remember the little things that are important to people including my family. I might not call, or I might forget a birthday, but the small things show I care.”

MEGAN TIBBALS

Company: Barrick Gold Corporation
Title: General Manager
Country: Dominican Republic

Raised in a mining family in Nevada, Megan’s passion for mining was fuelled by the stories of her ancestors. Megan graduated as a Chemical Engineer from the University of Nevada in 2002 and was employed by Newmont, where she gained experience in environmental management, project leadership, processing, and operational oversight; these were critical when she transitioned to Chief Metallurgist and became one of the first general managers when the Nevada and Barrick Gold’s Nevada Gold Mines joint venture was formed.

Megan works as General Manager at Barrick’s Pueblo Viejo operation in the Dominican Republic. Despite language barrier, her fearless embrace of challenge in an unfamiliar country showcases her determination to effect positive change. Her hands-on approach has transformed the mine.

She is a staunch advocate for sustainable mining practices that prioritise safety, environmental stewardship, and community engagement. Early in her career, she championed a safety programme through a bottom-up approach. Her unwavering commitment to promoting critical safety controls led to a mindset change that prevent fatalities in the industry.

As a member of the Mackay School of Mines Executive Advisory Board, she is a supporter of robust mining education, ensuring that future industry leaders receive a solid foundation. Her active participation in the Women in Mining Nevada chapter underscores her dedication to promoting diversity within mining. Remarkably, she has implemented part of the Nevada gender diversity programme in the Dominican Republic and has successfully increased female representation at the Pueblo Viejo mine to an impressive 25%.



“ Being in mines, it has been a phenomenal and fulfilling journey so far, and I can tell it will be even more exciting and fulfilling in the years to come.”

ANJNA TIWARI

Company: Tata Steel Ltd
Title: Head, Security and Fire services of Chromite Group of Mines and Ferro Alloys Plants
Country: India

Growing up Anjna was fascinated by the training and troop movements at the local army cantonment and early in life she was determined to join the uniformed services. Her career began with the Central Industrial Security Force, securing vital installations and infrastructure. Transitioning to India's Special Protection Group and undergoing rigorous commando training, she made history as its first female member. During 28 years of service, she safeguarded two Prime Ministers, ensuring their safety during official engagements.

Joining Tata Steel in 2021 as Head of Security for mines, the first woman to hold this position, saw Anjna move from Delhi in the north to a remote mining village in Odisha in the eastern part of India. Amongst the many challenges facing her was resistance and lack of acceptance from male colleagues, stakeholders and the community. However, things changed through her display of competence, integrity, and dedication to community welfare. She earned the respect and admiration of external stakeholders and villagers whilst ensuring harmonious industrial relations at the company's seven mines, six ferro alloy plants and one stainless steel plant.

She sees her biggest achievement as establishing a successful career in the male dominated sectors, overcoming bias and disproving the stereotype that "women can't do." Her career has required deep commitment and was never just about having a job and earning a living. She is focused on creating diversity in the work force and recognises the important role a supportive and committed organisation has in achieving this.

According to Anjna, mining is not a glamorous occupation but a thrilling career.



“Securing water for Cerro Verde was the biggest challenge I faced. It was resolved through the Virtuous Circle of Water and a great team effort.”

JULIA TORREBLANCA

Company: Sociedad Minera Cerro Verde
Title: Vice President, Corporate Affairs
Country: Peru

Julia wanted to be a lawyer to make a difference in people’s lives, but mining didn’t feature in her original plans. Then, when working at a law firm, she was invited to apply to a company looking for a someone, who spoke English and was able to drive. That is how she started her mining career.

Her work at Cerro Verde began with writing contracts for equipment, and she continued to build her knowledge by studying mining law, procedures, pre-existing contracts, and Cerro Verde’s history. Her role as a Mining Manager also taught her about operations, giving her greater context as to how the process of mining and the legality behind the mine worked together.

As recognition of her diligent work, Julia became the company’s representative on the committee responsible for building a concentrator to double production on the Chili River Basin. However, with the Chili River Basin declared exhausted, Julia’s task was to secure additional water rights. The solution was the Virtuous Circle of Water, comprised of highland dams, a potable water plant, pipelines and wastewater treatment plants, ensuring that additional water for farmers, energy and mining; drinking water for 500,000 people; treat 95% of sewage that was flowing untreated into the river; and in a Peru and world first, reuse treated sewage water for mining. As in-house lawyer on the project, Julia successfully managed one of 2005’s the largest financing operations globally. Her responsibilities continued to increase and broaden, culminating in her appointment as Vice President, Corporate Affairs.

Commenting on her mining career, Julia says “it has been 27 years of great adventure, Cerro Verde continued growing in a sustainable manner and I have grown as a better mining professional and person. Above all, my work changes people’s lives for the better.”



“ From the first time I stepped into a mine, I committed to making a real difference to these communities, and I celebrate every small step towards sustainable development.”

NATALY VASQUEZ ALZAMORA

Company: STEMLAB
Title: Founder & CEO
Country: Peru

Nataly has always believed that communication was powerful tool for social change. A fervent advocate for female empowerment, Nataly has an outstanding track record of promoting gender equality and leading initiatives that promote opportunities in STEM for women. Her mentoring and speaking roles have raised awareness of gender and sustainability issues, while her innovative social and training programmes demonstrate a strong commitment to sustainable development.

Nataly says, “being recognised as a ‘*Mujer Roca*’ (Rock Woman) by the Canada-Peru Chamber of Commerce and ‘*Egresada Exitosa*’ by my university is very rewarding, as it reflects the positive impact of my work and motivates me to continue.”

She is a founding partner of STEMLAB, an organisation that develops skills in female graduates to enhance their employability in the mining sector. Nataly has implemented mining reading circles for young women and girls from vulnerable backgrounds to promote the mining industry. She is using social media – Instagram, LinkedIn and WhatsApp – to create visibility for women’s achievements in STEM and to educate the wider public on mining. She is also using social media to make scholarships more accessible to women, leading to an increase in self-esteem and reduce the rate of dropout.

For Nataly, “my greatest influences come from my family. I grew up surrounded by people who, despite adversities, always sought ways to learn and teach. They were my first teachers, showing me the importance of education, community service, and not being afraid to break barriers.”



“ Education, whether formal or family, is the basis of everything. It is through education that we change lives and expand horizons.”

ALINE VELOSO

Company: Vale Base Metals
Title: Logistics Operations
and Essential Services Director
Country: Brazil

For over 20 years, chemical engineer Aline has excelled in traditionally male leadership roles, often being the first woman in the position. For the last two years, she has been Logistics Operations and Essential Services Director, covering nickel and copper mining, at Vale Base Metals.

Her original career choice as a Chemical Engineer was motivated by curiosity, wanting to understand how things worked and the magic behind chemical transformations. However, as she matured, her vision expanded to more human transformations, finding inspiration in guiding others, especially women, on new paths to discover their own vocations.

Aline has created female communities and supported diversity, equity and inclusion programmes (DE&I), from literacy to socio-economic development. She was leader of the highly successful community at Yara International to boost female participation and development. For six years, she was a mentor in the Women in Agronomy programme and global DE&I ambassador for Yara International.

In addition to being a Director at Vale Base Metals, Aline is a single-mother of a 13-year-old girl and admits it isn't simple balancing both roles, but definitely possible. She uses her own life experience to support other women and prove they have the agency to change their lives, both personal and professional.



“ I have encountered physical obstacles and social barriers, overcame them with resilience, optimism, and, above all, asking for help when needed, because one cannot always do it alone.”

FERNANDA VERGARA

Company: Anglo American
Title: Capability Development Specialist
Country: Chile

With a degree in psychology, Fernanda joined Anglo American in 2018 as a graduate trainee working first in Human Resources and then Talent Acquisition. In this new environment, she came to appreciate the impact of work on wellbeing and the importance of attracting diverse talent. Fernanda then had a secondment to Anglo American's offices in London, working with the team on projects related to wellbeing and mental health across the business. In her current role, she is leading on projects that combine training with the key aspects of inclusion and diversity from their offices in Chile.

With a group of colleagues, Fernanda formed "Breaking Barriers", a community to end prejudices surrounding disability and promote positive awareness. Five years later it was recognised by Chile's Ministry of Mining as an example of best practice for inclusion of people with disabilities. Fernanda also directed a project, through Anglo American's Ambassadors for Good programme, to connect girls from technical and professional high schools with women leaders in male-dominated industries, and promote careers built on STEM subjects.

A personally significant milestone was when the company exceeded the legal requirement of having at least 1% of its workforce made up of employees with disabilities. Beyond legal compliance, this demonstrated clear progress in creating opportunities for inclusion.

"Due to a medical condition, I have a physical disability that has made me a wheelchair user all my life. I have encountered both physical obstacles and social barriers, but tried to overcome them with resilience, optimism, and, above all, asking for help when needed, because one cannot always do it alone."



“Being a reformer is not easy as there are vested interests who do not want anything to change.”

CRISTINA MARIA VILLEGAS

Company: Pact
Title: Director, Sustainable Jewellery and Strategic Initiatives
Country: United States

Cristina found her niche, as a changemaker in the mining industry, helping reform-minded companies source minerals from far-flung mines responsibly. She is now best known for her work with artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM), and women miners.

She says that “being a reformer is not easy as there are vested interests who do not want anything to change.” Before setting up the Moyo Gems programme, it was considered impossible to trace coloured gemstones to source because 80-90% are mined by ASM. However, Cristina rose to the challenge and, with Kenyan and Tanzanian women miners’ associations – AWEIK and TAMOWA – co-designed a direct sourcing programme to bring their traceable gems to the international market. Moyo Gems is a collaboration that focuses on the women artisanal gem miners (and their male allies!) in Tanzania and Kenya to track coloured gemstones from miner to market.

Working for Pact, an international not-for-profit organisation within which the Moyo Gems programme operates, Cristina directs the programme’s day to day operations, raises the funding, and works directly with the women’s mining association partners on strategy and direction. They are now working on major opportunities for women miners, young women professional gemstone cutters, and budding entrepreneurs in the region. To date, they have exported 30,000 gemstones, but from 2025 those numbers are set to increase dramatically through major growth in Europe.

Cristina gets many requests to mentor others but, to diversify the mining industry’s thought leaders, deliberately chooses young people of colour. These young women and men are the exciting future of the industry – one that is more diverse.



“ It is essential to create a support system of people you genuinely trust, can use as sparring partners and with whom to “straighten each other’s crowns” in adversity.”

TANJA WINTER

Company: Aurubis AG

Title: Executive Director, Head of Sales Rod

Country: Germany

Copper runs in Tanja’s veins. Her father spent his entire career working for a copper wire producer and she started working in the same company when she was 16 years old and loved it from the first day. After completing her studies, Tanja worked for two different companies before joining Aurubis. Since 2016 she has headed sales of copper products and is responsible for marketing almost one million tons of copper wire rod, for the largest producer outside of China.

Tanja founded Women4Metals in 2019, together with colleagues and official sponsorship from her CEO, to increase female participation in the industry. Tanja explains “I realise we are creating something wonderful for individuals in our industry, a completely different spirit, a drive for cultural change through very open exchanges.”

She is known for tackling obstacles head-on, never losing sight of her goals, and constantly seeks innovative solutions to overcome challenges while staying true to herself, fully committed and authentic. She does not shy away from uncomfortable decisions and is always keen to hear and implement different perspectives and voices. Her time-management is impressive, considering her additional roles and external responsibilities. Tanja’s leadership role in global sales at Aurubis showcases her ability to thrive in challenging environments and to break barriers. By excelling in her position and by advocating for diversity and inclusion, she is paving the way for other women.

Tanja says, “authenticity has always been essential to me, staying true to myself while trying to understand others. My motto is: work like you don’t need the money, dance like no-one’s watching you, love like you’ve never been hurt.”



“ I am convinced that, through well-managed mining, we can bring more development, education, health, and opportunities to our community.”

CLAUDIA SILVANA WISUM YANKUAM

Company: Exploraciones Mineras Andinas del Ecuador
EMSAEC. S.A

Title: Operations Assistant

Country: Ecuador

As a child, Claudia longed to gain knowledge and pestered her mother to enrol her into school. Claudia worked hard, and thanks to her mother's support and scholarships, she was able to complete her education. She became the first Indigenous Shuar to graduate as a Mining Engineer in Ecuador. Claudia later completed internships at local mining companies before starting her current role as an Operations Assistant at EMSAEC, a subsidiary of CODELCO, in the Llurimagua mining concession.

Her career in mining had a specific challenge, “I come from a culture that deeply respects the environment, and some people looked at me with distrust, fearing that, as a mining engineer, I could be the one to harm nature. But my mission is to educate my people about responsible mining, one that allows development without compromising our land.”

In fulfilling her mission, Claudia gives talks about mining in her native Shuar language. Her vision is creating profound change for women, showing them options beyond traditional roles: “I am here to be an example that we can make our dreams come true without letting go of our values or identity.” Recently, WIM Ecuador invited Claudia to be the organisation's spokesperson and has now represented them on radio, television and has also appeared before the Constitutional Court.

Claudia believes “I carry the ancestral duty to care for nature, preserving the values of my culture, while seeking the sustainable development of my people.”



“ Each time I help someone gain clarity, learn something new, or overcome a challenge, I consider it a milestone which contributes to a larger sense of accomplishment.”

ALICIA WRIGHT

Company: Glencore
Title: Marketing Chief Financial Officer,
Metals & Coal
Country: Switzerland

Alicia Wright joined Glencore’s Risk Management Department in 2006. In 2022, she was appointed as Marketing Chief Financial Officer for the Coal and Metals business, leading a team of over 250 professionals in Switzerland and fifteen other countries worldwide.

As a female senior leader at Glencore, Alicia has been instrumental in leading major changes and improvements within the company’s finance space, working to streamline operational processes and automate financial systems on a global scale. She has played an important role driving diversity and championing women’s leadership across Glencore’s global finance operations.

Diversity and inclusion are core values for Alicia, which she promotes when managing multicultural teams around the world. She says some of her proudest achievements have been times when she has supported team members in their pursuits, whether by offering helpful information, facilitating a colleague’s personal growth or assisting with complex tasks.

Alicia believes consistency is key, both at work and in her private life: “I believe that showing up consistently, putting in the effort, and staying committed leads to long-term success and fulfilment. Small, steady progress often leads to the biggest transformations.”



“ Planning, organising my time, prioritising tasks. I also prioritise the quality of time spent with family and friends.”

PAYIDWENDÉ PRISCILLE ZONGO

Company: Chambre des Mines du Burkina (CMB)

Title: Executive Director

Country: Burkina Faso

Priscille’s mining career happened by chance. With a degree in management sciences, she was working in insurance when she discovered mining. Captivated by the level of technical expertise required to operate a mine and challenges in terms of sustainable development, governance, and inclusivity, she didn’t hesitate to take up the opportunity to work with the *Groupement Professionnel des Mines du Burkina (GPMB)*. In this role, she contributed to the transformation of GPMB into the Chambre of Mines of Burkina (CMB) in 2011.

At CMB, Priscille highlights her involvement in establishing local content in the mining sector. This involved leading nationals in the mining value chain and the CMB in the adoption of public policies to formalise local content requirements. She takes great satisfaction in the CMB’s “Women at the Heart of Mining” video series which showcases women working as geologists, metallurgists and machine operators, and also as finance and HR managers.

Since 2020, Priscille has been teaching “Specificities of the Mining Sector and the Extractive Industry Value Chain” at the Universal Institute Mining Management. Priscille is also known as the “godmother” of the Burkina Faso Association of Students in Mining, a non-profit organisation of students and junior professionals in the minerals industry. Outside of work, she leads the “Élan de Femme,” an association working with rural women to promote economic empowerment and involvement in local governance.

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THANK YOU

“The WIM100 is the passion project of WIM UK’s Global Outreach Committee and is something we have seen truly permeate into the global mining sector.

It is an initiative that has become one of the cornerstones of giving visibility to women in the industry.

I want to take this opportunity to thank our incredible volunteers for all the hard work they do at WIM UK and our sponsors for their continued support.”



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