WOMEN
IN MINING



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Women in mining (UK)

ABOUT WOMEN IN MINING UK

Women in Mining UK (WIM UK) is a volunteer-led, non-profit organisation. We foster an inclusive community that amplifies women's voices across mining and metals, advancing collaboration, insight and leadership to shape the industry today and for the future. Founded in 2006, we bring people together to share knowledge, build professional connections and make women's experience and expertise more visible to the industry.

Our membership is free and open to everyone, regardless of gender or location. Members come from across the sector, including mining companies, suppliers, professional services, universities and organisations that work with mining communities. We aim to create a welcoming network in which people can exchange ideas, find support at different stages of their careers and contribute to a more inclusive industry.

WIM UK works with partners to support career development and broaden access to opportunity. Our activities include networking, educational and mentoring events, scholarships, internships and initiatives that help women prepare for leadership and board roles. Through engagement with universities and other organisations, we also help raise awareness of the many careers available in mining.

Our policy and research work brings attention to the challenges women face and the practical changes that can improve their participation and progression.

We celebrate women's achievements through our communications and through 100 Global Inspirational Women in Mining (WIM100), our biennial publication recognising women whose actions have made a meaningful difference around the world. The publication is one way we connect role models with people who may never otherwise hear their stories.

WIM UK's work is made possible by volunteers, members and industry partners who give their time, expertise and support. Whether you are beginning a career, seeking a new direction, leading a team or working to improve your organisation, you are welcome to join the conversation. Find out more about our work and membership at womeninmining.org.uk.

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AT THE FOREFRONT OF THE INDUSTRY

Image courtesy of Endeavour Mining

WHAT MAKES A WIM100 WOMAN?



A WIM100 WOMAN IS A TRAILBLAZER:

a pioneer and innovator who drives positive and meaningful change, enabling more inclusive, responsible and sustainable practices that strengthen the mining industry today and shape its future.



SHE ADVOCATES, EMPOWERS AND INSPIRES

opening doors for others at every stage of their careers and fostering cultures where diverse voices are heard, valued and respected



SHE RISES UP TO THE CHALLENGES SHE FACES

demonstrating resilience, courage and determination. She challenges convention, speaks up with conviction and breaks down barriers.



AND SHE LEADS WITH IMPACT.

Through vision and integrity, she delivers tangible change and helps create teams, organisations and communities in which people can thrive, succeed and develop into the leaders of the future.

There is no single route to becoming a WIM100. What connects these women is the lasting difference they make to our industry and to those around them.

FOREWORD



Gina Jardine
Chair



Lucy Crane
Managing Director

Welcome to the seventh edition of 100 Global Inspirational Women in Mining. Since WIM UK first published the WIM100 in 2013, its purpose has been simple – to make visible the women whose work is shaping mining and to give others the chance to learn from their stories. With this edition the WIM100 alumnae community reaches 700 women, a huge achievement. Every one of them has taken a different route through the industry. Together they show how much talent our sector holds and how many possibilities lie ahead.

The response to this edition has been extraordinary. We received more than 1,200 nominations from over 60 countries, figures we are proud to continue to see grow year on year. The breadth of those nominations made the task of selecting 100 women both rewarding and difficult. It also reminded us that there are many more women making a difference than any single publication could recognise. To everyone who took the time to nominate a colleague, mentor, friend or leader, thank you for telling us why her contribution matters.

The women in these pages work across operations, engineering, geology, finance, research, policy, technology and community engagement, among many other fields. Some have spent decades building teams and institutions, others are opening new paths at an earlier stage of their careers. Their achievements cannot be measured by job title alone. They have solved hard problems, challenged familiar ways of working and made room for other people to contribute. They have listened to communities, supported colleagues and helped translate ideas into practical change.

Mining is being asked to do a great deal. The world needs minerals and metals for infrastructure, technology and a changing energy system. At the same time, communities, employees and investors rightly expect the industry to work responsibly, be accountable for its impacts and share the benefits of what it produces. Meeting those expectations takes sound technical decisions and a willingness to hear different perspectives. The stories in this book show what women already contribute to that work, in many settings and at every level of responsibility.

Recognition, however, is only one part of progress. A woman may be celebrated for overcoming a barrier, but we should also ask why that barrier was there and what can be changed for the people who follow.

We hope these profiles encourage employers and leaders to look closely at who gets opportunities, whose expertise is heard and who is supported to advance. We also hope they give women considering a career in mining a richer picture of the work they could do and the people they might become.

One of the great strengths of WIM100 is that it connects people. An alumna's story may resonate with a student on another continent, prompt a conversation within a mine team or encourage someone to put a colleague forward for a new opportunity. We invite you to read these profiles with that possibility in mind. Share the stories that stay with you. Reach out to someone whose work challenges your assumptions. Above all, carry the recognition beyond these pages by making space for talent in your own organisation and community.

This publication depends on the generosity of many people. We thank the nominees for sharing their experiences so openly, the nominators for bringing their work to our attention and the volunteers who have devoted time and care to this edition. We are grateful to our sponsors, BMO Capital Markets, BCG and Stratum International, for supporting WIM100 2026. Our thanks also go to everyone who has helped build and sustain this global community since its first edition.

The WIM100 is a celebration of achievement, but it is also an invitation to keep moving. The women featured here have shown what can happen when expertise, courage and commitment meet opportunity. We are proud to share their stories and to welcome them into the WIM100 alumnae community. We hope you will leave this book with new names to remember, new ideas to consider and renewed determination to help others thrive in mining.

IN MEMORIAM
WILLIAM "BILL" SMITH

Women in Mining UK was deeply saddened by the sudden passing of William "Bill" Smith, a longstanding friend and supporter of both WIM UK and the WIM100.

Bill was Head of International at BMO Capital Markets and a highly respected figure across the international financial and mining communities. BMO has been a longstanding sponsor of the WIM100, and Bill played an important role in strengthening that relationship and championing the initiative over many years. He was a familiar face at WIM100 celebrations and events, where many within our community will remember his warmth, enthusiasm and genuine interest in the women whose achievements we were there to celebrate.

More than a supporter of the initiative, Bill was an exceptional male champion for gender equity within the mining sector. His advocacy was sincere and unwavering. He understood the importance of creating opportunities, developing future talent and ensuring that women were recognised for the contribution they make to our industry.

Across the mining and financial communities, Bill will be remembered for his leadership, commitment to inclusion and positive impact on those around him.

For everyone at Women in Mining UK, Bill will also be remembered for the kindness, dedication and authenticity he brought to every interaction.

Our thoughts remain with Bill's family, his friends and colleagues at BMO Capital Markets, and all those who had the privilege of knowing and working with him.


William Smith
BMO

FOREWORDS FROM OUR SPONSORS



Richard Couzens
Head of International
BMO Capital Markets



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

Celebrating leadership, advancing opportunity.

It is our privilege to introduce the seventh edition of 100 Global Inspirational Women in Mining celebrating the remarkable women whose leadership, expertise and determination are strengthening the global mining industry.

For more than a decade, WIM100 has brought visibility to women whose contributions span the breadth of the sector. Recognition can elevate voices, open doors and encourage talented people to build long and rewarding careers in mining. By sharing their stories, this publication recognises individual achievement while creating something equally important: a global community of role models who demonstrate what is possible and inspire others to follow.

And role models matter most at a time when the mining industry is evolving rapidly. From growing demand for critical minerals to advances in technology and increasing expectations around sustainability, the sector faces both significant opportunities and complex challenges. Success will depend on attracting and developing talented people with a broad range of skills, experiences and perspectives. By highlighting exceptional leaders and sharing their stories, WIM100 shows the next generation of talent what leadership in this industry can look like.

BMO

This year's publication carries particular meaning for all of us at BMO, as we mark the passing of one such role model within the firm and beyond — our colleague and friend, William "Bill" Smith.

Bill served as BMO's Head of International and was a respected leader, mentor and collaborator. He understood the vital role of the mining industry in the global economy, but he also understood that the sector's future would depend on the people shaping it. Throughout his career, he championed the value of bringing different experiences and perspectives to the table and was deeply committed to creating opportunities for the next generation.

His support for Women in Mining UK and WIM100 reflected those convictions. For Bill, recognising inspirational women was not simply about celebrating success. It was about making leadership visible, encouraging others to see a future for themselves in the industry and helping build a stronger and more inclusive sector. His personal interest, trust and active participation contributed meaningfully to BMO's enduring partnership with Women in Mining UK.

We are proud that Bill's commitment will continue through initiatives created in his honour. Over the next three years, BMO will support Imperial College London's Ada Lovelace Academy, which is working to increase the representation of women and other underrepresented groups in engineering and technology. We are also honoured to establish the William Smith Bursary in Metals and Mining.

The bursary will continue the tradition of inviting a student from Imperial College London's Metals, Energy and Finance master's program to attend BMO's Global Metals, Mining & Critical Minerals Conference.

The experience provides emerging talent with direct exposure to industry leaders, professional networks and real-world perspectives that can help inform and accelerate a student's career.

These initiatives reflect a belief shared by Bill, BMO and Women in Mining UK: progress requires both recognition and action. Celebrating accomplished leaders is essential, but so is investing in education, access and experiences that enable the next generation to become leaders themselves. Our support for the Ada Lovelace Academy and the William Smith Bursary builds on that foundation and carries forward a legacy rooted in opportunity.

The women profiled in this edition are trailblazers, advocates, innovators and changemakers. Their work is advancing their organisations and communities while helping the mining sector respond to some of the world's most consequential challenges. Their accomplishments demonstrate that inclusion is not separate from business performance or innovation. It is integral to both.

To every woman recognised in the 2026 WIM100, congratulations. Thank you for the excellence you bring to the industry, the barriers you continue to challenge and the example you provide to colleagues and future generations.

FOREWORDS FROM OUR SPONSORS



Jolien Van Goethem
Partner



Adrian Schulte Steinberg
Managing Director & Partner,
Global Leader Mining

Mining has always been an industry that thinks in decades, not years. But rarely has so much change been packed into such a short period. Demand for the minerals powering the energy transition, defence and AI infrastructure continues to grow. At the same time, geopolitical uncertainty, pressure on returns and talent shortages are making it harder to turn that demand into lasting value.

Against this backdrop, five themes stand out:

- Critical minerals have become a geopolitical priority. Governments are increasingly focused on securing access to the resources their economies depend on. As BCG's research on critical mineral supply chains highlights, concentrated supply, trade tensions and shifting alliances are forcing the industry to rethink how minerals are sourced, processed and financed.
- Being a great mining company is no longer enough. BCG's latest Value Creation in Mining research shows that miners have made real progress. Balance sheets are stronger, cash generation has improved and capital allocation is more disciplined. Yet investors have not consistently rewarded these gains. The challenge now is to translate stronger business performance into sustained shareholder returns.

- AI is moving from promise to practical impact. Our research on The AI-Powered Mining and Metals Company shows that leading miners are already seeing measurable improvements in throughput, maintenance and operational planning. But technology alone is not the answer. Success depends just as much on the people, skills and ways of working behind it.
- Mining needs to rethink how it attracts and develops talent. The industry has an ageing workforce and remains one of the most male-dominated sectors. BCG's research also highlights the difficulty of attracting younger generations. Changing this requires more than recruitment campaigns. It means creating workplaces where people from different backgrounds can thrive, where women have equal opportunities to lead, and where new skills can be developed throughout a career.
- Earning trust remains fundamental. While the language around ESG may be changing, the importance of strong relationships with communities and governments has not diminished. Meaningful engagement and shared benefits remain essential to the long-term success of mining projects.

Taken together, these shifts call for an industry that is not only more productive and resilient, but also more open to new ideas and different perspectives. We believe the quality and diversity of leadership will be central to how successfully mining navigates what comes next.

And this is precisely why Women in Mining UK's WIM100 matters. To each of you recognised in the seventh WIM100 edition: congratulations! Your achievements span the breadth of the industry, and you are helping shape what mining looks like today, while showing the next generation what is possible.

BCG is proud to once again support Women in Mining UK. We congratulate you on this well-deserved recognition and thank you for the leadership, determination and fresh perspectives you bring to our industry.



FOREWORDS FROM OUR SPONSORS



Nichole McCulloch
Managing Director

On behalf of Stratum International, congratulations to the 100 women recognised in the seventh edition of WIM100. Their leadership, innovation and determination are creating meaningful change across the global mining and minerals sector. This year's programme received more than 1,200 nominations from over 60 countries and every continent, reflecting the remarkable depth of talent within our industry.

The scale of that response makes one thing clear: mining does not lack talented women. The challenge is ensuring that talent is recognised, supported and able to progress.

Women still represent only around 15% of the mining workforce. Even that picture remains incomplete. International Women in Mining found that 35 of the top 100 mining companies it studied did not publish gender-disaggregated workforce data. Without clearer and more consistent reporting, it is difficult to measure progress or understand where change is most needed. The opportunity goes beyond representation. Mining is navigating changing skills requirements, growing demand for minerals and continued competition for talent. The organisations best placed to respond will be those that widen access to opportunity, recognise potential beyond familiar networks and create environments where talented people can contribute, progress and influence decisions.

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MINING
A HUMAN ENDEAVOUR

That means looking beyond entry-level representation and considering how women are supported throughout their careers. Visibility, sponsorship and access to meaningful leadership opportunities all matter. Progress is not simply about bringing more women into mining but ensuring there are clear pathways for them to reach senior influential roles.

This is where Stratum's work connects naturally. We help clients identify both established and emerging leaders across sectors and geographies, strengthening the pipelines that will shape mining's future. Through this work, we see first-hand the breadth of leadership capability that exists across the industry. We also see the difference that broader networks and more intentional succession planning can make in bringing talented individuals into consideration for roles where they can have genuine impact. But appointments alone are not enough. Inclusion creates value when different perspectives are heard, supported and given genuine influence.

Our sponsorship of WIM100 reflects that belief. We are proud to support an initiative that gives greater visibility to exceptional women, demonstrates what impactful leadership looks like and inspires future generations to see a place for themselves in mining.

To this year's WIM100, congratulations. Your achievements are strengthening the industry today and helping to create more opportunities for those who follow.

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MINING
A HUMAN ENDEAVOUR



Image courtesy of Charlotte Knee Photography



2026 EDITION OF THE 100 GLOBAL INSPIRATIONAL WOMEN IN MINING

Carmene **Abreu**
Joan D. **Adaci-Cattiling**
Catherine **Adair**
Amanda **Adams**
Angela Maria **Agudelo**
Adjou **Ait Ben Idir**
Shoug **AlOthaim**
Aida **Alzhanova**
Graciela **Arrieta Guevara**
Carly **Ascott**
Alison **Atkinson**
Adriana **Aurazo**
Halimata **Barry**
Gracelin **Baskaran**
Aissata **Beavogui**
Peggy **Bell**
Brooke **Bibeault**
Mariska **Bolton**
Silvia **Bottero**
Graciela **Bustamante**
Carole **Cable**
Ariel **Cao**
Blanca Paola **Cazares Perez**
Nandini **Chakravarty**
Caoilin **Chestnutt**
Chiedza **Chipangura**
Fatima **Collins**
Dr Gláucia **Cuchierato**
Christina **Dahnér**
Sophie **Dessart**
Dr Ana **Fernández-Iglesias**
Kattherine **Ferrada Fuentes**
Karen **García**
Tina **Gauthier**
Dr **Urishanie Govender**
Dr **Ros Green**
Maria **Guzman**
Hayley **Halsall-Whitney**
Amanda **Healy**
Emily **Hendrickson**
Dr Doris **Hiam-Galvez**
Esther **Finda Kandeh**
Flore **Kayala**
Sophie **Kellermann**
Stefanie **Klein**
Kadiatou **Konaté**
Laura **Konkel**
Dr Catherine **Kuupol Kuutor**
Dr Nikky **LaBranche**
Calliope **Lalousis**
Anne **Lauenroth**
Dr Lynda **Lawson**

CELEBRATING BOLD,
BRILLIANT WOMEN.

Maggie **Layman**

Dr Li **Li**

Cynthia **Lim**

Dr Likonge **Mulenga Makai**

Pascaline Balbine **Makani Omgba**

Lydie **Malaika**

Lusine **Manucharyan**

Yelena **Marchukova**

Anita **Marques de Andrade**

Stephanie **Marshall**

Mahlogonolo **Mashile**

Sheeba **Mashruwala**

Phillis **Mbinda**

Dr Robina **McCann**

Susannah **McLaren**

Alicia **Milne**

Dr Kym **L. Morton**

Epiphanie **Murorunkwere**

Shqipe **Neziri Vela**

Nine **Novisundari**

Theresa **Nyabeze**

Estefanny **Pardo Gutiérrez**

Jazmin **Parra Ancares**

Dr Heidi Elaine **Pass**

Laura **Queiroz**

Christa Hildegard **Quiroz Cotrina**

Danuta **Rajczakowska**

Kirthy **Reddy**

Lucy **Roberts**

Angie **Robson**

Gabriela **Rumazo Vela**

Rokhaya **Sall Mbaye**

Lindy **Scott**

Dr Elizabeth (Libby) **Sharman**

Fatima Umaru **Shinkafi**

Vera Lucia **Silva**

Suchandra **Sinha**

Flavia **Tata Nardini**

Nahomie **Tshikadi**

Kerry **Turnock**

Oyunsaruul **Udambor**

Marisol **Valerio**

Aurora **Williams Baussa**

Pamela **Yáñez Jara**

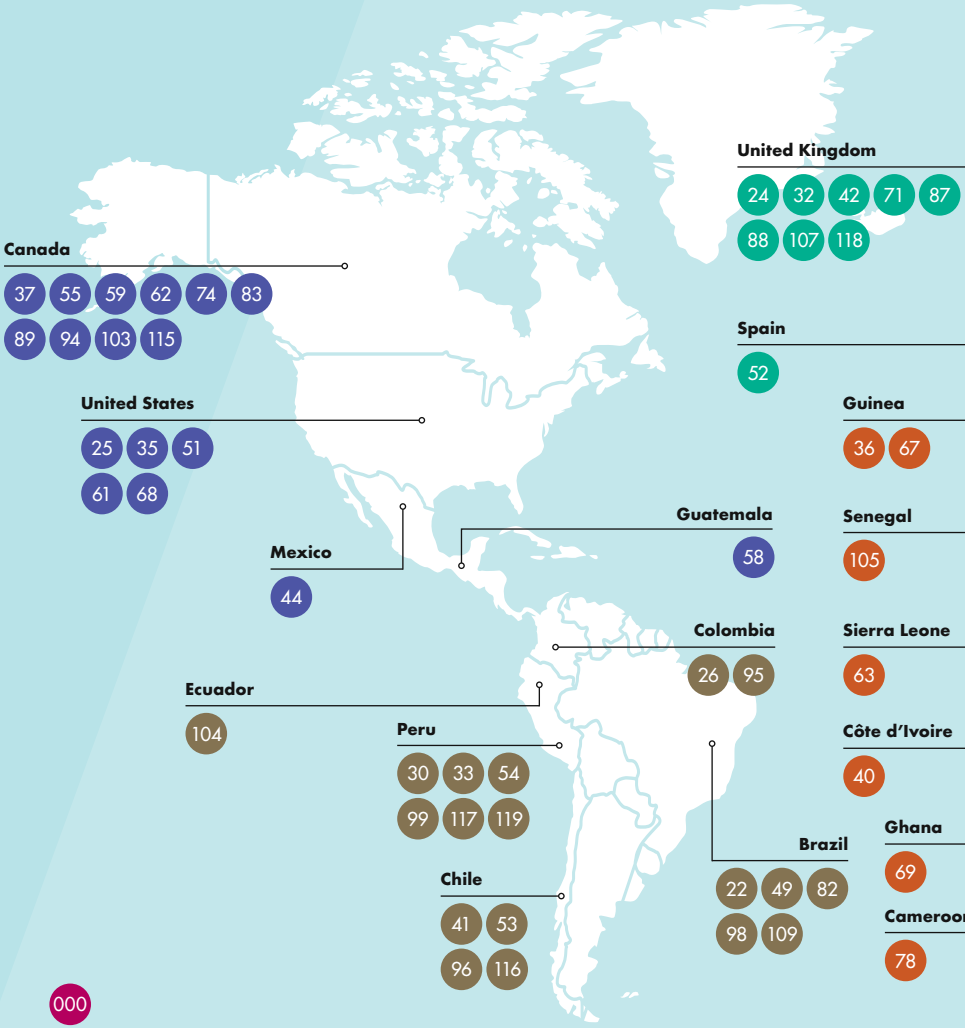
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Karina **Zevallos**

Wendy **Zhang**

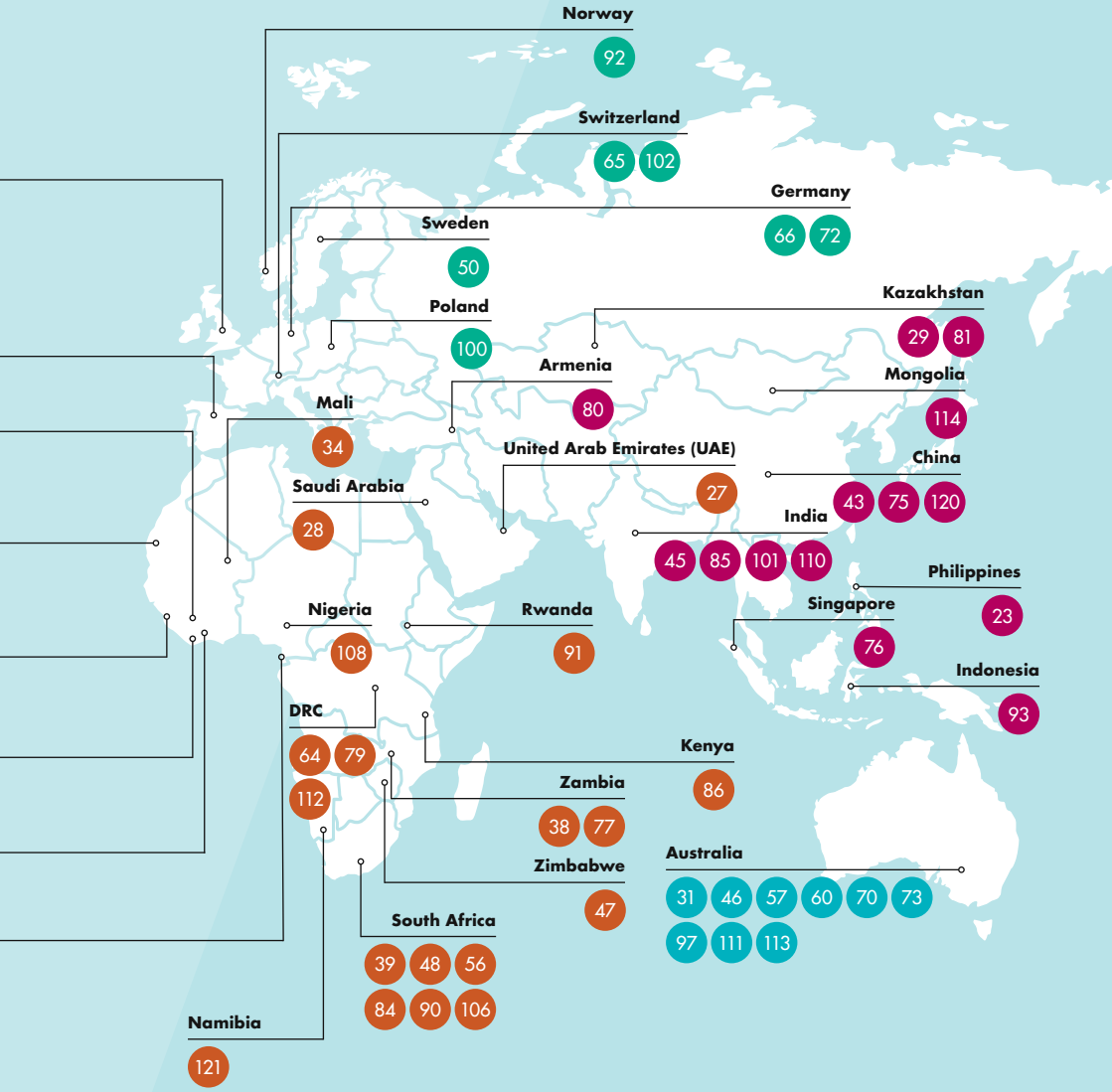
Leezola **Zongwe**

THE GLOBAL DISTRIBUTION OF OUR 2026 WIM100



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100™
INSPIRATIONAL WOMEN IN MINING
2026



Image courtesy of Charlotte Knee Photography



"Do not focus on fitting into the industry; focus on bringing your authentic self and helping shape the industry you want to see."

CARMENE ABREU

Senior Manager of HR, Communications, and Communities

COMPANY:
Vale Base Metals

COUNTRY:
Brazil

"Mining has taught me that the greatest transformations are not geological, they are human." For Carmene Abreu, mining is about creating opportunities and changing lives. The industry was never part of her career plans, but she soon recognised its potential to transform communities. She also encountered a male-dominated culture, rigid hierarchies and limited social dialogue. Determined to challenge the status quo, Carmene set out to put people, inclusion and local development at the heart of mining. Her conviction reflects the values instilled by her parents, particularly her mother, who saw education as a path out of poverty.

Today, Carmene is General Manager of Human Resources, Communities and Internal Communications at Vale Base Metals' Salobo copper operation in Brazil, overseeing people strategy and community relations for a workforce of around 6,000. Her people-centred approach has delivered measurable results. Under her leadership, Salobo became the first Vale Base Metals operation to earn Great Place to Work certification, while female workforce participation rose from 22% to 29.5%. Recruitment from local communities increased by 500%, supported by training and leadership development programmes designed to open career paths for local talent. For Carmene, these achievements demonstrate that operational success and human development can go hand in hand.

Carmene has fought to establish diversity, people development and community engagement as business priorities, not secondary concerns. Now pursuing a PhD on corporate activism and social transformation in mining regions, she wants communities to thrive long after mining ends. Her ambition is to leave a legacy of opportunity: "A single opportunity can change a life, but creating opportunities can change generations."

> “Lean forward, no what ifs, no buts; grab the opportunity, find your voice, make and lead a path where there isn’t any.”



JOAN D. ADACI-CATTILING

President and General Manager – External Affairs and Social Performance

COMPANY:
OceanaGold (Philippines), Inc.

COUNTRY:
Philippines

“Laban!” Joan Adaci-Cattiling’s favourite Filipino motto means “fight” or “keep going”. It captures the determination that took her from law to mining leadership, making her the first Indigenous woman to become president of a company within a global mining organisation in the Philippines. Proud of her Tuwali and Applay heritage, Joan grew up in a mountainous province, deeply connected to her roots. A lawyer by training, she joined OceanaGold in 2007, drawn by the challenge of building its first Philippine mine and demonstrating the value of responsible mining.

A defining moment came when OceanaGold’s Didipio gold-copper mine began operating, 19 years after its agreement with the Philippine government. Joan helped navigate complex legal, environmental and social challenges to secure stakeholder support. Rising through legal and human resources leadership, she became President of OceanaGold Philippines in 2020. Under her leadership, two development funds were established, benefiting nearly 400 communities. For Joan, mining’s success lies in the opportunities it creates and the lives it improves.

Joan also works to open doors for others. She founded Raniag Minera, OceanaGold’s women-in-mining group, and helped establish Diwata, promoting women in resource development. She also helped launch a programme training Indigenous grandmothers as solar engineers in India, bringing new skills to remote communities. Joan hopes to inspire more women, particularly from Indigenous communities, to lead. “If another woman can look at my journey and believe, ‘There is a place for me there too,’ that would be a legacy worth leaving.”



"Speak up for yourself and spend time listening and learning from those ahead of you in their career. Ask questions, ask for help, but trust your values."

CATHERINE ADAIR

Director, External Engagement, Europe

COMPANY:
Teck

COUNTRY:
United Kingdom

"Let's try!" is Catherine Adair's motto. She entered mining as an outsider and turned that into an advantage. With a background in journalism, history and political science rather than engineering or geology, she joined the industry after working in local government and media. Growing up in rural western Canada, she recognised mining's potential to transform communities like her own. "Mining is often the lifeblood of rural communities," she says. That realisation shaped a career connecting mining with the people it affects.

Catherine joined Teck in 2010 in community engagement, rising through social responsibility, strategic partnerships and community development roles. Her proudest achievement came during the Covid pandemic, when she led Teck's Copper & Health programme, promoting antimicrobial copper on high-touch surfaces in hospitals and public spaces to reduce infection. The initiative demonstrated mining's tangible value to society. Catherine later oversaw around US$30 million a year in global community investment and worked with Teck's senior leadership. Now Director, External Engagement, Europe, she builds relationships with governments, civil society, media and other stakeholders.

Curiosity, empathy and collaboration shape her leadership. Moving to Vancouver during Covid, away from her support network, taught Catherine the importance of connection and belonging. Another leap outside her comfort zone took her to London in 2025. As mining becomes increasingly central to geopolitics, she wants to strengthen understanding between the industry and society. "There are huge opportunities in mining, but also huge responsibilities." Her ambition is to help mining tell its story better. And listen better too.

> “Open doors for the people coming behind you and never underestimate the impact of making someone feel seen, supported, and encouraged to lead.”



AMANDA ADAMS

Principal, Energy & Resources

COMPANY:
Stantec

COUNTRY:
USA

Being laid off from her first job on the day she returned to work, after getting married, felt like a devastating setback for Amanda Adams. Instead, it changed the course of her career. “It was actually a gift,” she says. Taking a chance on a new company opened the door to mining and tailings engineering, setting her on a path that, more than 20 years later, has seen her lead multidisciplinary teams on major mining projects. Today, Amanda leads an Energy & Resources practice at Stantec, a global engineering consultancy headquartered in Canada.

A specialist in tailings storage dams and water management, Amanda has worked on complex international projects and helped shape how the industry approaches tailings risk. Passionate about the role of the Engineer of Record for tailings dams, she co-founded a working group bringing together the US Society on Dams (USSD), the Canadian Dam Association (CDA) and the Australian National Committee on Large Dams (ANCOLD). The group’s guidance, workshops and webinars have helped advance tailings practice internationally.

Amanda has been equally committed to helping others find their place in the industry. A long-time Women in Mining advocate, she credits her first WIM event in 2010 with changing the trajectory of her career. When her daughter was a baby, she brought her along to monthly WIM Denver meetings because “that’s how I was able to make my schedule work”. Now a mother of three, Amanda speaks openly about her experiences with pregnancy, miscarriage and motherhood, helping younger colleagues navigate challenges she once faced. She also co-founded a women’s peer mentoring group at Stantec, turning that support into opportunities for others. “I hope my legacy is measured by people encouraged, people who felt supported, saw a path for themselves and had the confidence to lead.”



> "The future of mining will be defined by the value we create for people, communities, and the environment."

ANGELA MARIA AGUDELO

Electrical Asset Manager

COMPANY:
Glencore – Carbones del Cerrejón Ltd

COUNTRY:
Colombia

Angela Agudelo chose mining 25 years ago, seeing it as an opportunity to put her expertise in electrical power systems to work and build a career as an electrical engineer. In 2008, six years after joining the Cerrejón mine in La Guajira, Colombia, she faced her most significant challenge: overseeing its electrical system and leading more than 120 people, in one of the world's largest coal operations. At the time, electrical safety practices were still evolving and potentially fatal incidents remained a risk. Angela set out to transform both the technology and safety culture, leading the development of a pioneering energy control centre that enabled remote operation and reduced workers' exposure to high-risk interventions.

For Angela, changing systems meant first changing mindsets. Faced with resistance from highly experienced personnel, some with over 20 years' experience, she held one-to-one conversations, established clear agreements and built understanding of the "why" behind new practices. "Driving organisational cultural changes has been one of the greatest professional challenges of my career," Angela says, adding that those experiences "tested and strengthened my character, determination, and resilience."

Developing local talent is another priority. "Understanding the communities in which we operate is an essential part of our daily work and a fundamental pillar of our strategy," she says. Angela has helped employees from surrounding communities move from general services into technical roles. To further strengthen inclusive culture, she also mentored a young Wayuu engineer who now helps bridge cultural and language gaps in communicating critical safety procedures. For Angela, developing those who will follow her is part of the job: empowering young professionals to recognise their own ability to transform the workplace.

> “A seat at the table is not the goal. What you do with it is.”



ADJOU AIT BEN IDIR

Director & Managing Partner | Head of Corporate, M&A & Securities (NRF)

COMPANY:
TASIR Partners | Norton Rose Fulbright (NRF)

COUNTRY:
United Arab Emirates (UAE)

Adjou Ait Ben Idir describes leadership as creating a “safe corridor through chaos”. From military coups to complex mining transactions, the lawyer and strategist has built a career bringing clarity and confidence to some of the Middle East and Africa’s most challenging business environments. Her journey into mining began at Total, working on corporate social responsibility, anti-corruption and human rights. Fascinated by the intersection of law, politics, capital and communities, she became increasingly concerned with one question: who benefits versus who should benefit from Africa’s mineral wealth?

Over two decades, Adjou rose to senior leadership at Norton Rose Fulbright, advising mining companies and governments across Africa and the Middle East. Now CEO and Managing Partner at TASIR Partners, a strategy and risks advisory firm focusing on Africa, she also advises governments, sovereign wealth funds (SWF) and major corporates on mining, commodities and infrastructure. She recently led a team that secured over US$300 million for a pan-African mining and processing platform designed to retain more mineral wealth on the continent. After years structuring deals, she was helping build the model she had long advocated for. Mining “is the one sector, where getting the structure right can change the trajectory of an entire economy, and getting it wrong can cost a generation,” she says.

“Rigorous by training, creative by instinct, stubborn by choice,” Adjou has challenged gender barriers, securing a female lawyer’s promotion to Partner during maternity leave and pushing to reform promotion criteria. Inspired by the strength and resilience of those around her living with disabilities, she also advocates for government-level reforms to improve inclusion of people with hidden disabilities. Her ambition is to transform mining and open doors for future women leaders. “If the models outlast me and the people I trained surpass me, that is a legacy.”



"Take the opportunity, build your knowledge, seek strong mentors, and allow your results to speak for you."

SHOUG ALOTHAIM

Board Member & Corporate Communications and Community Lead

COMPANY:
Saudi Gold Refinery Company

COUNTRY:
Saudi Arabia

Skydiving, bungee jumping and breaking new ground in Saudi Arabia's mining industry have something in common for Shoug AlOthaim: they all demand the courage to test her limits. "I never stop testing how far I can go," she says. Inspired by her father's journey from jewellery into mining, she inherited his passion for the industry but was determined to forge her own path. Trained in public relations, she began her career in innovation and marketing before moving into mining change management. Entering a highly technical, male-dominated sector without an engineering background meant learning quickly, asking the right questions and earning trust. But stepping outside her comfort zone was precisely what drove her.

As Board Member and Manager of Change and Communications at Saudi Gold Refinery Company, Shoug has strengthened collaboration, transparency and accountability. She helped develop its first sustainability report and ESG framework and advance its target of 30% female workforce representation by 2030. A founding member of the Saudi Women in Mining Association, she is opening doors for women in a traditionally male-dominated industry. She has also established women's learning and job placement centres and developed university internships offering young women practical experience and pathways into mining.

Driven by her belief that mining's future depends as much on people as on resources, Shoug is determined to strengthen governance, develop local talent and create lasting opportunities for the next generation. She hopes to leave a legacy of stronger institutions and empowered people. As a child, she dreamt of becoming "a galaxy rather than a single star", bringing talented people together to make the sky brighter. Today, that dream continues to shape her approach to leadership.

> “Every role is about having each other’s back, teamwork and trust.”



AIDA ALZHANOVA

Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Strategic Development

COMPANY:
Solidcore Eurasia Ltd, Solidcore Resources

COUNTRY:
Kazakhstan

“Limits are in your head.” Aida Alzhanova, Deputy CEO for Strategic Development at Solidcore Resources, has spent her career putting that belief into practice. Aida is a builder. Brick by brick, rather like the Lego she enjoys outside work, she has learned mining from the ground up. What began in 2010 as a temporary assignment on “a very narrow issue” became a 16-year career, taking her from specialist through business analysis, strategy and production to Deputy CEO. Along the way, she earned a law degree while working full-time. “All with kindness and humility,” as a colleague puts it.

Today, Aida leads investment projects spanning exploration, mining, processing and closure, while advancing more sustainable fuels and mentoring colleagues. Her proudest achievement was leading the rollout of a real-time personnel tracking and video surveillance system to improve plant safety, a success that later prompted its adoption at other operations.

But some perceptions have proved harder to shift, particularly that mining in Central Asia is a male domain. In 2017-18, Aida worked with Kazakhstan’s Ministry of Labour to challenge restrictions barring women from physically demanding industrial roles, contributing to their abolition in 2021. Now, Aida sits on the Astana International Financial Centre’s Mining Executive Council and chairs the Kazakhstan Chamber of Mines’ Supervisory Board. Fittingly, one of her role models is Margaret Thatcher, who “was not afraid of being unpopular in advocating her views”.

Now Aida is pursuing change on two fronts: developing Kazakhstan’s junior mining market and building a community of women in mining across Central Asia. Her broader ambition is to overturn mining’s image as a “masculine, harmful industry” and make it a “desired and dignified profession”.



"There is no single way to be a woman in mining or a leader. Find yours."

GRACIELA ARRIETA GUEVARA

Senior Corporate Relations Advisor for Andean, Central America and Hispanic Caribbean

COMPANY:
Shell

COUNTRY:
Peru

When Graciela Arrieta Guevara arrived in Scotland on a Chevening Scholarship, her luggage was missing, winter had set in and she knew nobody. For the young Peruvian lawyer, it was the start of a journey that would help transform her country's mining industry. Her interest in mining began in human rights and public service, where she witnessed the paradox of resource-rich regions whose communities still lacked basic services. Determined to turn mineral wealth into human development, she pursued a Master's in Mineral Law and Policy at the University of Dundee.

Graciela built a career spanning mining regulation, law and corporate leadership. After working at Peru's energy and mining regulator, OSINERGMIN, she joined Cerro Verde as Legal Adviser before rising to Hydrocarbons Sector Manager at the National Society of Mining, Petroleum and Energy (SNMPE). In 2016, she co-founded Women in Mining Peru (WIM Peru), when women accounted for just 6% of the country's mining workforce. As President from 2021 to 2023, she helped grow the organisation to more than 1,000 members across 11 regions and spearheaded the first Inclusion and Diversity Summit at PERUMIN 35. Now Senior Corporate Relations Adviser at Shell, she continues to build bridges across Latin America.

For Graciela, leadership demands courage, consistency and humanity. She believes progress goes beyond representation: women must have a voice in decision-making. Her journey has taught her to stay true to her values and set boundaries. Inspired by her mother and grandparents, she hopes to leave a legacy measured in opportunities rather than titles. Progress, she says, means "lightening the backpack for the women coming behind us", so each generation can travel further.

"Don't be afraid to have a go and own it!"



CARLY ASCOTT

Owner & Chief Executive Officer

COMPANY:
Western Air

COUNTRY:
Australia

Carly Ascott knows a thing or two about performance under pressure. She entered Australia's mining and drilling industry in August 2002 after partnering with a driller. What began as an opportunity became a passion for engineering equipment and solving operational problems. The sudden loss of her business partner proved defining. Carly took control of Western Air, an Australian high-pressure air equipment specialist supplying mining and energy, becoming one of the few sole female owners of an Australian mining equipment manufacturer. "It forced me to step up as a leader in the industry," Carly explains.

That came with assumptions to overturn. "I've often walked into meetings where people assumed I was the secretary rather than the business owner or decision maker," she says. Her response? "I've learned to let my work and results speak for themselves." They have. Under her leadership as CEO and owner, Western Air has won major contracts against multinational competitors and expanded its engineering capabilities and industry partnerships. Today, Carly is pushing into lower-emission technology, aiming to make exploration and drilling safer, more efficient and less carbon-intensive.

Describing herself as "ambitious, resilient and creative", Carly is a passionate advocate for women in mining, actively mentoring emerging talent and building a predominantly female team in an industry where women remain underrepresented. To women entering the industry, her message is clear: "Be bold!" That instinct to empower others extends beyond mining. After experiencing the devastating 2019-20 Australian bushfires firsthand, she founded Bushfire Kids Connect and its 'Naturally Brave' 3D STEM programme, which has reached more than 1,000 Australian schools. If she were not in mining? Carly would work on helping vulnerable children.



"Do it. You cannot predict what you will get to do and see, but you will make a difference."

ALISON ATKINSON

Group Director Project and Development

COMPANY:
Anglo American

COUNTRY:
United Kingdom

Alison Atkinson is a newcomer to mining, but arrived with three decades of experience tackling some of engineering's biggest challenges. A civil engineer, she moved from major infrastructure into the UK's nuclear defence sector, eventually becoming CEO of the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE). Named one of the ten "Most Influential Female Engineers in the UK and Europe" in 2019, Alison counts becoming a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineering as her proudest achievement. She joined Anglo American in 2023, drawn by mining's "scale and global reach and impact". "The impact is generational," she says. "I have only seen that in mining around the world."

At Anglo American, Alison applies that experience to transforming how major projects are developed and delivered. Leading more than 500 project and technology specialists and 12,000 contract partners, she oversees an annual capital programme of around US$4 billion, alongside technology and carbon initiatives. Her motivation? "Simplifying complexity." Now working on the Anglo Teck merger as incoming Chief Technology Officer and CEO of the Crop Nutrients business, she is taking on her next challenge.

Describing herself as a "sunshine mixed with a little hurricane", Alison measures leadership as much by opportunities created as projects delivered. She credits leaders who believed in her potential before she did and seeks to do the same through mentoring and sponsorship of Anglo American's Women@CHS network. Her advice to women is direct: "Look beyond the stereotypes, the impact you can make as part of a team is astounding." Her own ambition is equally clear: to be remembered as a leader who "made a change" and helped make mining a more trusted industry.

> “The next step is not just increasing participation, but ensuring women have equal opportunities to influence decisions and lead transformation across the industry.”



ADRIANA AURAZO

LATAM Secretary General

COMPANY:
Latin American Mining Alliance (ALMA)

COUNTRY:
Peru

Growing up in mining camps in Peru, Adriana Aurazo saw firsthand how the industry shaped communities. Her father worked for a mining company, giving her an early understanding of mining’s potential to drive development, and the responsibilities that came with it. Inspired to make a difference, she pursued environmental and mining law, beginning her career at the Peruvian Society for Environmental Law. In a male-dominated industry, she was determined to prove that leadership depended on competence, not gender. “Diversity strengthens decision-making and drives better outcomes,” she says.

Over more than two decades Adriana built her influence by working on different sides of the mining industry: as a lawyer, government regulator, consultant and executive. Each role strengthened her conviction that responsible mining depends on bringing business, authorities and communities together. In 2017, when becoming Director General of Mining Environmental Affairs at Peru’s Ministry of Energy and Mines, she helped modernise environmental regulations before taking her expertise into corporate leadership. Joining Southern Peaks Mining as Vice President of Environmental, Social and Sustainability Affairs in 2024, she worked to make sustainability a business priority rather than a compliance exercise. Her achievements include strengthening ESG governance and advancing international standards, including The Copper Mark, at the company’s Condestable mine.

Now Secretary General for Latin America at the Latin American Mining Alliance (ALMA), Adriana is driving regional collaboration on responsible mining. A champion of women’s advancement, she mentors young professionals and supports Women in Mining across Latin America, Chile’s Somos Backanas programme as an ambassador, CENTRUM PUCP and WomenCEO Perú’s leadership programme, and Peru’s Mujeres Roca initiative. Her guiding principle is to “leave every place, every project, and every person better than you found them”.



> “Don’t be afraid to take your place: your skills, integrity, and perseverance will overcome prejudices and obstacles.”

HALIMATA BARRY

Social Relations and Sustainability Manager

COMPANY:
Toubani Resources

COUNTRY:
Mali

In Mali, where tensions between industrial mining companies and artisanal miners run deep, Halimata Barry has helped turn conflict into cooperation. Through dialogue and negotiation, she played a key role in an agreement that saw Barrick Gold allocate approximately 25km² of land to artisanal mining cooperatives. For Halimata, trust is built “through listening, respect, and consistency between words and actions”. Trained in sociology, she entered mining almost by chance, joining Randgold’s Loulo-Gounkoto complex as an intern in 2012. Working with local communities, she discovered that mining’s success depended as much on human relationships as on technical performance.

Halimata went on to build a career spanning industrial mining, artisanal mining, and international development, turning dialogue into results. At Komana Mining Company, she established a community development department from scratch, helping 800 women move from artisanal gold mining into market gardening and developing a microfinance structure that accumulated CFA300 million in savings within two years. She later led a mercury-reduction programme for Pact, training more than 1,700 artisanal miners and establishing Mali’s first mercury-free ore-processing pilot site. Since 2025, she has been building community engagement and sustainable development initiatives at Toubani Resources’ Kobada gold project.

Calm under pressure and deeply empathetic, Halimata leads through patience and action. Having overcome prejudice in Mali’s male-dominated mining industry, she champions women and young professionals, mentoring them towards financial independence. For her, leadership means creating opportunities for others. Above all, she wants mining communities to thrive long after operations cease, equipped with the skills and resources to shape their own futures.

> “My own journey has taught me that resilience is often forged in difficult moments.”



GRACELIN BASKARAN

Director, Critical Minerals Security Programme

COMPANY:
Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)

COUNTRY:
USA

BBC, Bloomberg, CNN, The Economist, Financial Times, Wall Street Journal. To name a few. When critical minerals are discussed, Dr Gracelin Baskaran is rarely far from the conversation. A mining economist by training, she has become a prominent voice in the field, testifying before the US Congress and advising heads of state, ministers and mining executives worldwide.

Gracelin founded and directs the Critical Minerals Security Programme at Washington DC-based CSIS, “the defining moment of my career”. When it launched, critical minerals were “still viewed largely as a niche mining issue”. Today, she notes, they sit at the centre of debates over economic competitiveness, national security, AI, energy and geopolitics. A Cambridge PhD and former Fulbright Scholar, Gracelin also teaches at Georgetown University. Africa remains a strong focus: she began her career in South Africa’s platinum belt and later spent five years with the World Bank there. Her next goal is expanding US commercial partnerships with resource-rich countries, particularly across Africa.

“Motivated by solving problems”, Gracelin believes there is a solution to every one. A hiker at heart – “the further away from a city, the better” – she has skydived, bungee jumped, backpacked solo across Africa and Asia, and dived with sharks. Peers describe her as someone who “deals in absolute facts”, with frankness and tenacity to match. Gracelin’s journey has also been shaped by personal challenges that strengthened her resilience and determination. As she reflects, “Those experiences changed my perspective forever and reminded me that the most meaningful achievements often come after the hardest chapters.”



> “Don’t be afraid to be the first in a room if that’s where you find yourself; it’s uncomfortable, but it’s also where real impact happens.”

AISSATA BEAVOGUI

Chief Executive Officer

COMPANY:
Africa Sustainability Partners

COUNTRY:
Guinea

Aissata Beavogui never planned a career in mining. An auditor at Deloitte, she discovered the industry while conducting due diligence on a mining project for Grant Thornton. Struck by the impact mining decisions could have on communities and the environment, she joined Guinea Alumina Corporation (GAC) as Compliance Director. In 2016, she made history as Guinea’s first female mining Director General of GAC, taking charge of a US$1.4 billion bauxite project in an industry where, as she recalls, being “the first” often meant being “the only”.

Taking the helm of GAC was no small challenge. Amid construction delays and mounting shareholder pressure, Aissata steered the project to first ore in 2019, on budget and without incidents. Determined to ensure Guineans benefited from mining, she expanded access to training, employment and contracts for local businesses. Despite boardroom opposition, she spearheaded Project 150, offering young people in the Boké region training and employment opportunities. Her achievements earned her World Bank Group recognition in 2020. She later led Hamana Gold, part of Predictive Discovery, bringing her expertise in governance and community relations to a new gold project.

Now building her own gold and lithium venture, Aissata is determined to embed responsible mining and community development from the outset. As CEO of Africa Sustainability Partners, she identifies and advances early-stage mineral opportunities, connecting projects with technical expertise, investment and strategic partners. As President of Women in Mining Guinea, she wants female mining CEOs to become the norm, not the exception. “The glass ceiling isn’t just something to break, it’s a door, and once you walk through it, hold it open for others.”

> “Approach the day with curiosity because you never know what you may learn that will create opportunities for you.”



PEGGY BELL

Chief Operating Officer (Maven)

COMPANY:
Maven Exploration | Mine Like a Woman

COUNTRY:
Canada

Peggy Bell “fell” into mining after a series of unfortunate events. She had been running a heating and cooling company with her husband when moved on from the partnership. Looking for a new direction, she joined an environmental laboratory that was also a global centre of excellence for mining. What kept her there was discovering mining’s connection to the global economy. Neither a geologist nor an engineer, Peggy taught herself the technical concepts. “I will teach myself how to do anything. Literally from my nails to building polygons and interpreting geological data,” she says.

That unconventional background became a strength. Described by a collaborator as a “systems translator”, Peggy turns complex concepts into language people can understand. “Assays are samples, a deposit is a rock,” she says. She put that philosophy into Mine Like a Woman, taking an idea for a T-shirt company from concept to launch in just five days and building a platform whose designs are now worn at mining conferences worldwide. Her work with the Femina Collective, where she had been Chief Brand & Engagement Officer, eventually led to co-founding Maven Exploration, Canada’s first fully women-founded exploration company, with an ambition to make mining “radically accessible”.

For Peggy, that means an industry open to people regardless of education or background, where women can rise at every level and Indigenous Nations can become partners and owners in mineral development. An avid reader with restless curiosity, she says her favourite book changes constantly. Her approach to life is characteristically direct: “How hard can it be?” Her advice to women considering mining is equally simple: “Do it! Just join. Mining has a place for everyone.”



"There is no contradiction between being ambitious, running a company, being a mother, caring deeply about your family and also enjoying femininity, beauty or self-care."

BROOKE BIBEAULT

Chief Executive Officer

COMPANY:
Makor Resources

COUNTRY:
Zambia

Brooke Bibeault once dreamed of working at Vogue. When the coveted editorial offer finally arrived, however, her ambitions had changed. Instead of fashion publishing, she would find herself building a copper mining company in Zambia, an unlikely path for someone whose background spanned strategy, sustainability and global brands. Introduced to mining through her husband's career, Brooke was struck by the disconnect between the industry's importance and how little consumers understood about the origins of minerals. Working alongside artisanal miners in Africa convinced her that mining could be done differently.

As co-founder and CEO of Makor Resources, Brooke is developing copper projects in Zambia. Her "Hubology" model clusters neighbouring mining licences to share infrastructure and processing capacity, aiming to make smaller deposits commercially viable. Initially self-funded, Makor has required her to navigate complex regulations, traditional authorities and male-dominated mining finance networks. She also co-founded MineHive, connecting artisanal miners with training and industry opportunities. Keen to strengthen her technical expertise, she is now studying geology, "not to become the geologist in the room", but to challenge assumptions and make better-informed decisions as a mining executive.

A mother of three, expecting her fourth child, Brooke has often brought her children into the African communities where she works, reinforcing her belief that mining must create opportunities for future generations. Describing herself as "accountable, unshakeable, empathetic", she wants more women not just working in mining, but owning assets, controlling capital and shaping decisions. Her ambition is to build a company that outlasts its founder and leaves communities stronger, believing that "we develop finite resources, but our thinking, responsibility and impact should never be finite."

"If you can dream it, you can achieve it"



MARISKA BOLTON

Snr HRD Business Partner – Human Resource Development (HRD)

COMPANY:
Glencore Ferroalloys

COUNTRY:
South Africa

"She is not good enough. What does she know about mining? She is just a secretary." Mariska Bolton remembers the doubts echoing through the corridors when she became Senior HRD Business Partner, the first woman in the mine's history to hold the position. She had, in fact, started as a secretary in 2002, when few women worked in technical roles. The daughter of a miner, raised in a mining community, Mariska carved out her own path in the industry, working her way from secretary to senior leadership.

Mariska has since turned that determination into practical change. She initiated South African mining's first fully operational underground virtual-reality training centre, reflecting her belief that "a skilled workforce is a safe workforce". In 2023, this commitment earned her the Minerals Council Safety Hero Award, her proudest career moment. During a restructuring, she developed an interview-preparation programme later requested by other operations. Now Limpopo Province Women in Mining Chairperson, Mariska also challenged pink reflective strips on women's Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) because they identified female employees in isolated areas.

For Mariska, development also applies to herself. In her forties, and already a mother and grandmother, she is completing a Bachelor's degree in Human Resource Management, with a Master's next on her list. A mentor to others, she wants Human Resources Development seen not as compliance, but as an investment in safer, stronger operations. Her ambition is to develop others as she has developed herself or, as she puts it, keep "digging deep to uncover potential".



"Stay true to yourself, dream big and never be afraid to dare."

SILVIA BOTTERO

Chief Exploration Officer

COMPANY:
Montage Gold Corp.

COUNTRY:
Côte d'Ivoire / Ivory Coast

Silvia Bottero had always dreamed of exploring new horizons. Fresh from university, she found the opportunity in Kazakhstan, taking a first job that "shook her life". Curious by nature, she chose exploration because it combined her love of the outdoors with an analytical mind. Her career took her from hydrogeology in Kazakhstan and Niger to exploration across Africa. Fluent in five languages, Silvia built a life around remote places, even taking her young children to exploration sites to keep them close. Mining, she says, taught her the universal human need for "a sense of belonging".

Over more than a decade at Endeavour Mining, Silvia rose from Exploration Director to Senior Vice President Exploration, leading teams that discovered more than 15 million ounces of gold at Ity, Lafigué and Assafou, discoveries that strengthened Côte d'Ivoire's position on the global mining map. But behind that progression was a personal obstacle: lack of self-confidence and the fear of disappointing others, "that feeling of not being 'good enough'". Now Chief Exploration Officer at Montage Gold, she defines leadership as "empathy, foresight, results" and herself as "an iron fist in a velvet glove". Her proudest career moment? Whenever a colleague says: "I'd love to work with you again."

Côte d'Ivoire ultimately became more than a place to explore. Silvia became an Ivorian citizen, taught geology voluntarily at Félix Houphouët-Boigny University and mentors young women into science and mining. Honorary President of Women in Mining Côte d'Ivoire and a taekwondo black belt, she is also committed to shape young African talented athletes beyond the sport. "She has not simply succeeded as an individual; she has helped redefine leadership standards and open the way for future generations," says a colleague.

> “Embrace every opportunity, stay curious and never stop pursuing your dreams.”



GRACIELA BUSTAMANTE

Manager, Portfolio Strategy and Development

COMPANY:
BHP

COUNTRY:
Chile

Graciela Bustamante is drawn to the challenges others avoid. In 2015, she was part of a pioneering group of women who founded Women in Mining Chile and helped develop one of Chilean mining’s first sexual-harassment awareness videos, when the subject was rarely discussed and years before #MeToo. “Meaningful change begins when someone has the courage to address the ‘elephant in the room’ with conviction and respect,” she says. Hearing the challenges faced by other women in the industry, Graciela recognised the scale of the problem. When she entered mining in 1999, women represented around 3% of Chile’s workforce, and she had to work harder to earn credibility and make her voice heard. “She did not wait for the industry to change, she changed it,” says a colleague.

Over 26 years in copper mining, Graciela has brought that same appetite for difficult challenges to strategy, projects and operations. One defining experience was helping secure approval for a long-term development plan, demonstrating that desalination was essential to mining’s future in a water-scarce environment. In 2010, she became the first woman to sit at the collective bargaining table with the mine operators’ union. Today, she is Manager Portfolio Strategy and Development at BHP.

Graciela has also learned that difficult goals need not come with an expiry date. In her forties, with children aged four and six, she moved with her family to London to pursue an MSc at Imperial College, a dream postponed for years. “Dreams don’t have an expiration date,” she says. For Graciela, leadership now means helping others thrive. Ultimately, she hopes her legacy will be measured not by projects delivered, but by “the people I inspired, the culture I helped shape and the opportunities I created for others”.



> “Companies need to focus on fixing their own systems and workplace, not the women.”

CAROLE CABLE

Head of Global Energy and Resources

COMPANY:
Brunswick Group

COUNTRY:
United Kingdom

Being made redundant could have ended Carole Cable’s budding mining career. Instead, it took her halfway around the world. Mining was already in her blood. With family in the industry, she had visited remote exploration sites as a teenager, sparking a fascination with mining, communities and the land. So when her Australian employer was taken over, Carole had to choose between staying where her friends were or taking a chance on London. “Mining was my passion, so I decided to take a calculated risk.” She chose London, leaned on her small network and landed a role as a uranium and nuclear fuels analyst. Three decades later, she is one of mining’s most experienced strategic communications advisers.

Carole moved through JPMorgan and Credit Suisse before joining Brunswick in 2007. Now co-head of its global Energy and Resources practice, she advises boards and executives on transactions, leadership changes, crises and corporate reputation. One of few senior female strategic communications advisers in global mining, she has built her authority through tenacity, calm judgement and a willingness to “speak truth to power”. Carole believes that while “there is no shortcut around hard work”, there is also “a great deal of fun” in mining.

Opening doors for others has been equally important. Carole counts founding Mining Indaba’s Young Leaders Programme in 2015 as her proudest achievement, connecting young people with industry, government and civil society. She also chaired Women in Mining UK’s Board for seven years, strengthening its governance and support for women. Having relied on others willing to open doors for her, Carole now does the same, striving “to do things better than has been done in the past” and help create a fairer industry.

> “Be humble in learning, ambitious in vision, resilient in challenges and kind in the impact you bring to others and the industry.”



ARIEL CAO

North Asia Director – Mining Advisory

COMPANY:
SLR Consulting

COUNTRY:
China

Ariel Cao found her place in mining by learning to bridge worlds: Chinese clients and international experts, technical specialists and decision-makers. Her path into the industry was unplanned. Working for a UK-based engineering technology group in China, she was introduced in 2008 to Runge, a global mining consultancy establishing its Chinese office. Drawn to mining’s complexity and international reach, Ariel stayed. Without a formal mining qualification, she built her knowledge through work, training and study, progressing over 18 years to North Asia Director-Mining Advisory at SLR Consulting. “I realised that my greatest contribution in mining is often as a bridge,” she says.

Ariel has helped Chinese clients navigate international mining investments, as part of a multidisciplinary team that raised more than US$60 million on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange and supported acquisitions worldwide. Deputy Chair of the Global Mining Association of China (GMAC) since 2018, she has led JORC Code training in Chinese, bringing international reporting standards to mining professionals in China. “Her standard response is yes, not no,” says a colleague. “She perseveres when others might walk away.”

Ariel rarely frames her career in terms of barriers. In China’s male-dominated mining industry, she has sat across the table from senior officials without questioning whether she belonged. However, she sees the need for more visible female leaders. Rather than seeking the spotlight, Ariel has nominated other Chinese women for WIM100, mentored colleagues and helped them into senior roles. She now hopes to build a stronger women’s mining community in China and leave the industry “more connected, more responsible and more inclusive”. Guided by Bruce Lee’s philosophy, “Be water, my friend”, she continues to adapt, learn and help others succeed.



"The limits are often much greater in our minds than in reality."

BLANCA PAOLA CAZARES PEREZ

Director, Sustainability and Social Affairs

COMPANY:
Agnico Eagle Mines Ltd

COUNTRY:
Mexico

Early in her mining career, Paola Cazares knocked on her Country Manager's door with an unusual request. Hired to digitise geological maps, she had become interested in the operation's wider challenges. "I want to contribute to safety, the environment, and community development," she told him. His response was blunt: "And what do you know about that?" Paola replied: "I don't know yet, but I can learn, and I'm willing to try." He gave her the chance, changing her career. Nearly 20 years later, she leads sustainability and social affairs for Agnico Eagle in Mexico.

Paola has since turned that initiative into action. Seeing women leave Agnico Eagle Mexico, she analysed the data, benchmarked global practices and secured an inclusive maternity-leave policy covering new mothers, adoption, child loss, loss of the mother and same-sex couples. Since its introduction, 10% of the company's female workforce in Mexico has benefited, mostly in operational roles. Beyond Agnico Eagle, she became the first woman President of the Chihuahua Mining Cluster and serves as Vice President of CAMIMEX's Sustainability Commission.

For Paola, however, the toughest challenge was not the industry, but overcoming her lack of confidence. "In many ways, my greatest challenge has been myself," she says, recalling the fear and self-doubt that once held her back. Her career taught her to step outside her comfort zone, take risks and trust her own abilities without having all the answers. "I learned to believe in myself and not let fear define my decisions." It is a lesson she now passes on to other women: "Don't wait until you have all the answers; believe in your potential, be courageous enough to raise your hand."

“Never let yourself be taken for granted.”



NANDINI CHAKRAVARTY

Managing Director

COMPANY:
Mine Line Pvt Ltd

COUNTRY:
India

Nandini Chakravarty was born into mining, but was not allowed to study it. Growing up in Dhanbad, one of India’s oldest mining towns, with a father who was an Inspector of Mines, she says “coal is in my blood”. After school, Nandini travelled to the Indian School of Mines to study mining engineering, only to be turned away because she was a woman. “The passion to work in mining remained nevertheless.” An arts graduate, she entered the industry in the late 1970s and learnt from her father. Nearly five decades later, she leads Mine Line, a major Indian manufacturer of electrical equipment for underground mines.

Under Nandini’s leadership, Mine Line introduced European technologies and automation adapted to Indian conditions, while its flameproof electrical equipment is now used in around 80% of the country’s underground coal mines. She has also helped shape industry safety standards. In 2014, her contribution to mining science earned her the MGMI Presidential Gold Medal, the same recognition her father had received four years earlier. Her proudest moment. Being nominated by the Board as a life member of the Mining, Geological and Metallurgical Institute of India, a powerful recognition for a woman whose competence was once questioned because of her gender.

Having fought to earn her place in mining, Nandini now helps others find theirs. She mentors women through Women in Mining India and develops young engineers through training and hands-on experience, with some progressing to General Manager roles. Her ambition is to leave behind a team capable of carrying her work forward. Her advice to young women reflects her own journey: “You are stronger than you think. Never let anyone belittle you because you are a woman. Stand strong.”



> “Imposter syndrome happens before a growth spurt, if you’re not feeling it, you’re not pushing yourself hard enough.”

CAOILIN CHESTNUTT

Executive Director

COMPANY:
Australian Coal Association Research Program (ACARP)

COUNTRY:
Australia

Caoilin Chestnutt became a geologist by mistake. An administrative error at Trinity College Dublin enrolled her in geology instead of zoology. She embraced the unexpected, drawn by the promise of adventure and international travel. But her first mining job brought another case of mistaken identity. Arriving at an exploration camp in Western Australia’s goldfields, she discovered she had been hired because her employers thought she was a man named Colin, capable of meeting the tough physical demands of a fieldwork. Undeterred, Caoilin proved herself in the field, beginning a 30-year career that would take her from exploration geology to senior mining leadership across the world.

A defining career move took Caoilin from geology into mergers and acquisitions, combining technical expertise with commercial strategy. At Arrow Energy, she led a team that increased reserves fivefold in a year, exceeding targets by 350%. At Anglo American, she expanded Canada’s mineral inventory by 8Bt and negotiated major transactions. At BHP, she helped forge AI exploration partnerships with KoBold Metals and Sensore. Queensland’s first Resources Investment Commissioner, she helped shape the state’s critical minerals framework. Today, as Executive Director of ACARP, she leads industry research into decarbonisation, safety and innovation, while championing critical minerals investment as Deputy Chair of the Queensland Exploration Council.

“Allergic to ‘that’s how we’ve always done it’”, Caoilin has never shied away from asking whether there is a better way. Raising two children alone while navigating demanding international roles, she credits those around her with helping her overcome setbacks. Grateful for the mentors who supported her, she now pays it forward, guiding women from schoolgirls to senior executives. For Caoilin, this matters more than titles or projects: “Ore bodies get mined out. People you support keep going long after those resources are gone.”

> “When people feel seen and organised, they move mountains.”



CHIEDZA CHIPANGURA

National Director & Founder

COMPANY:
Women Empowerment in Mining Zimbabwe (WEMZ)

COUNTRY:
Zimbabwe

“A true inspiration.” “A game changer.” “A living legend in the artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) sector.” Those who have worked alongside Chiedza Chipangura do not hold back. Neither does she. In 2016, she walked into a conference room packed with more than 500 women gathered to access the Women Empowerment Funds hosted by a local Member of Parliament (MP). She had come not for money, but to demand change for female chrome pickers being paid far below market value. When the MP told her that “policy is not influenced by individual need, but by collective voices”, Chiedza acted, mobilising women and founding Norton Constituency’s first association representing women miners. “What began as one voice in a room became an organised movement,” she says.

A primary-school teacher before becoming a miner and mine owner, Chiedza was drawn to mining during Zimbabwe’s 2008 economic collapse, when it was one of the few industries left standing. Despite scepticism and sexism, she rose to become the first female chairperson of the Zimbabwe Miners Federation’s Mashonaland West province in 2018. She has since campaigned for fair chrome pricing, safer communities, mechanisation and ASM formalisation, with her association supporting more than 1,000 women through the formalisation process. Her advocacy has taken her from mine sites to boardrooms and Parliament, breaking barriers in Zimbabwe’s male-dominated industry.

That determination carries a personal weight. “As a leader I carry the burden of all women,” Chiedza says. When she fails, she feels women collectively are judged; success is hers alone. Yet she draws strength from marginalised women who “bounce back with tears in their smiles”. Through #Plant365, she now aims to restore one million hectares damaged by mining. Her word for the future of mining? “Regenerative.”



> “No workplace can be considered safe if its people do not feel psychologically and emotionally safe.”

FATIMA COLLINS

Women in Mining – Regional Head (Africa)

COMPANY:
Sibanye-Stillwater

COUNTRY:
South Africa

A yoga teacher, children’s author and fearless campaigner against gender-based violence (GBV), Fatima Collins is redefining leadership in mining. With nearly 30 years of experience across four countries and multiple industries, the South African socioeconomic development specialist took an unconventional path into the sector. She first encountered mining while assessing its impact on local communities. But joining Sibanye-Stillwater as Regional Head for Women in Mining in 2022 brought her experience in development, strategy and gender equality together. “It was the moment I understood that the different paths in my career had not been disconnected, they had prepared me to lead systemic change,” she recalls.

At Sibanye-Stillwater, Fatima has turned advocacy into action, championing initiatives to tackle GBV and improve women’s safety underground. From better lighting in mine cages to two GBV reporting centres, her work addresses both physical and psychological safety. She has spearheaded awareness campaigns, including a short film encouraging survivors to report abuse and seek support. Beyond Sibanye-Stillwater, she works with Women in Mining South Africa (WiMSA) to challenge entrenched attitudes and promote safer workplaces industry-wide. Her efforts earned her the Positive Icon award at the 2024 Africa and Middle East Gender Mainstreaming Awards.

Bold yet deeply empathetic, Fatima creates safe spaces for women to speak up. Drawing on her yoga practice, she brings calm and compassion to difficult conversations. She is now focused on protecting pregnant women in high-risk mining roles without compromising their careers. Her ambition is clear: “I hope my work normalises an environment where no woman has to choose between her well-being, motherhood and career.”

> “Empower yourself, enjoy what you do and stand your ground with competency.”



DR GLÁUCIA CUCHIERATO

Founder & Executive Director

COMPANY:
GeoAnsata

COUNTRY:
Brazil

Gláucia Cuchierato’s career has been shaped by determination and the desire to build her own path. A self-made woman, she has pursued independence and the freedom to put her ideas into practice. “I wanted to build something bigger, more challenging and closer to who I really am,” she says. She founded GeoAnsata, a Brazilian consultancy specialising in geoscientific data governance and technical assurance, and later returned to university for a PhD in Mineral Engineering, linking research with industry challenges. Driving her journey is a conviction held since university: science, technical rigour and responsibility can help mining deliver greater benefits to society.

Drawing on her doctoral research, Gláucia developed GeoData Quality Management (GDQM), a methodology that identifies weaknesses in geological information before they affect resource models, technical reports or investment decisions. Its preventive approach uses traceability and continuous improvement to turn geological data from a record into a strategic tool for reducing risk and strengthening confidence in mineral projects. “More than an expert, Gláucia is a reference point in the industry: she not only understands the sector, but actively contributes to raising its standards,” says a former collaborator.

Gláucia also had to fight to make her expertise heard. “I faced a lot of resistance to my ideas, my voice and my contributions,” she says, recalling being interrupted, seeing men receive credit for her ideas and repeatedly having to prove her authority. Yet she believes knowledge should be shared, training professionals, organising technical events and bringing international specialists to Brazil. Her proudest achievement, however, was helping identify a clay deposit for women artisans in São Paulo’s Ribeira Valley, enabling a traditional community to preserve its craft, income and culture.



> “Collaboration allows us to know more than we are capable of knowing by ourselves.”

CHRISTINA DAHNÉR

Specialist – Rock Mechanic Engineer, Mining Technology

COMPANY:
LKAB

COUNTRY:
Sweden

When Christina Dahnér joined LKAB in 1989 as its first female mining engineer, women were virtually absent underground. Thirty-seven years later, she is tackling one of mining’s toughest challenges: keeping people safe as mines go deeper and seismic risks increase. Mining was not originally the plan. Christina intended to study geophysics, but geology sparked a fascination with rock as a construction material that led her into the industry. In a male-dominated field, she found women had to be “more skilled and competent” than men to reach the same career level. She responded by building her authority through technical expertise, beginning a career devoted to understanding rock and making deep mines safer.

A defining moment came when Christina joined the International Caving Study (ICS), gaining exposure to technologies and safety practices worldwide. She went on to pioneer LKAB’s first mining-sequencing approach for high-stress conditions and helped integrate seismic analysis into operational decisions. Now a specialist in rock mechanics and seismology, she works on techniques to reduce seismic hazards, bridging research and operations. In 2025 came her proudest moment: delivering a keynote on hydraulic fracturing at the Rockbursts and Seismicity in Mines (RaSiM) conference, recognition of expertise built over nearly four decades.

Curious, open-minded and inclusive, Christina is as committed to sharing knowledge as building it. She collaborates with universities, supervises master’s and PhD students and is completing her own PhD. Her approach remains grounded in humility: “There is always somebody who can teach you something new.” Her ambition is to leave both new technologies and a new generation of researchers and engineers, making mines safer long after her own work is done.

> “Don’t be afraid to take the path you never expected, because it may lead you to a career, a community, and a sense of purpose you never imagined.”



SOPHIE DESSART

Manager, Communications & Public Affairs

COMPANY:
Florence Copper

COUNTRY:
United States

Sophie Dessart’s career began with a conversation. Before she was old enough to vote, a casual chat with her local county clerk in Michigan led to her first job, as an election inspector. That same curiosity and instinct for connecting with people eventually took her into mining. Starting in consulting, Sophie moved into external relations with predominantly mining clients and quickly fell for an industry that felt like “one big family”. “Wherever I go in the world, if I meet a group of miners, I likely will know at least one person,” she says.

In her role as Manager of Communications and Public Affairs at Florence Copper, Sophie translates complex mining and environmental concepts for stakeholders. She leads communication strategy, community and media relations along with philanthropic programmes. Sophie earned the community’s trust in the world’s first in-situ copper recovery (ISCR) operation through public consultation and federal permitting. She directed the teams documenting the milestone at Florence Copper, and together they celebrated the world’s first copper cathodes harvested from a greenfield ISCR operation. “It was an incredibly emotional moment”, she says.

For someone who grew up playing with Barbie dolls, loved pink and never imagined a career in mining, Sophie is now challenging perceptions of who belongs in the industry. As a young woman representing mining in public forums, she has faced assumptions about the sector and who is qualified to lead, using them to “build understanding, challenge stereotypes” and encourage more women into mining. Determined to open doors for others, she mentors students and young professionals, while her extensive community work reflects a broader belief in service. “I hope to leave mining, and my local community, stronger than I found them,” she says.



> “Your ability to connect people and ideas will take you further than technical expertise alone.”

DR ANA FERNÁNDEZ-IGLESIAS

Director Global R&D Portfolio – Sustainable Mining

COMPANY:
ArcelorMittal Global R&D

COUNTRY:
Spain

“Mining was not the plan, but sustainability always was.” Growing up in a Spanish city heavily affected by industrial pollution in the 1980s, Ana Fernández-Iglesias saw early why heavy industry needed to change. A chemical engineer specialising in environmental technologies, she joined ArcelorMittal’s R&D organisation in 2008, without a mining background. Then, while working on steel projects 15 years ago, she asked: “What could we do to improve sustainability in the first step of the value chain: mining?” No one around her in R&D was working on mining, so Ana took the first step herself.

She went on to build ArcelorMittal’s mining R&D capability from the ground up, creating a dedicated team, laboratories and pilot facilities focused on tailings, water management and circularity. Over five years, she turned the team into a reference in tailings management, delivering millions in value while achieving exceptional employee satisfaction. Now Director of ArcelorMittal’s global Sustainable Mining R&D portfolio, Ana leads multidisciplinary teams across its mining operations. Yet her defining lesson has been about people, not technology. “The biggest barriers to positive change are rarely technological,” she says. Innovation depends on trust, collaboration and shared purpose.

That belief extends beyond research. Ana teaches sustainability and innovation at the University of Oviedo, supports STEM initiatives for young girls and champions multidisciplinary teams that bring different backgrounds into mining. A self-described “nonconformist, demanding, catalyst”, she sums up her personality with a “Warning! I may start new initiatives.” It fits a career built on seeing what mining could do differently and taking the first step to make it happen.

> “Leadership, innovation, and the ability to transform the industry have no gender.”



KATTHERINE FERRADA FUENTES

Environmental Manager, Chile

COMPANY:
Anglo American

COUNTRY:
Chile

It took Kattherine Ferrada more than a decade to help turn copper smelter waste into a resource for Chile’s construction industry. In February 2026, Chile published Supreme Decree 46, authorising the use of copper slag in construction, a breakthrough she had worked tirelessly to achieve. For Kattherine, it was proof that mining could be part of the solution to its own environmental challenges. Trained as an agricultural civil engineer, she discovered mining while serving as Regional Director of Water Resources in Chile’s Atacama region. Witnessing the industry’s environmental and social impact convinced her she could make a difference. “I realised I could contribute, bringing a perspective from outside the traditional mining world,” she recalls.

Since joining Anglo American in 2011, Kattherine has risen through environmental and sustainability roles to become Environmental Manager for Chile, overseeing three operations. Leading the company’s contribution to the decade-long regulatory effort, she worked with government agencies, universities and industry partners on technical studies and pilot projects, from road paving to public spaces. Her perseverance helped turn years of research into national policy. Her wider achievements in environmental management, permitting, air quality forecasting and circular economy strategies have also earned her multiple awards.

Having repeatedly faced gender bias, Kattherine is determined to help other women thrive. She leads with empathy and inclusion, values shaped by her mother, who grew up in poverty without formal education. Outside mining, she puts those values into practice by teaching traditional Mapuche weaving, bringing women together through creativity and shared learning. She now hopes to enable the safe reuse of mine tailings in construction, staying true to her motto: “Always leave things better than I found them.”



> “Where you start does not determine how far you can go; your authenticity, resilience, and determination do.”

KAREN GARCÍA

Commercial Manager

COMPANY:
Rock Drill, Vilbra Group Company

COUNTRY:
Peru

“Mining found me before I found mining.” Karen Garcia entered Peru’s mining industry by chance, starting as a receptionist at Master Drilling in 2006. Twenty years later, she is Commercial Manager at Rock Drill, having climbed the ranks through determination, discipline and a relentless drive to learn. Her journey was far from easy. Working full-time, she became pregnant during her first university term but refused to abandon her studies. Balancing motherhood, work and education, Karen kept pushing beyond her comfort zone. “Credibility is built through knowledge,” she says.

Over 17 years at Master Drilling, Karen rose to Head of Commercial Management, mastering the technical side of mining and earning the trust of major clients. In 2023, she left the company to join Rock Drill, becoming Commercial Manager in 2025. Her hands-on approach sets her apart. From underground drilling operations to mine sites above 4,500m, she works alongside technical teams to understand their challenges. Combining operational expertise with commercial strategy, she has helped secure contracts exceeding US$50 million and expand the client portfolio by 30%.

Resilient, courageous and disciplined, Karen has never stopped learning. A self-described “lifelong learner”, she ranked fourth out of 1,250 students in International Business and third in her MBA class, while pursuing a Master’s in Innovation and Sustainability. Between March 2025 and August 2026 alone, she earned 22 certifications. She now mentors young professionals, particularly women, across Peru. “I want my story to show that with determination, continuous learning, humility and resilience, it is possible to build a meaningful career regardless of where you start.”

> “People who are incredibly brilliant or talented sometimes need someone else to magnify their voice.”



TINA GAUTHIER

Chief Commercial Officer

COMPANY:
Vale Base Metals (VBM)

COUNTRY:
Canada

Tina Gauthier was offered a role outside her comfort zone and feared she might fail. She took it anyway. The decision led directly to a vice-president position and crystallised an approach that has shaped her career: “If the opportunity terrifies you, seize it.” Mining had also come by accident, when a friend in the industry recommended her for a role. With a background in English and psychology rather than mining or engineering, Tina rose through sales, trading and commercial leadership with curiosity, resilience and what she jokingly calls “stupid courage”.

Today, Tina is Chief Commercial Officer of Vale Base Metals, leading around 100 people in a global commercial organisation supporting some US$8 billion in annual revenue across copper, nickel, cobalt and precious metals. She played a key role in the formation of Vale Base Metals, helping establish commercial stability through the transition. She also became the first woman to chair the Nickel Institute and the London Metal Exchange Nickel Committee. Yet leadership, for Tina, is not simply about reaching the top: “People who are incredibly brilliant or talented sometimes need someone else to magnify their voice.”

With few female role models, Tina once felt she had to work harder to make her voice heard. Now she uses her position to amplify others, mentoring emerging leaders and giving them high-profile opportunities. As Executive Sponsor of Vale Base Metals’ Black and Allies Affinity Group, she also champions inclusion. Mining, she believes, still needs more women in senior roles: “It’s not enough to have a single female voice at the table.” Ultimately, Tina hopes to measure her legacy through others’ success: “I would like to inspire others to achieve their grand goals.”



"Be curious, be courageous and never underestimate the value of your perspective and your voice."

DR URISHANIE GOVENDER

Chief Sustainability Officer

COMPANY:
Harmony Mining Company

COUNTRY:
South Africa

For Urishanie Govender, sustainability belongs at the heart of mining, not on the margins. Trained as a scientist, she was drawn to an industry where science, people and purpose intersect. But it was the opportunity to improve lives through safer workplaces, stronger communities and responsible resource management that kept her there. "I am in mining because of the people!", she says today. Overcoming perceptions of what leadership in mining should look like, she learned to trust her own style, combining empathy and collaboration with technical expertise. Her defining realisation was that sustainability could drive business performance rather than simply fulfil compliance obligations.

Over more than 30 years, Urishanie built a career spanning government, engineering, mining and corporate leadership. After senior positions at PPC Cement, GIBB, De Beers and Vedanta, she became Chief Sustainability Officer at Harmony Gold in 2024. There, she has championed the integration of sustainability into business strategy, advancing renewable energy, water stewardship and community development. Her 3As framework – Ambition, Action, Accountability – has helped shape Harmony's water and carbon roadmaps to 2030. Armed with a doctorate in business leadership and postdoctoral research experience at Wits University, she bridges academic research and executive decision-making.

Away from work, Urishanie recharges by walking 10,000 steps a day and hiking in nature. Equally passionate about opening doors for others, she wants more women shaping mining's future and is working to equip them with the skills, confidence and opportunities to lead. Guided by integrity, compassion and accountability, she hopes to leave future generations more responsible organisations and a mining industry that creates "shared value that outlives our operations".

> “Modern medicine focuses on prevention rather than cure. Mining should be no different.”



DR ROS GREEN

Principal Environmental Geochemist

COMPANY:
Rio Tinto

COUNTRY:
Australia

Some of Ros Green’s proudest achievements are problems that never happened. As an environmental geochemist, she identifies risks before they become environmental legacies, knowing that decisions about mine waste, water and closure can affect communities and landscapes long after mining ends. That focus has deep roots: at school, Ros was fascinated by geography and how water shapes landscapes. Drawn to mining by challenging work, continuous learning and the chance to experience different places and cultures, she found herself tackling those same questions through mine-waste landforms and water. “The biggest successes are often the ones nobody ever sees,” she says.

Over more than 20 years at Rio Tinto, Ros has helped shift thinking from treating environmental problems to preventing them at source. An internationally recognised expert in environmental geochemistry, acid and metalliferous drainage and mine closure, she has influenced how mine-waste and water risks are managed across commodities, countries and the mine life cycle. Describing herself as “curious, thoughtful, and quietly determined,” she is prepared to challenge established plans when the science points to long-term risks. Through her work with the International Network for Acid Prevention, Ros contributes to improving industry knowledge and practice.

Ros applies the same long-term thinking to people, mentoring students and early-career engineers, building their technical confidence and opening doors to new opportunities. Having balanced her own career with a young family, she encourages women entering mining to stay curious and “take your seat at the table”. Her hoped-for legacy combines both strands: better-prepared environmental professionals and mines less burdened by preventable problems. “Some of the environmental problems I am proudest of solving are the ones that never happened,” she says.



> “No matter how hard the road is, don’t stop, believe in yourself and keep moving.”

MARIA GUZMÁN

Technical Office Manager

COMPANY:
EMOCON Group

COUNTRY:
Guatemala

Maria Guzmán’s greatest lesson in leadership came from a mine blast that failed twice. The Venezuelan mining engineer was leading a critical operation to connect an underground mine with an open pit and recover high-grade gold ore. After allowing an experienced contractor to override her technical judgement, the blast failed. Twice. Deeply affected, Maria submitted her resignation. Her employer refused to accept it. On the third attempt, she returned to her original design. This time, it worked. The experience taught her a lasting lesson: listen to others, but trust your own expertise and judgement.

Maria’s passion for mining began at school, driven by her interest in Earth Sciences and mathematics. Over 17 years, she built an international career across Venezuela, Argentina and Ecuador, rising to senior engineering and working for international companies, including Yamana Gold and Newmont. Combining technical expertise with financial analysis, Maria challenged established practices to improve efficiency and productivity. At Newmont, she led the implementation of Xeras, strengthening cost management and data-driven decision-making. She also helped develop multicultural teams and future mining leaders.

Throughout her career, Maria has had to prove herself in a male-dominated industry, earning respect through perseverance, technical expertise and results. But success came with personal sacrifices. She eventually chose to take a professional break, moving to Portugal to be present during an important stage of her daughter’s life. In August 2026, she joined EMOCON Group in Guatemala as Technical Office Manager, overseeing technical and operational activities for underground mine development projects. Maria wants her journey to inspire other women to overcome obstacles and claim their place in mining. “Resilience is not about never falling; it is about finding the strength to rise, learn and keep moving forward,” she says.

> “Never let anyone define who you are or what you are worth.”



HAYLEY HALSALL-WHITNEY

Vice President, Operations

COMPANY:
West Red Lake Gold Mines Ltd

COUNTRY:
Canada

Hayley Halsall-Whitney wanted to be a lawyer. Instead, she became an engineer and found in mining another way to solve difficult problems. Drawn to advocacy, critical thinking and complex challenges, she studied chemical engineering and specialised in Advanced Process Control before joining Falconbridge’s Process Control Group. As she progressed from technical specialist to operational leader, her perspective shifted. “The most rewarding challenges were no longer technical, they were human.” Building teams and developing leaders became as important as improving operational performance.

The defining shift came when Hayley was promoted from Mill Manager to General Manager at Wesdome Gold Mines’ Eagle River Complex. Suddenly responsible for the entire business rather than a single function, she learnt that technical expertise earned credibility, but people determined whether an operation succeeded. Hayley led Eagle River to record production in 2021, while delivering its first block model and life-of-mine update since start-up. She also drove improvements in safety and workplace diversity. Now Vice President, Operations at West Red Lake Gold Mines, she is helping lead the restart of a historic Canadian gold mine, while serving as an Independent Director of Banyan Gold.

Hayley’s rise has also challenged assumptions about what a mining leader should look like. Early in her career, she often felt she had to prove her technical expertise before receiving the same credibility as others. She responded with competence, authenticity and results, while opening doors for others. “Hayley is just a phone call away, providing mentorship when asked,” says an industry peer. Curious, courageous and compassionate, Hayley wants to leave every organisation stronger than she found it: “The true measure of leadership is not just the results we deliver, but the people we develop along the way.”



> “Everyone has something to offer, every thought and idea is worth synthesising into your plans, and process. People are what make it all worthwhile for me.”

AMANDA HEALY

Chair of the Board

COMPANY:
Warrikal Pty Ltd

COUNTRY:
Australia

Amanda Healy’s connection with mining began in 1963, as a young child in Mount Isa, Queensland. Her father, an Aboriginal Australian surveyor, worked in the industry, but it was the “sheer excitement of the big machines” that hooked her. More than 40 years in mining across Australia and Canada followed. Yet starting her own business proved defining. “It changed the way I thought and behaved in an industry that I loved,” she says. Today, Amanda chairs Warrikal, an Aboriginal-owned company providing services to Australia’s resources sector.

As a Koori woman building a business in mining and heavy industry, Amanda has challenged assumptions about where Indigenous businesses belong, demonstrating they can compete in technical and commercially complex areas. She now helps other Aboriginal businesses develop, mentors emerging leaders and advocates for greater Indigenous participation in supply chains. But her proudest career moment came from giving back to her community: sponsoring a film, “Genocide in the Wildflower State” that helped the long campaign for reparations for members of Western Australia’s Stolen Generations.

Amanda describes resilience as her best quality and “cool and calm” as her personal tagline. Now a grandmother, she is trying to slow down and spend more time with her grandson, while helping others “find their own place” in mining. Her ultimate goal is a more accessible industry, with more women at strategic level and greater involvement of local Indigenous peoples. Their knowledge of the environment, built over millennia, is “second to none”, she says.

> “We accomplish our greatest work when we step outside of our comfort zone. Be bold, and try new things. Don’t ever be afraid to be the first.”



EMILY HENDRICKSON

Manager, External Affairs US

COMPANY:
Integra Resources

COUNTRY:
USA

Mining changed Emily Hendrickson’s life long before she joined the industry. When she was 13, during the 2008 recession, her father lost his job before finding work at a gold mine in central Nevada. “That job changed our family’s trajectory,” Emily recalls. It opened doors that had seemed out of reach, including higher education, and eventually drew her into mining. The experience shaped how she sees the industry: capable of transforming lives and communities, but accountable for how it does so. Rather than criticise from the sidelines, Emily chose to drive change from within.

At Integra Resources, where she is Manager, External Affairs US, Emily helped lead a landmark 2025 agreement with the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes for the DeLamar gold and silver project in Idaho. Hearing that Tribal communities often felt excluded from mine development and its benefits, she took a different approach. Years of collaboration produced a Life-of-Mine Relationship Agreement supporting Tribal culture, self-determination and economic participation, the first of its kind in the lower 48 states. Despite resistance, Emily challenged established practice to make communities partners, not an afterthought.

Emily applies the same thinking to her career. When considering leaving a secure role at a major miner for an unknown junior, a mentor offered “the best worst piece of advice I’ve ever received”: “If I were you, I would just stay where you’re comfortable.” She did the opposite. And calls it the most career-accelerating and personally fulfilling decision of her life. Her motto: “Get comfortable being uncomfortable.” She wants mining to do the same, replacing its “race to second place” with a race to pioneer better social practices. Mining once changed her family’s trajectory. Now she wants it to create opportunities for others, while changing the industry from within.



"Do not wait for permission to do things differently."

DR DORIS HIAM-GALVEZ

Program Chair

COMPANY:
World Mining Congress 2026

COUNTRY:
Canada

Growing up in Peru, Doris Hiam-Galvez rode horses through the mountains and filled rooms with rocks. She wanted to become a miner, but women were then considered "bad luck underground". Instead, she chose chemical engineering, then metallurgy. When her PhD supervisor died midway through her studies in Belgium, Doris was left in a new discipline, language and country without her mentor. She could have gone home. Instead, she found new advisers in Germany and Canada and finished her PhD. "That taught me that when the path collapses, you rebuild it," she says.

That instinct shaped Doris's three-decade career. At Hatch, she pioneered approaches that halved ramp-up times on billion-dollar projects and introduced in-situ recovery and mine-waste valorisation into new markets. Her ambition went further: to rethink what mining leaves behind. "Mining will ultimately be judged by the future it enables," she says. After 20 years of work, she developed Designing Sustainable Prosperity (DSP), shifting success from volume extracted to lasting prosperity created. Published as a book in 2024, DSP is now seeing its first full implementation through Canada's Sudbury Initiative. In 2026, Doris received the Selwyn Blaylock Canadian Mining Excellence Award, Canada's highest recognition for a career contribution to mining.

As Program Chair of the World Mining Congress 2026, Doris is now taking that transformation global, targeting 50% women leaders and using the congress to secure commitments and track progress over the next decade. Her ultimate goal is an industry where "every young woman entering this industry finds a seat already built for her and knows she is expected to redesign the table."

"Be intentional and keep your eyes on the goal."



ESTHER FINDA KANDEH

Director

COMPANY:
Women on Mining and Extractives (WoME)

COUNTRY:
Sierra Leone

Growing up in Sierra Leone's mining heartland, Esther Finda Kandeh witnessed a troubling contradiction: women sustained mining communities, yet their contributions went largely unrecognised. Determined to challenge this injustice, she founded Women on Mining and Extractives (WoME) in 2013, giving women a platform to defend their rights and make their voices heard. For Esther, women artisanal miners are not victims, but skilled, resilient contributors to local economies. "Mining has taught me how remarkably resilient people are under harsh conditions, especially women," she says.

Through WoME, Esther works with nearly 1,000 women across Sierra Leone's mining districts, helping them organise, understand their rights and develop the skills to improve their livelihoods. Her work spans legal training, economic empowerment and support for survivors of sexual violence. But her influence reaches far beyond mining communities. Through the Kimberley Process Civil Society Coalition, she brings the voices of women artisanal miners into international discussions on responsible diamond sourcing, challenging an industry where their contributions have long been overlooked. She also founded the Women's Alliance on Natural Resources Governance (WANrg), connecting grassroots advocacy with national policy debates and pushing for greater recognition of women's rights and access to mining's economic benefits.

"Women's land rights are human rights, not a favour." This conviction drives Esther's determination to build a more inclusive mining industry, despite entrenched cultural barriers and persistent funding challenges. Compassionate, determined and results-driven, she is equally committed to empowering the next generation. Through her annual Make It Real conference, she inspires young girls from mining communities to pursue education and leadership opportunities, helping them claim their rightful place in the industry.



"Don't wait for what the sector can give you; think first about what you can bring to it."

FLORE KAYALA

Journalist

COMPANY:
ASBL Oisillons Group

COUNTRY:
Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

When Flore Kayala entered mining, she was afraid to speak up. Surrounded by men who seemed to have all the answers, the Congolese journalist struggled to make her voice heard. Yet she was determined to shed light on an industry poorly understood by the public. Trained in social communications at the Catholic University of Congo, she began as a reporter and editor before specialising in natural resource governance. A course in extractive industry governance in Cameroon proved a turning point, giving her the confidence to tackle complex issues such as mining taxation, often considered a male-dominated area in the sector.

Determined to make mining more transparent, Flore founded Oisillons Infos, an independent media platform bringing the DRC's mineral wealth under greater public scrutiny. Through Oisillons Group and its Natural Resources Desk, she has built a network of more than 65 journalists across Kinshasa, Lualaba and Katanga, training them to investigate mining revenues, taxation and accountability. She has also coordinated GIZ-funded investigative journalism workshops. Her work earned her the GIZ Digital Award in 2022 and Civil Society Prize in 2023, recognising her contribution to public awareness and mining governance.

Flore is equally determined to amplify women's voices in mining. Her reporting exposes the precarious conditions facing women at mine sites, while her advocacy pushes for their inclusion in decisions about mineral wealth. She is now mapping women across the DRC's mining sector to make their contributions more visible. Her next ambition is to build a newsroom where women journalists use their microphones and pens to tell the stories of other women in mining. Once afraid to speak up herself, Flore is determined to ensure that other women are heard.

> “Accept the job, ask a lot of questions, work hard and lean in!”



SOPHIE KELLERMANN

Head Sustainable Metals & Minerals

COMPANY:
Glencore

COUNTRY:
Switzerland

Sophie Kellermann knew almost nothing about mining when she was headhunted for a legal role at Glencore. Fresh from law school and newly arrived in Switzerland, she was drawn to combining her legal background with an entirely new industry. She quickly fell for its pace, international character and “work hard but also have fun” mentality. After a decade in legal and contracts roles within ZincCopper department, her boss trusted her to take on sustainability alongside her legal work, just as the field was emerging as a commercial priority. Her success earned her the green light to build a dedicated sustainability team from scratch.

Six years later, Sophie leads an international, all-female team and has helped turn sustainability from a niche topic into a trusted part of commercial decision-making. As Head of Sustainability for ZincCopper Marketing, she works across responsible sourcing and supply-chain due diligence, navigating fast-changing regulation and market expectations. An early adopter of AI in sustainability, she also embraces startups and new ideas to improve how her team works. Her philosophy is pragmatic: sustainability and commercial success are strongest when they go hand in hand.

Positive, forward-thinking and empathetic, she brings the same mindset to leadership. According to a collaborator, where others see problems, Sophie sees opportunities. Calm under pressure, she helps others turn challenges into progress. She listens, shares knowledge and makes time for others, while supporting young women and smaller companies in the industry. Sophie hopes to leave behind trusted, high-performing teams and a realistic approach to sustainability. Her personality tagline captures it: “Bridging people together, simplifying complexity and creating value.”



"Don't wait for the industry to be ready for you, help build the version of it that is."

STEFANIE KLEIN

Group Diversity & Inclusion (DEI) Manager / Women4Metals Initiative Lead

COMPANY:
Aurubis AG

COUNTRY:
Germany

"Steffi, for the first time I feel like I can actually be a woman in this industry." Of all the milestones in Stefanie Klein's 16 years in metals, those words from a colleague have stayed with her. They capture what drives her: changing an industry historically built around men so women can enter, belong and progress. Yet Stefanie never planned a career in metals. Working in wholesale and trade, a conversation with a woman in the sector changed her path 16 years ago. "Women attract other women into industries like this," she says. "Visible role models matter more than any recruiting campaign."

Taking the lead of Women4Metals in 2022 gave Stefanie "a real lever to change something, not just talk about it". Now Group Diversity & Inclusion Manager at Aurubis, she is turning advocacy into structural change. She has introduced workplace assessments to identify barriers for women, built networks across sites and functions, and is rolling out a Female Readiness Roadmap. Her approach is pragmatic: use data to expose gaps, then turn evidence into action. "Give people a reason that's concrete, not a slogan," she says, "and they change faster than the systems around them do."

Progress can be slow, particularly when resistance lies in ingrained ways of thinking. Stefanie challenges those assumptions while bringing people with her, even "the ones who didn't want to come". Ultimately, she wants Women4Metals to work itself out of a job: for women's career progression to become an expectation rather than an exception, and inclusion a leadership responsibility rather than a women's issue. "Fix the system, not the women."

“My work is to transform systems, not adapt to them.”



KADIATOU KONATÉ

Human rights Advisor

COMPANY:
Rio Tinto SimFer

COUNTRY:
Guinea

When Kadiatou Konaté returned to work just two months after giving birth, she faced a difficult challenge. Balancing breastfeeding with a new career in mining, she relied on her mother for childcare, visiting during breaks to feed her daughter. A month later, a week-long mine-site assignment meant temporarily interrupting breastfeeding, which she resumed upon her return. The experience strengthened her conviction that no woman should have to sacrifice motherhood for professional ambition. For the young Guinean feminist, who had spent years fighting discrimination and violence against women, it reinforced her determination to change the system from within.

At just 25, Kadiatou has already spent a decade campaigning for girls’ rights. In 2016, she cofounded the Club des Jeunes Filles Leaders de Guinée (The Guinean Young Women Leaders’ Club), helping build a network of more than 500 girls and support over 600 survivors of gender-based violence. Joining Rio Tinto in 2023 marked a leap from activism into corporate mining. Initially struggling to find her feet, she invested in professional development, building confidence without compromising her values. “Every day, I continue to choose authenticity, and I consider that one of life’s greatest freedoms,” she says. Now Human Rights Advisor at Rio Tinto SimFer, she strengthens human rights protections through contractor audits, workplace training and contributions to the Simandou project’s Gender Strategy.

Her activism extends outside mining. In 2024, she founded MALAFF (Centre for Leadership and Support for Girls and Women), supporting girls’ education, health and dignity, while her book Les Mères de la Liberté (Mothers of Freedom) restores women overlooked in Guinea’s independence history. With more than 38,000 LinkedIn followers, she amplifies women’s voices and challenges stereotypes. Determined to make mining safer and more inclusive, Kadiatou strives to be “the woman you needed when you were younger, and open the door for those who will come after you.”



"If at first you don't succeed, try, try again."

LAURA KONKEL

Senior Counsel

COMPANY:
Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP

COUNTRY:
USA

Mining sits at the intersection of almost everything that interests Laura Konkel: complex transactions, geopolitics, technological innovation and tangible economic impact. With a background in international relations, intelligence and international security, and law, she found in mining a natural fit. Her early legal career combined M&A, mining and national security, before critical minerals sharpened that focus. Drawn to projects that strengthen communities and supply chains, Laura has built her career where law, finance, government and mining meet.

Laura is Senior Counsel at Akin and at the forefront of a new model for critical-minerals finance. Advising at the Pentagon and leading multi-billion-dollar pipelines, she is widely recommended as lead counsel in the sector. She advised Vulcan Elements, one of the largest US rare-earth magnet manufacturers, on its formation and financing, navigating multiple stakeholders and evolving priorities. "Laura handled that complexity with a level of focus and control that was critical to the outcome," says one industry peer. Beyond individual deals, she helps shape the conversation around mining's future, particularly government funding for strategic resources. "She is not just participating in the evolution of the sector, she is actively shaping it."

Described as a "super connector", Laura gives junior professionals meaningful roles on major deals and opens doors for young people across mining, law and finance. Colleagues describe someone who sets high standards but notices the late nights, thanks her teams and brings people with her. Laura wants to build the legal and financial foundations for the next generation of critical-minerals projects and a clearer path for women to lead them. "The world cannot build its future without mining, but mining must earn its place in that future."

> “You belong in this industry, and your contributions will make it stronger, safer, and more inclusive.”



DR CATHERINE KUUPOL KUUTOR

Tarkwa Mine Manager

COMPANY:
Gold Fields Ghana Ltd

COUNTRY:
Ghana

When Catherine Kuupol Kuutor entered mining in Ghana, even finding somewhere to change was a challenge. One of only two women in her department, she shared changing rooms and washrooms with male colleagues and repeatedly made the case for separate facilities. “We felt like intruders in a space that should have been inclusive,” she recalls. Twenty years later, Catherine is the first woman to lead Ghana’s largest surface mine, her “proudest career moment”. Her journey began almost by chance: after missing out on her first-choice university programme, an older metallurgy student suggested Minerals Engineering, a subject she had never heard of. She took his advice, starting a career that would take her from laboratory metallurgist to Manager of Gold Fields’ Tarkwa Mine.

Catherine’s rise was built on technical depth and growing responsibility. She has led gold processing, tailings management and plant optimisation while completing a PhD alongside senior operational roles. She was awarded PhD in 2024, the year she took charge at Tarkwa Mine. Combining those demands with motherhood was not easy, and she credits her husband Robert and wider family with supporting her through years of night-shift work. “Family is my anchor,” she says.

Having broken barriers herself, Catherine is determined to ease the path for others. She mentors young professionals and founded the Catherine Kuupol Kuutor Award at the University of Mines and Technology (UMaT), recognising academic excellence and supporting women in Minerals Engineering. Her ambition is an industry where competence outweighs perception and opportunities are fairly allocated. Her advice to young women reflects her own journey: “Step boldly into mining, carry yourself with confidence, establish your presence, and focus on creating meaningful impact that no one can deny.”



"Do not wait until you feel completely ready: build your expertise, take the opportunity, speak up, and leave the door open wider for the women behind you."

DR NIKKY LABRANCHE

Dust and Respiratory Health Programme Lead

COMPANY:
The University of Queensland

COUNTRY:
Australia

In 2010, an explosion at the Upper Big Branch coal mine in the USA killed 29 miners. For Nikky LaBranche, the tragedy was deeply personal: she had completed her first mining placement there in 2001. It marked a turning point in her career, making "preventing occupational harm" the "purpose behind everything I do", she recalls. Originally drawn to mining by the promise of adventure and international opportunities, Nikky found a deeper purpose in protecting those working underground. Over more than two decades, she has built a career spanning mining operations, government and research, driven by a determination to make mining safer.

A mining engineer "powered by curiosity, purpose and a chronic inability to say no to a good idea", Nikky is now Dust and Respiratory Health Programme Lead at the University of Queensland's Sustainable Minerals Institute. Challenging the assumption that meeting regulatory dust limits protects workers, she pioneered a method to analyse individual particles, revealing risks conventional monitoring can miss. Her findings are helping reshape Queensland's coal mine dust control standards, shifting the focus from compliance to prevention. Her work has earned national innovation and health and safety awards.

What strikes her colleagues most is her resilience. Nikky completed her PhD while managing a multimillion-dollar research portfolio and raising a young family, despite losing her home in the 2022 Queensland floods. An AusIMM Board Director, she champions emerging professionals and inclusion, while her annual Dust and Respiratory Health Forum attracts participants from 20 countries. Her ultimate goal is clear: that no miner develops a preventable lung disease because the industry lacked the knowledge or courage to act in time.

> “Embrace all the opportunities the industry throws at you.”



CALLIOPE LALOUSIS

Chief Operating Officer

COMPANY:
Deswik – a Sandvik company

COUNTRY:
United Kingdom

“I ended up in mining by accident.” A civil engineer by training, Calliope Lalousis entered the industry through a graduate role, designing structures for mining and minerals processing, the first step in a career shaped by unexpected opportunities. A graduate development programme at Hatch allowed her to explore different roles and build new skills over almost a decade. The experience “really suited my personality”, she says. That adaptability led her to Deswik in 2011, then an unknown start-up. Almost 25 years after entering mining, she is Chief Operating Officer (COO) of the global mine-planning technology business, now part of Sandvik’s Digital Mining Technologies division.

At Deswik, Calliope moved from mine planning and financial modelling into regional management, before taking on global leadership. Today, she oversees global operations, helping turn sophisticated digital tools into practical solutions that enable mining teams to plan and operate more effectively. Her work bridges engineering, technology and strategy. “She is helping accelerate the industry’s transition to a more intelligent, technology-enabled future,” says an industry peer.

Calliope has been the only woman in a room of men more times than she can remember. Sometimes, “it has been lonely.” While her male colleagues were supportive, the experience showed her the importance of having other women in the room, and of making them visible. Through five years with Women in Mining UK, she supported partnerships promoting networking, mentoring and career development. Now she is focused on developing others while preserving Deswik’s people-centred culture. “Success for me has always been about the people I interact with every day,” she says. After a career shaped by unexpected opportunities, Calliope wants to help others embrace theirs.



"Build strong networks, stay curious, and be confident in the value you bring."

ANNE LAUENROTH

Managing Director BDI Raw Materials Committee, Senior Expert Raw Materials

COMPANY:
Federation of German Industries (BDI)

COUNTRY:
Germany

Anne Lauenroth did not enter mining through a mine site or a geology degree. She came to it through policy. When raw materials became part of her brief at the Federation of German Industries (BDI), she had to learn about mining fast. "What began as a professional necessity soon turned into genuine fascination," she says. Anne discovered a world where geology, technology and global economics converge: "the invisible foundation of modern life". After a career in European and international policy, including more than six years at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs, Anne's move from the think-tank world into industry representation showed her first-hand how policy decisions affect companies, supply chains and raw-material security.

At BDI, Anne has made that connection between policy and industry her focus. A peer describes her as a "central architect of Europe's resource security strategy", bridging "the gap between high-level policy and industrial reality" and helping ensure industry's voice was heard in Berlin and Brussels during the development of the EU Critical Raw Materials Act. Three years with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) also deepened her work on development policy and sub-Saharan Africa. Today, she works to strengthen raw-materials policy in Germany and the EU, advance international partnerships and drive innovation from exploration and mining to processing and recycling.

For Anne, securing raw materials is not simply about supply. Her goal is to do it sustainably, creating value for industry, society and local communities. She wants mining to become smarter, cleaner and more inclusive, using automation, electrification and innovation to reduce its environmental footprint. It reflects an approach she sums up as: "Curious by nature, collaborative by choice, solution-driven by instinct." Behind it is a simpler conviction: "There's always a way."

"Be the change you want to see."



DR LYNDA LAWSON

Senior Research Fellow

COMPANY:
The University of Queensland's Global Centre for Mineral Security in the Sustainable Minerals Institute

COUNTRY:
Australia

Lynda Lawson was in her twenties when she first watched molten copper being poured at Mount Isa Mines in Australia. The image stayed with her, symbolising "the power and beauty of minerals and their capacity to transform human development." Decades later, that fascination has become a mission: ensuring mining's benefits reach some of the industry's most overlooked workers, particularly women in artisanal and small-scale mining. Driven by curiosity and compassion, Lynda has built a career bridging research and practical action, helping women gain the skills and opportunities to shape their own futures.

Today, Lynda is Senior Research Fellow at the University of Queensland's Global Centre for Mineral Security in the Sustainable Minerals Institute, specialising in gender equality and mineral security. Awarded in 2020, her PhD drew on seven years of fieldwork in Madagascar and Thailand, exploring women's roles in gemstone supply chains. In Madagascar, she helped establish training and a gemstone-cutting and jewellery-making centre to expand women's economic opportunities. Her reach has since grown globally. Through the World Bank-supported Delve Exchange, she helped connect more than 3,000 artisanal miners across 71 countries, contributing to a miner-led ASM Academy. Since 2012, she has also trained and mentored mining professionals across Africa.

Described as curious, committed and compassionate, Lynda believes lasting change starts with listening to miners, not imposing outside solutions. Through training, mentoring, and knowledge sharing, she empowers women to drive change in their communities. Now focused on mineral security and women's health and safety, she challenges the use of the male body as the default standard for mine-safety. For Lynda, the priority is to "move beyond tokenism" and remove the barriers to women's full participation.



> “The quality of our discoveries will always reflect the quality of our people. Invest in both.”

MAGGIE LAYMAN

Vice President, Exploration

COMPANY:
Tectonic Metals Inc.

COUNTRY:
Canada

Maggie Layman had a geological model she believed in. Acting on it meant significantly expanding a drill programme and accepting the risk if she was wrong. She backed the geology, rallied her team and watched the drilling validate the model into a gold deposit. The decision cemented her confidence as a geologist and leader. Drawn to geology by science, the outdoors and exploring new places, Maggie had found an industry combining all three. Over two decades, that curiosity took her from field geology to senior exploration leadership across North America.

At Barkerville Gold Mines and later Osisko Development, Maggie rose from Exploration Manager to Vice President of Exploration, leading a 95-person team through more than 700,000 metres of drilling at the Cariboo Gold Project in British Columbia. As one peer noted, “her technical achievements are exceptional” and is testament to her progression. She advanced Cariboo to feasibility, defining two million ounces of gold reserves and 3.3 million ounces of resources. During the transition to Osisko, she was “the person who held the Cariboo Gold Project together”, recalls another peer. Her work earned her the Eira Thomas Award in 2021 and AME’s Spud Huestis Award in 2023. After leading exploration for Teck, she became Vice President, Exploration at Tectonic Metals in May 2026.

For Maggie, however, “people are at the centre of everything”. For more than a decade, she has mentored and volunteered through the Association for Mineral Exploration (AME), while championing inclusive teams and opportunities for others. “Maggie is direct!” says a colleague. When something is unfair, she speaks up; when others need support, she “holds the door open”. Her goal is for people to leave her teams more confident than when they arrived: valued, challenged and empowered to grow.

> “Keep an open mind and trust in your potential; with curiosity and determination, you can be outstanding in any field, mining absolutely included.”



DR LI LI

Associate professor

COMPANY:
Dalian University of Technology

COUNTRY:
China

On Australian mine sites, Li Li was often one of the few woman, the youngest person in the room, and the only Chinese female engineer with a PhD. Despite a doctorate in rock mechanics, she still had to prove herself in an industry where site experience often outweighed academic qualifications. Having arrived in Australia as an international student, Li had already navigated language and cultural barriers. Now, she earned credibility through technical precision, determination and a willingness to challenge established practices. As one collaborator observes, “she thinks like a researcher, acts like an engineer, and communicates like a strategist.”

After completing her doctorate at UNSW Sydney, Li spent five years in Australian mining, leading eight engineering projects and contributing to more than twenty others. Returning to China in 2021, she joined Dalian University of Technology as an Associate Professor, bringing her field experience into research and teaching. She developed an open-pit slope monitoring system combining real-time data with advanced numerical modelling to improve mine safety. In 2026, her expertise took her to Serbia’s Bor Copper Mine, where she advised on slope reinforcement and ground stability. Today, she is developing a platform integrating sensor, drone and on-site monitoring data to predict slope instability and help prevent failures.

For Li, advancing mining technology goes hand in hand with developing the people who will shape the industry’s future. She mentors young engineers and PhD students, opens doors to international opportunities and encourages women to trust their expertise. Her ambition is to build an industry where innovation protects lives and safety is non-negotiable. Above all, she believes that “the future of mining depends on the people we empower today.”



> “Progress rarely happens by accident; it requires sustained effort and focus.”

CYNTHIA LIM

Chief Economist and General Manager Market Analysis

COMPANY:
South32

COUNTRY:
Singapore

Naturally shy and introverted, Cynthia Lim never imagined herself as an outspoken leader. Growing up in a modest family in Singapore, she benefited from scholarships that opened opportunities otherwise beyond her reach. Her entry into mining was unplanned, but she discovered an industry combining economics, geopolitics and complex challenges. The turning point came at South32, where her involvement in diversity and inclusion gave her a cause she deeply believed in. It gave Cynthia the courage to speak up, advocate for others and find her voice.

With over 20 years in economics, including roles in Singapore’s government and at Wood Mackenzie, Cynthia is now Chief Economist and General Manager Market Analysis at South32, one of the few women to hold such a position in global mining. She has transformed forecasting into a strategic function shaping investment and risk decisions. Yet she still experiences imposter syndrome, sometimes questioning whether she belongs at the table. “Some people expect a Chief Economist to be an older Caucasian man,” she observes, “or assume women are less technical, Asian women are quieter”. Cynthia has learnt to claim her place, proving that empathy and technical authority can coexist.

As the first Singaporean woman to lead Women in Mining and Resources Singapore (WIMAR SG), President in 2023-2026, Cynthia revitalised the organisation after Covid, increasing membership revenue by 70% and tripling event participation. She has also mentored young professionals and introduced over 1,200 students to mining. For Cynthia, success lies in helping others grow. “Open doors generously,” she says. “The opportunities we create for others often endure beyond our own personal achievements.”

> “Use every experience as an opportunity to learn, grow and build the person and leader you want to be in future.”



DR LIKONGE MULENGA MAKAI

General Manager Power and Energy

COMPANY:
Konkola Copper Mines Plc

COUNTRY:
Zambia

Between 2009 and 2011, Likonge Makai Mulenga led a power reliability project at Zambia’s Konkola Copper Mines (KCM) that helped define her career. Delivered safely, on time and within budget, it improved reliability, cut costs and demonstrated the power of engineering excellence and teamwork. Likonge had discovered mining during three industrial attachments while studying engineering, drawn by its technical challenges. But succeeding in a male-dominated industry was not easy. Often judged by her gender rather than her abilities, she learned to let her results speak for themselves.

Now General Manager – Power and Energy at KCM, Likonge is spearheading efforts to make the company’s energy supply more reliable, efficient and sustainable. Within six months of taking up the role, she oversaw the commissioning of KCM’s first Power Maximum Demand SCADA system, enabling real-time electricity monitoring and control. She also championed cost-saving measures and more affordable power supply arrangements. Beyond KCM, she became the first woman to chair Zambia’s Rural Electrification Authority Board and the first African Ambassador for the IEEE Smart Village initiative, promoting sustainable energy access.

Likonge is passionate about using energy to transform lives. Through LiChi’s Community Solution Ltd, which she founded, she promotes affordable solar power while supporting education, agriculture and women’s empowerment. She also mentors young women pursuing engineering and science careers. For Likonge, leadership means creating opportunities and developing others. She hopes to be remembered as someone who “empowered people, developed future leaders, fostered collaboration”, leaving both mining operations and communities stronger.



"Dare, move forward and inspire."

PASCALINE BALBINE MAKANI OMGBA

President

COMPANY:
Association of Women in Mining of Cameroon (AFEMIC)

COUNTRY:
Cameroon

Pascaline Balbine Makani Omgba knows what it means to be overlooked. During her career in Cameroon's mining industry, she watched young professionals she had trained become her managers. Rather than accept the barriers holding women back, she set out to dismantle them. Studying geology, Pascaline was one of fewer than five women in her year group. "You immediately get the feeling that you're doing something out of the ordinary," she recalls. Entering mining in 2000, she became determined to give women a stronger voice, particularly in artisanal and small-scale mining.

Pascaline, who holds a Bachelor's degree in Earth Sciences, a Master's degree and a postgraduate diploma in Soil Science, founded the Association of Women in Mining in Cameroon (AFEMIC) in 2016, giving women miners collective representation and greater economic opportunities. As President of the Association of Women in Mining in Africa (AWIMA) from 2022 to 2024, she strengthened cooperation between Francophone and Anglophone members. She also coordinated Cameroon's national action plan to eliminate mercury in artisanal gold mining, bringing stakeholders together to promote safer practices. Her advocacy has reached international forums, including the Minamata Convention.

Pascaline "meets adversity with strategic stubbornness", says a colleague. Yet generosity and mentorship define her leadership. She shares her networks and encourages younger women to claim their place. "She makes the impossible seem achievable," says another collaborator. Now working on mercury-free technologies and investment opportunities for artisanal miners in Africa's critical minerals sector, Pascaline remains guided by her motto: "Solidarity, justice and fairness." Her ambition is to ensure future generations no longer face the barriers she encountered.

> “Your capability, talent, character and consistent performance will speak louder than stereotypes.”



LYDIE MALAIKA

General Manager Processing Operations – Luilu Refinery

COMPANY:
Glencore – Kamoto Copper Company (KCC)

COUNTRY:
Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

As a child growing up in a family of five girls, Lydie Malaika knew what she wanted to be: a metallurgist, like her father. His advice – “Be bold, be brave and challenge yourself” – stayed with her as she built a career in one of the DRC mining industry’s most male-dominated fields. After studying Metallurgical Engineering at the University of Lubumbashi, Lydie rose from metallurgical engineer and metal accountant through senior processing roles. In 2025, she became the first woman in Kamoto Copper Company’s history to reach General Manager level, taking charge of processing operations at the Luilu Refinery.

Her rise was built on technical depth and measurable results. “She doesn’t accept baseline performance, she engineers step-changes,” says a collaborator. Lydie developed mathematical models that substantially increased copper current efficiency and cobalt leaching efficiency at KCC and Metalkol, respectively, and further reduced iron contamination in cobalt hydroxide tenfold. She also built a metal-accounting system from scratch, implementing Australian Mineral Industries Research Association (AMIRA) standards. She measures leadership less by numbers than people: her proudest achievement is “empowering people to achieve results they never knew they could achieve”.

As General Manager, Lydie is opening doors for others, developing young engineers and supporting women into operational roles. She has appointed KCC’s first female maintenance manager for the WOL-Cobalt and Roasters plant and is determined to encourage more girls into mining through schools and universities. A mother of three girls, her mission is personal. Once inspired by her father to become a metallurgist, Lydie now hopes to inspire the generation behind her: “Be bold, be brave, and believe in what is possible. The sky is the limit.”



"Success is not only measured by professional achievements, but also by the values you bring, the trust you build, and the contribution you make."

LUSINE MANUCHARYAN

Senior Adviser, Sustainability and Climate Change

COMPANY:
Zangezur Copper Molybdenum Combine (ZCMC)

COUNTRY:
Armenia

Ask Lusine Manucharyan about her proudest career achievement and she points not to a project or position, but to her professional development. Over two decades, she has built expertise in sustainability and environmental management, earning a Diploma in Sustainable Business Practice, Chartered Environmentalist status and full membership of the Institute of Sustainability and Environmental Professionals. Yet her path began elsewhere. Joining an Armenian gold operation as an executive assistant in 2001, Lusine worked with technical, planning and geological teams, including three years on exploration data. Fascinated by mining's multidisciplinary nature, she found the curiosity that would shape her career.

Today, as Senior Adviser in Sustainability and Climate Change at Zangezur Copper Molybdenum Combine (ZCMC) and Founder and CEO of Resilience Sustainability Services, Lusine works to embed sustainability in mining. Her experience includes four years on a tailings dam seismic stability study alongside international experts. As External Relations Lead at the Armenian Mining and Metallurgical Association (AMMA), she also builds international partnerships and promotes responsible resource development. Her greatest challenge? Translating complex issues for decision-makers outside mining, building trust and understanding. "The greatest value of the industry is its people," she says.

Driven by collaboration and knowledge-sharing, Lusine is committed to inspiring the next generation and strengthening mining's voice in global sustainability discussions. She is developing the Global Executive Dialogue on Economic Development and Nature Protection, reflecting her conviction that both priorities can advance together. Above all, she hopes to leave a legacy of stronger partnerships and positive change. Her motto: "Leave the world better than you found it."

> “Authority cannot be gained through words; it is earned only through deep knowledge, actions and the ability to make confident decisions in critical moments.”



YELENA MARCHUKOVA

Head of Gold Extraction and Processing Plant

COMPANY:
Varvarinskoye LLP

COUNTRY:
Kazakhstan

“Yelena, take over the plant.” When Yelena Marchukova received that call from her manager in February 2018, it marked the culmination of a journey that had begun 27 years earlier on the production floor. Growing up in Rudny, Kazakhstan, near the city’s mining and processing complex, Yelena was drawn to an industry where she could see tangible results. She began as a separator operator in 1991, spending 16 years in production before joining Varvarinskoye in 2007 as a filter operator apprentice. She rose through the ranks – flotation foreman, section head, chief engineer – before being entrusted with the gold processing plant. “I know the plant from the inside,” she says.

Yelena combines strict production discipline with a conviction that “people are the heart of any production facility”. She regularly walks the plant, discussing equipment and listening to those operating it. When a shortage of specialists hit in 2024, she looked within, identifying promising employees with no previous experience and retrained them for technical roles. Dozens became operators, engineers, supervisors and foremen. She has also overseen safety improvements and technological upgrades to reduce metal losses and increase gold recovery. “Leadership always begins with respect,” she says.

Yelena knows that women in production still face an unspoken question: “Are you sure you can handle it?” After years proving her expertise in what was considered male territory, she became the first woman from a production background to head Varvarinskoye’s gold processing plant. Now she mentors employees, welcomes students and encourages young women to see mining as a place for them. “If my experience inspires even one girl to believe in herself and say, ‘Production is absolutely my place, and I will succeed,’ then every step of my journey has had deep meaning.”



"Careers are built by competence, but accelerated by courage."

ANITA MARQUES DE ANDRADE

Senior Global Manager – Operational Risk Management

COMPANY:
Alcoa

COUNTRY:
Brazil

In an industry where competitors traditionally kept their innovations to themselves, Anita Marques de Andrade helped bring more than 20 mining companies around the same table. Co-founder of Brazil's Mining Hub, she challenged the sector's reluctance to collaborate, building an innovation ecosystem that has engaged over 1,700 startups, identified 1,100 industry challenges and delivered more than 140 proofs of concept. Later President of the Hub's Council, she helped prove that competitors could achieve more by tackling common problems together. Attracted to mining by its scale and complexity, the Brazilian engineer has built her career around turning difficult challenges into practical solutions.

Trained as an environmental engineer, Anita began her mining career at Anglo American's Barro Alto nickel operation in Brazil in 2012. She progressed through risk management and innovation roles, before joining the company's London-based global team as Group Ethical Risk Principal, with responsibilities spanning Brazil, Chile, Peru, the UK, South Africa and Australia. Joining Alcoa in 2024, she played a leading role in driving its business Transformation Programme in Brazil before moving into global leadership in Operational Risk Management. She now helps shape a unified global approach to risk management, strengthening operational resilience across the company.

Often one of few women in the room, Anita learned to make her voice heard without compromising her identity. She believes mining must offer women more than entry into the industry, providing challenging assignments, international experience and decision-making opportunities. "We need to look at retention just as seriously as recruitment," she says. Passionate about developing people, she hopes to leave organisations stronger than she found them. Her favourite motto captures her philosophy: "Let your competence create your confidence."

> “Don’t do it alone: Build your supportive community one relationship at a time, seek opportunities for mentorship, be a mentor to others.”



STEPHANIE MARSHALL

Graduate Researcher

COMPANY:
University of Toronto

COUNTRY:
Canada

Stephanie Marshall’s passion for mine rehabilitation began in her own backyard in Sudbury, Ontario. In the early 1970s, her father worked as a crane operator on Inco’s tailings in Copper Cliff, where researchers were experimenting with ways to restore barren land. Inspired, he applied their techniques to the lifeless clay surrounding the family home. Within a week, vegetation appeared. Within a year, the land was green. For Stephanie, this transformation proved that mining’s environmental damage could be reversed. Fascinated by Sudbury’s regreening, she switched from biology to environmental science at university, setting her on a path into mine rehabilitation.

With more than 15 years of experience across the mining life cycle, Stephanie has built an impactful career focused on environmental stewardship and mine closure. She successfully established Glencore’s first dedicated Site Rehabilitation Team at its Sudbury operations, overseeing a closure portfolio exceeding C$130 million across more than 10 sites. In 2019, she received the inaugural Dr Jack Winch Early Career Award for her contributions to mine reclamation. But Stephanie wanted to go further. Driven by unanswered questions about mining wastewater, she returned to the University of Toronto to research sulphur compounds. In June 2026, she left Glencore to complete her master’s degree and pursue new opportunities.

Guided by courage, curiosity, and integrity, Stephanie believes leadership means creating fair opportunities for others. Having experienced gender-based barriers to career advancement, she knows the barriers women face in mining. She champions mentorship and solidarity through Women in Mining Sudbury and The Femina Collective, and others, convinced that collaboration is essential to the industry’s future. Her ambition is to leave a lasting positive impact on people and the planet: “If the table isn’t big enough, build a bigger table.”



"Never compromise your performance, never apologise for taking up space, and remember that while mentors offer guidance, you hold the pen to your own life and career."

MAHLOGONOLO MASHILE

Underground Manager

COMPANY:
Bosjesspruit Colliery – Sasol

COUNTRY:
South Africa

After exhausting night shifts at a coal mine in Witbank, Mahlogonolo Mashile would drive to Midrand to attend business classes, sometimes surviving on virtually no sleep. Secretly pursuing a postgraduate qualification while working underground, she eventually took an even bigger gamble: resigning to pursue a full-time MBA and an exchange programme at Warwick Business School in the UK, with no income or financial safety net, "because I refused to live with the regret of not having tried". Her determination had deep roots. Fascinated by geography but unwilling to settle for a conventional desk job, she had chosen mining engineering for its physical and intellectual challenges.

After starting her career at Anglo American, Mahlogonolo joined Sasol, rising through production and supervisory roles to become Underground Manager at Bosjesspruit Colliery in 2024. Responsible for production services across two shafts, she has also served as acting Mine Manager. In a male-dominated industry, she has built her authority on technical excellence, respect and authenticity, rejecting pressure to adopt an intimidating leadership style. "I learned to view myself not as a 'female leader' but as a leader, period." For Mahlogonolo, few rewards are greater than seeing others succeed. Among her proudest achievements was seeing a team member she had mentored pass his Mine Manager's Certificate of Competency demanding examination.

Mahlogonolo is also the founder and host of Mining Insight, a bi-weekly podcast bringing together executives, employees and unions to discuss safety, sustainability and ethical leadership. Through girlleadSA, she provides academic support and STEM mentorship to disadvantaged girls, with plans to expand beyond Mpumalanga into the Eastern Cape and Limpopo. Her ambition is to make women leading mining operations the norm, not the exception.

> “Life begins at the edge of your comfort zone. Try, learn and trust that everything eventually works out for the best.”



SHEEBA MASHRUWALA

Head R&D

COMPANY:
Hindustan Zinc Ltd – Vedanta Group

COUNTRY:
India

Where others see mining waste, Sheeba Mashruwala sees opportunity. As Head of R&D at Hindustan Zinc, she turns discarded materials into valuable resources. Yet mining was never part of her plan. A chemical engineer, Sheeba joined the company as a graduate trainee in 2006, knowing little about the industry. Fascinated by the combination of science, engineering and people, she embraced the challenge. Nearly two decades later, that curiosity drives her pioneering work in waste-to-wealth technologies.

A turning point came when Sheeba moved into Hindustan Zinc’s Business Transformation Office after 15 years in operations and R&D. Working with beneficiation plants, she discovered how small improvements could deliver substantial business value. The experience transformed her from problem-solver to value creator. Returning to R&D with a commercial mindset, she developed practical solutions that combine sustainability with profitability. Holding four Indian and three international patents in metal recovery and waste valorisation, she has pioneered technologies to turn smelter waste into paving blocks, supporting local communities. Her work also spans silver recovery and critical minerals.

When Sheeba faces a new challenge, she draws strength from her younger self and the lessons of a mother who taught her resilience, perseverance and self-belief. Those qualities define her leadership today. Courageous yet humble, calm under pressure and deeply empathetic, she challenges conventions while empowering others. Her peers describe her as a dedicated mentor to women and young professionals who creates opportunities, encourages independent thinking and ensures talent is recognised. “Mining has taught me that people are the industry’s greatest resource,” she says. Sheeba measures progress through both the innovations she delivers and the people she helps grow.



"Africa cannot fully realise the value of its mineral wealth while overlooking its women."

PHILLIS MBINDA

Founder

COMPANY:
MajiYeTU

COUNTRY:
Kenya

Phillis Mbinda's perspective on mining changed when she visited two gemstone mines in Kenya. Trained in chemical engineering, she was fascinated by transforming raw minerals into valuable products. But witnessing the safety risks, poor water management and environmental challenges facing artisanal and small-scale miners opened her eyes to the industry's wider responsibilities. She realised science could do more than improve mineral processing: it could protect communities and restore damaged environments. "For me, this is science with heart," she says. That conviction led her to become an environmental scientist, hydrogeologist and founder of MajiYeTU, an initiative advancing sustainable water management and mine rehabilitation.

Through MajiYeTU, Phillis is developing affordable technologies to treat contaminated water, remediate mine tailings and restore degraded soils. Combining environmental geochemistry with nature-based solutions, she works with artisanal miners, mining companies and government institutions to improve environmental standards. She has also contributed field-based scientific evidence to support environmental decision-making through engagement with Kenyan government ministries. A researcher at Germany's TU Bergakademie Freiberg, she has championed African-led environmental innovation at international forums, including the Africa Green Economy Summit, and the Africa Climate Summit 2 (ACS2) at the African Union.

Entering technical environments dominated by men, Phillis had to fight to prove her competence. That experience strengthened her determination to open doors for others. As a lecturer at Taita Taveta University, she mentors future engineers, some of whom have become mining inspectors and innovators. Seeing them succeed ranks among her proudest achievements. Now aiming to expand MajiYeTU across Africa, she hopes to leave a legacy of cleaner water, healthier soils and empowered communities. "I want to be known as the girl who dared to dream!"

"Be brave enough to bring your whole person and perspective into the room."



DR ROBINA MCCANN

Vice President of Health

COMPANY:
Anglo American

COUNTRY:
United Kingdom

A doctor by training, Robina McCann entered mining by accident. Her first medical posting took her to Mount Isa, a remote Australian mining town, where an industry she knew largely through mainstream media suddenly became about people. "What attracted me was the people: resilient, practical, hardworking and often remarkably stoic in challenging environments," she says. A later posting at a mine in Ghana proved pivotal, teaching her to listen to local teams and understand culture and context before designing solutions. The experience shaped her move from clinical occupational health into global health leadership.

Robina went on to senior roles across mining and oil and gas before joining Anglo American, where she is now Vice President Health. With degrees in science, medicine and healthcare management, she has kept learning throughout her career, adding qualifications in occupational health and safety, sustainability and executive leadership. Her focus has broadened too: from treating individuals to designing systems that protect entire workforces. She is now developing health-related data models and AI-enabled architecture for more proactive, predictive health systems. "I hope to see a mining industry that is more human-centred but fully technology-enabled."

Robina describes leadership as "integrity, courage and service", but has had to fight to make her voice heard, facing casual misogyny disguised as humour and learning the language of business to demonstrate the value of health and wellbeing. Today, she mentors others and advocates for more inclusive workplaces. Her ultimate ambition is to make health and wellbeing inseparable from operational excellence, and eliminate occupational disease from mining. "Mining is ultimately about its people," she says. For Robina, protecting them and their communities is fundamental to a stronger, more responsible industry.



"Let's make responsible mining something we do together, not something we compete over."

SUSANNAH MCLAREN

Head of Responsible Sourcing & Sustainability

COMPANY:
Cobalt Institute

COUNTRY:
United Kingdom

Susannah McLaren did not choose mining for the mining. She chose it for the problems, and the chance to make a difference. "I was drawn to the opportunity to help solve some of society's most complex challenges," she says, in an industry where the energy transition, economic development and human rights intersect. Since entering the minerals space, her work alongside partners in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), including those supporting artisanal mining, has fundamentally shaped her approach. "The most effective leadership isn't about having the answers or telling people what to do, it's about listening first," she says.

Today, drawing on a 25-year career, as Head of Responsible Sourcing & Sustainability at the Cobalt Institute, Susannah operates where geopolitical pressure, social risk and commercial interests meet. "Susannah has an exceptional ability to anticipate where the field is going and to act early," says a former collaborator. An early advocate for a just transition in cobalt, she established the Cobalt Learning Group, enabling companies in the cobalt industry to share experience, learn from experts and strengthen responsible sourcing practices. She also created the Cobalt Downstream Engagement Group, breaking ground by bringing automotive and electronics companies into direct dialogue with producers and promoting shared responsibility across the supply chain.

Gender bias "undoubtedly held me back earlier in my career", she says. Yet it was in extractives, and later critical minerals, that Susannah found an industry where she could thrive. Now Chair of the Board of the Global Battery Alliance, she is applying her collaborative approach across global battery supply chains, strengthening transparency and traceability while continuing her work in the DRC. Her ambition is to ensure producing countries, workers, communities and artisanal miners are partners in shaping mining's future.

> “Everyone is equal, everyone is capable.”



ALICIA MILNE

President & Chief Executive Officer

COMPANY:
Q2 Metals Corp

COUNTRY:
Canada

When Q2 Metals’ flagship asset delivered disappointing drilling results amid a global lithium downturn, Alicia Milne faced a choice: retreat or start again. She chose the latter, backing a new lithium asset: the Cisco project in Quebec, Canada. The decision paid off. Cisco became what Alicia describes as the fourth-largest spodumene lithium deposit in the world, a defining turnaround for a leader whose career has been built on perseverance.

Alicia’s route to the top was far from conventional. Drawn to mining because securities law offered something “new and more exciting” from the legal careers her friends were pursuing, she spent more than two decades working with junior exploration companies, building expertise in corporate and securities law, compliance and governance before moving into board roles and, eventually, becoming CEO in 2020. Yet the transition came with self-doubt in a male-dominated industry. “The biggest challenge I found was to overcome that feeling that I didn’t belong in the C-suite, that I didn’t deserve to be a CEO,” she says.

Alicia now wants to take Cisco from discovery to a world-class lithium operation, but her ambitions go beyond building a mine. Her goal is for the project to become a model for responsible resource development, built to high environmental standards and through genuine collaboration with local communities. A former director of Women in Mining BC and a long-time mentor, she also wants more women to recognise that they belong in the industry. Her advice reflects her own journey: “On the hardest days, keep going as it’ll get better.”



"Never give up, never give in, enjoy every moment and always do your absolute best every day."

DR KYM L MORTON

Chief Executive Officer and Consulting Mining Hydrogeologist

COMPANY:
KLM Consulting Services Pty Ltd

COUNTRY:
South Africa

Deep beneath Botswana's diamond mines lies one of Kym Morton's most enduring achievements. In the 1980s, the hydrogeologists' team discovered deep aquifers supplying the Orapa, Letlhakane and Damtshaa mines. Four decades later, they remain productive. Kym's mining journey began in 1980 at Namibia's Rössing Uranium mine, when the open pit was just two benches deep. Excited by the prospect of helping build a major mining operation, she embarked on a career that would make her a leading authority on mine water management.

In 1989, Kym founded KLM Consulting Services, which has since advised more than 300 mines worldwide. Her decade-long research with De Beers on block cave dewatering and mud rush prevention earned her a PhD from Imperial College London in 2008, helping make underground mining safer. Her water management strategies have also delivered substantial savings, including US$28 million annually at an Australian open-pit mine. She broke another barrier by becoming the first woman appointed to the Board of South Africa's Council for Geoscience in its 100-year history.

Pragmatic, curious and determined, Kym has never shied away from challenging conventional thinking. Once struggling to be heard in meetings, she earned respect through expertise and perseverance. A commercial pilot and flying instructor with over 8,000 hours on fixed-wing aircrafts, she plans to fly around Mount Everest in a King Air 200. Today, she is developing international guidelines with industry leaders to prevent underground water inrushes and mudrushes. Determined to elevate water management to board level, where she believes it belongs alongside HR, IT and finance, she insists: "If water is managed accurately then water inrushes and mudrushes will stop."

> “When you receive opportunities, use them to lift others as well”



EPIPHANIE MURORUNKWERE

Site Manager at Rutongo Mines

COMPANY:
Trinity Metals

COUNTRY:
Rwanda

In 2013, Epiphanie Murorunkwere worked as a storekeeper at Rwanda’s Rutongo Mines, watching foreign experts perform technical jobs she dreamed of doing. Four years later, she returned with an engineering degree as the mine’s first Rwandan professional underground surveyor, and the first woman in the role. Mining ran in her blood. Her grandfather had worked at Rutongo in the 1920s, followed by her father, who reminded her of the family legacy she carried. Entering underground tunnels as the only woman among hundreds of men was daunting, but empowering. “It also gave me the confidence to prove that women can excel in technical and demanding mining roles,” she recalls.

Driven by discipline, Epiphanie rose from Mine Surveyor to Senior Surveyor and, in 2024, Site Manager. She broadened her expertise in geology, mineral processing and laboratory operations, gaining an understanding of the mining value chain. Her collaborative approach delivered results: in 2025, her site won Trinity Metals’ Best Site of the Year award for safety and production. Guided by integrity and fairness, she welcomes ideas from every level of the workforce. “Leadership is not about having all the answers; it is about learning from others and helping others grow,” she says.

Epiphanie is also opening doors for women in mining. When she joined Rutongo, just 38 of its 2,000 employees were women. She founded the Women’s Association, now boasting more than 300 members across three sites. Her advocacy has helped secure separate changing facilities, childcare support and suitable workwear. As an elected employee representative and mentor, she helps others develop their skills and advance their careers, putting her motto into practice: “Learn always, grow, give back.”



"I believe that a country's natural resources belong to its citizens."

SHQIPE NEZIRI VELA

Programme Manager

COMPANY:
Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI)

COUNTRY:
Norway

Why do some countries turn their natural wealth into prosperity, while others struggle despite abundant resources? That question drew Shqipe Neziri Vela towards mining. Growing up in Kosovo, with its long mining history and mineral potential, she became fascinated not by extraction, but by what happens to the wealth it creates. "Natural resources are a public trust," she says. After moving from journalism into international development, energy and anti-corruption, a defining moment came at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), where she led the first corruption-risk assessments of Kosovo's energy and extractive industries. It cemented her belief in the connection between natural resources, strong institutions and public trust.

Today, as Programme Manager at the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) International Secretariat in Oslo, Shqipe supports transparency and accountability across more than 55 resource-rich countries. Her work builds on two decades in energy, governance and anti-corruption, including with the World Bank and US Department of State. Yet her approach is as much about people as systems: colleagues describe her "calm determination" and ability to combine expertise with empathy.

That focus on people also drives Shqipe's work for women in mining. Having felt early in her career that she had to prove her expertise, in 2022 she co-founded Kosovo Women in Energy and Mining, the first such professional network in the Western Balkans, connecting women with mentors and opportunities. She also mentors internationally. Her legacy, Shqipe says, is not about titles, but "the people I have supported, the institutions I have helped strengthen, and the pathways I have helped create for future generations."

> “Let’s build a mining industry where women have an equal voice, communities have a stronger future, and the earth is not only mined but renewed.”



NINE NOVISUNDARI

Manager – Industrial Relations and HR Services

COMPANY:
INPEX Masela LTD.

COUNTRY:
Indonesia

For Nine Novisundarie, bringing more women into mining is not enough. What matters is whether they have a voice, opportunities to advance and a genuine chance to fulfil their potential. It is a conviction that has shaped her career spanning more than 25 years in Indonesia’s energy and natural resources industries. Attracted to the sector by the challenge of succeeding in a male-dominated environment, Nine set out to prove herself. Along the way, she discovered her true calling: helping others grow. Her philosophy, which she calls “humanising the human”, puts dignity, respect and sincerity at the heart of leadership.

Nine has applied this philosophy throughout a career spanning Hess, BP, Petrogas and INPEX, where she is now Manager – Industrial Relations and HR Services. A certified leadership and career coach, she has helped organisations develop talent and foster inclusion. She has also chaired the Learning & Development Task Force for Indonesia’s upstream oil and gas sector and co-founded the HR Migas Community. Through Women in Mining and Energy Indonesia (WiME), she mentors women, particularly in eastern Indonesia, helping them build confidence, overcome barriers and advance their careers.

Her commitment extends into the community. Through the YENA Foundation, which she founded, she promotes social awareness and community support, including an initiative offering free meals to those in need. Looking ahead, she wants mining to move from counting women to giving them genuine opportunities to lead and thrive. Her ambition is to help others discover their potential and achieve their goals, guided by a motto that captures her approach to life: “Rise with purpose, give with heart, make an impact.”



"Take care of the people and the rest will follow."

THERESA NYABEZE

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Culture Leader

COMPANY:
Vale Base Metals

COUNTRY:
Canada

When Theresa Nyabeze entered mining, one of her first challenges was simply finding personal protective equipment (PPE) that fitted. But the problem went deeper. As one of the few Black female engineers in Sudbury, Canada, she struggled with a sense of belonging and a lack of representative role models, deliberately building a network of mentors to help navigate her career. Having moved from Zimbabwe to Sudbury, Theresa was surrounded by an industry whose impact on the community helped shape her path. At university, she was drawn to mining engineering's combination of maths, science and societal impact.

Over a 25-year career, Theresa has worked across mine planning, design, technical governance and operations, but becoming an underground supervisor proved a defining experience. Leading crews at Vale's Canadian mines showed her how engineering plans translate into reality and deepened her appreciation for the people executing them. "People working together effectively are the heartbeat of our industry," she says. That conviction eventually took Theresa from technical roles into her current position as DEI Culture Leader at Vale Base Metals, where she brings together her understanding of operations, people and organisational change.

Theresa has since turned the barriers she encountered into pathways for others. She built the networks she once lacked, and now mentors women, Black professionals and newcomers. As Chair of the Canadian Institute of Mining, Metallurgy and Petroleum's Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee, she also helps shape industry conversations on inclusion. She also visits schools with her children's book, Underground! My Mining Adventure showing young people that engineers and underground miners can look different from the stereotypes they can imagine. Her philosophy is simple: "Take care of the people and the rest will follow."

> “You may encounter stereotypes or barriers, but do not allow them to define your potential.”



ESTEFANNY PARDO GUTIÉRREZ

Director of Corporate Mining

COMPANY:
Colombia’s Ministry of Mines and Energy

COUNTRY:
Colombia

Luz Estefanny Pardo Gutiérrez taught herself English to open doors that once seemed firmly closed. Born in Villavicencio, Colombia, and raised by a single mother, she faced profound adversity, including the trauma of her mother’s kidnapping during her childhood. Determined to become a lawyer, she left her hometown to study in Bogotá, overcoming financial and personal obstacles along the way. Her determination eventually took her to international law firm Holland & Knight, where she built a successful career advising mining and energy companies.

Estefanny brought that same determination to Women in Mining Colombia, helping transform a largely volunteer-run association into a financially sustainable organisation. As President, she secured its first cooperation agreement with an international development organisation, opening opportunities for women in small-scale mining communities across Bajo Cauca, Segovia and Chocó. She also spearheaded its financial formalisation, securing its first sustainable income. Her influence reached academia: she co-authored and coordinated La equidad de género en el sector minero colombiano (2024), a pioneering book on gender equality in mining published by Universidad Externado de Colombia, bringing together diverse voices to help reshape the industry.

In September 2026, Estefanny moved from private legal practice into government, becoming Director of Corporate Mining at Colombia’s Ministry of Mines and Energy. Now working to strengthen formal mining, improve transparency and promote responsible practices, she remains driven by a commitment to fairness and opportunity. Her vision extends to future generations: “Mining’s true legacy should not be measured only by what we extract, but by the value we create for people, communities and future generations.”



"Trust your knowledge, stay true to who you are and don't wait for permission to lead."

JAZMIN PARRA ANCARES

Change Management Leader

COMPANY:
Hexagon Mining

COUNTRY:
Chile

As mining moved towards Industry 4.0, Jazmin Parra Ancares saw a risk others had overlooked: women could be left behind, not for lack of talent, but access to the digital skills the transformation demanded. She responded by co-creating the Women's Digital Academy in Mining, a free programme combining technical training, female role models and peer networking for women across the mining ecosystem. "She did not wait for the system to change: she built the system that was missing," says an industry peer.

Growing up amid Chile's mining heritage, Jazmin was drawn to the industry by its impact on the country's economy and communities. Over a 20-year career spanning mining, energy, industry and technology, including roles at ENAMI, Duke Energy and Siemens/ Innomotics, she has increasingly brought together sustainability, inclusion and technology. From a pandemic-era pilot, the Academy expanded to Peru and Mexico and has trained more than 500 women from over 50 companies across seven editions. Jazmin included artificial intelligence from the first edition, years before AI became an industry priority, evidence of what a former collaborator calls her "anticipatory vision".

For Jazmin, digital transformation and inclusion are ultimately about people. Empathy, which she describes as her best quality, shapes her leadership and drive for greater inclusion. Inspired by resilient Latin American women, including her mother, she wants to leave "every process a little more human". Her message to mining captures that philosophy: "Mining's future will be built by those who lead with empathy as much as expertise."

"The hardest person you'll ever have to lead is yourself."



DR HEIDI ELAINE PASS

Founder & Principal Consultant

COMPANY:
Elemental Insight Consulting

COUNTRY:
Australia

At 22, Heidi Pass spent eight weeks at sea, working 12-hour night shifts alongside leading scientists. As the first Canadian undergraduate to work aboard the Ocean Drilling Programme's scientific drillship, she was already charting an unconventional course. "Adventure + science = YES!" she recalls. The first in her family to earn a university degree, Heidi discovered her passion for geology almost by accident, taking an elective course while studying chemistry. Fascinated by the stories rocks could tell, she later moved halfway around the world to Australia for a PhD in economic geology, knowing almost no one there.

Described by a colleague as "a powerhouse of intellect and empathy", Heidi became one of the few women to serve as Chief Geochemist at a major mining company. At Gold Fields, she secured investment for a geochemistry programme across four Australian mine sites, improving exploration and contributing to gold discoveries. Redundancy from Gold Fields pushed her to back herself: encouraged by a mentor, she founded Elemental Insight, now a successful geoscience consultancy. She later helped commercialise pioneering 3D core-scanning technology at Orexplore Technologies.

A 2019 expedition to Antarctica with 100 women in science transformed Heidi's perspective: for once, she was in the majority. She has also championed inclusion through the Australian Institute of Geoscientists' mentoring programme and first diversity policy, and Women in Technology WA. She enjoys "challenging the status quo" and, often the only woman in the room sees "pioneer", "first", "leader" and "trailblazer" as synonyms. Her career has been defined by stepping into spaces where women aren't expected and creating extraordinary change there.



> “Women are ready; the industry simply needs to create more opportunities for them to thrive.”

LAURA QUEIROZ

Director of Government Relations and Commerce

COMPANY:
British Consulate General Belo Horizonte

COUNTRY:
Brazil

The 2015 Mariana tailings dam disaster changed the course of Laura Queiroz’s life. Growing up in Minas Gerais, Brazil’s mining heartland, mining was part of her family’s story. But the tragedy, which struck while she was studying Environmental Engineering, convinced her the industry needed to change. “Meaningful change comes from working within the sector rather than standing outside it,” she says. Determined to make mining safer and more sustainable, Laura joined the British Consulate in Belo Horizonte as a mining intern in 2018.

Seven years later, Laura became the first Black woman Director at the British Consulate in Belo Horizonte. Now Director of Government Relations and Trade, she leads the UK’s critical minerals agenda in Brazil, strengthening cooperation between governments, industry and academia. She helped reposition Brazil as a strategic UK partner, organising a critical minerals mission involving more than 200 participants. She also co-created Zero Carbon Mining, bringing together over 11 companies to accelerate decarbonisation, and advanced UK–Brazil cooperation on tailings safety. Her work reflects her conviction that lasting change in mining depends on collaboration across borders and disciplines.

Often the only woman in the room, Laura knows the pressure of constantly having to prove herself. She co-founded Pretas na Mina, a network supporting more than 140 participants and creating opportunities for Black women in mining. She also helped establish a UK diplomatic internship programme for Black and Indigenous candidates, challenging recruitment barriers. Her ambition is to build an industry where future generations feel they belong. Her advice? “Courage will open more doors than confidence ever will! Don’t wait to feel ready before taking your place.”

> “Many times, you’ll be the only woman or the youngest person in the room. Don’t see that as a disadvantage; see it as your superpower.”



CHRISTA HILDEGARD QUIROZ COTRINA

Senior Strategic Planning Engineer

COMPANY:
Compañía Minera Antamina SA

COUNTRY:
Peru

Christa Quiroz Cotrina has built a career defined by breaking barriers. The first mining engineer in her family and a graduate of Cajamarca’s first-ever cohort of mining engineers, she was the only female operations intern at Milpo’s El Porvenir mine and the only woman in the strategic planning team at Yanacocha. Today, she is the only woman holding a senior long-term planning role at Antamina.

Born in Cajamarca, one of Peru’s main mining regions, Christa grew up in a family of teachers, knowing little about the industry. That changed when university visits to Yanacocha and Cerro Corona ignited her passion for mining. Graduating top of her class, she entered a male-dominated industry determined to succeed.

Over the next decade, Christa built her expertise in mine planning at Newmont’s Yanacocha operation in Peru and Barrick’s Veladero gold mine in Argentina. Moving abroad was a turning point, testing her resilience as she adapted to extreme weather, demanding working conditions and life far from home. Today, as Senior Strategic Planning Engineer at Antamina, one of Peru’s largest copper-zinc mines, she helps shape the operation’s strategic direction. Her work focuses on integrating new technologies, including mechanisation and commingling, to optimise waste and tailings storage, reduce environmental impacts and help secure the mine’s long-term future.

Having faced sexism early in her career, Christa wants women to thrive in mining, not simply enter it. She mentors young engineers, teaches postgraduate students and founded Amautas Mineros to bring mining education to communities in Cajamarca. She now plans to write a book to help young women overcome similar challenges. Her advice: “Be comfortable with not feeling ready. The opportunities will come before you feel prepared. Take them anyway. That’s where growth begins.”



"Remember that sometimes the greatest barrier is not a lack of competence, but a lack of confidence to show it."

DANUTA RAJCZAKOWSKA

Commercial Director & Member of Management Board

COMPANY:
Strzeblowskie Kopalnie Surowców Mineralnych (SKSM) sp. zoo

COUNTRY:
Poland

Danuta Rajczakowska entered mining through a laboratory. Fresh from a biotechnology degree in 2004, she joined Polish mineral producer SKSM as a chemist, seeing the job as a chance to apply science in a new field. Her husband, a mining graduate, first helped her understand the unfamiliar industry, but curiosity pulled her further in. Drawn to its mix of science, technology and problem-solving, Danuta moved into technology, R&D and production, becoming Chief Technologist and Production Manager and returning to university to study ceramics. More than 20 years later, she sits on SKSM's Management Board.

As Poland's ceramic tile industry expanded, Danuta helped develop a patented feldspar homogenisation technology, co-created SKSM's Research, Development and Technology Department and helped commission a new production line for finely ground ceramic and glass raw materials. Along the way, she built expertise across the value chain, from mineral processing and product development to production and quality. "I treat every challenge as a puzzle to be solved," she says. Now Commercial Director, she applies that mindset to customers, markets and new applications for SKSM's minerals.

Her influence also extends outside SKSM. Szminka na wyrobisku ("Lipstick at the Quarry"), launched on LinkedIn to share knowledge about mineral resources, grew into a platform promoting modern mining and women in the industry. Through it, she met the women with whom she co-founded Women in Mining Poland, where she is Vice-President. Her advice to young women is simple: "Find a mentor, keep learning and make your voice heard." Now SKSM's first female board member, she hopes such milestones will become unremarkable. "If, through my work, even one young woman believes that mining is also a place for her, I will consider my goal achieved."

> “No role is too big, and no role is reserved for any gender. What matters is hard work, perseverance and discipline.”



KIRTHY REDDY

Director

COMPANY:
Lloyds Infinite Foundation

COUNTRY:
India

In India’s conflict-affected Gadchiroli district, women once confined to housekeeping and low-paid jobs are now operating massive mining trucks. Behind this transformation is Kirthy Reddy, who refused to accept that mining was a man’s world. As Director of Lloyds Infinite Foundation, the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) arm of Lloyds Metals and Energy, she has opened new career paths for tribal women in Maharashtra. Convinced that mining should benefit local communities, Kirthy has made women’s economic independence central to her mission.

Through her pioneering Iron Women programme, Kirthy has helped break down barriers to women’s participation in mining. More than 300 women have been trained to operate vehicles and heavy equipment, with 271 securing roles as truck, loader, excavator and dozer operators at Surjagarh and Hedri. Some have seen their monthly salaries rise from INR12,000 (US$130) to INR55,000 (US$580). But changing attitudes proved as challenging as teaching technical skills. Faced with resistance from families and communities, Kirthy introduced phased training, exposure visits and family counselling to build trust. She also tackled practical obstacles, providing transport and safety measures to help women access jobs once considered exclusively male.

For Kirthy, the greatest rewards are personal. She recalls a young mother who left an abusive relationship after gaining financial independence, and a former Naxal insurgent who laid down her weapons to join her organisation. “People need to be heard,” she insists. Now expanding her initiatives to Bougainville in the Pacific, Kirthy wants community welfare to become as fundamental to mining as drilling and exploration, leaving communities stronger and women more independent.



"Invest in yourself and seize the opportunities that come along."

LUCY ROBERTS

Corporate Head HSEC and Human Rights

COMPANY:
Glencore

COUNTRY:
Switzerland

When Lucy Roberts began her mining career, there were no female change rooms on site and, she recalls, it was difficult for a woman's voice to be heard. More than 30 years later, she leads Glencore's global HSEC and Human Rights function, setting strategy across health, safety, environment, social performance and human rights. Mining was familiar territory: the daughter of a metallurgist, Lucy grew up around mine sites across the world. However, finding her own place in what was then an overwhelmingly male industry required persistence, one of the three words she uses to describe herself, alongside passion and integrity.

A dyslexic child who still smiles at the memory of dreaming that, one day, she might score 100% on a spelling test, Lucy went on to secure Board approval for Glencore's five-year HSEC and Human Rights strategy, a defining achievement for her. She also reset its approach to eliminating fatalities, contributing to significant safety improvements. Colleagues describe her as an empowering leader who breaks down silos, sets clear expectations and trusts people to deliver rather than micromanaging them. "Work as a team, show up as a team and deliver as a team," is her motto.

Lucy has seen opportunities for women expand dramatically since she entered mining, but believes their underrepresentation at senior levels remains a challenge. She is now working to change that through mentoring, coaching and supporting women into leadership, while encouraging the next generation to "invest in yourself and seize the opportunities that come along". Yet the legacy she ultimately wants to leave is broader: a sustained zero-fatality business, with safety culture and HSEC and Human Rights principles embedded in everyday operations.

> “Our responsibility is greater than the resources we extract.”



ANGIE ROBSON

Senior Vice President Corporate Affairs and Sustainability

COMPANY:
Torex Resources Inc

COUNTRY:
Canada

Of all the milestones in Angie Robson’s 20-plus years in mining, one stands apart: receiving an Eagle Feather from Sagamok First Nation for her work with the community. “One of the highest symbols of recognition I have ever received and a sacred and deeply meaningful gift I will always treasure,” she says. Mining offered Angie a route back to Sudbury, Ontario, after almost a decade away. “What a gift to be able to start my own family where I grew up.” Fifteen years at Vale took her from corporate affairs into Indigenous relations and sustainability. In 2020, she joined Torex Resources, where joining the executive team marked another turning point. “It was a massive leap and I’ve never looked back.”

Today, as Senior Vice President Corporate Affairs and Sustainability, Angie brings sustainability, corporate affairs and communications under one portfolio. A hands-on leader, she spends time in communities, listening to concerns and aspirations while helping embed responsible mining into Torex’s strategy. Colleagues describe her as calm and empathetic, but direct. “She does not avoid difficult conversations,” says one. Angie listens, follows through and brings people into solving problems, building trust with employees, communities and other stakeholders.

Angie’s understanding of inclusion is also deeply personal. Her youngest daughter Maggie lives with epilepsy and an intellectual disability, and Angie has spoken openly about challenging stigma and recognising potential where others may see limitation. She wants more women to see mining as an industry offering purpose and opportunity, rather than let outdated perceptions define their choices. Her advice to the next generation: “You will make a difference in a way you never thought possible. Think big and be brave.”



"This industry needs you, your voice and your leadership. Never doubt that this is your place, and make room for the women who come next."

GABRIELA RUMAZO VELA

Chief Executive Officer and Partner

COMPANY:
Keyword

COUNTRY:
Ecuador

Gabriela Rumazo Vela spent much of her career as the only woman in rooms filled with senior executives. In Ecuador's male-dominated extractive industry, she had to prove her credibility before her ideas were heard. Today, with more than 20 years in sector, she is one of the country's most respected strategic advisers. A lawyer by training, Gabriela began her career in oil and gas before moving into mining, where she discovered that the greatest challenges were often human rather than technical. Fascinated by the relationships between companies, governments and communities, she found her calling in strategic communications and public affairs.

In 2015, Gabriela became Partner and CEO of Keyword, leaving law to embrace this new direction. "It was a bet on myself," she recalls. She has since helped mining companies navigate crises, anticipate risks and build trust, develop communications strategies when constitutional challenges threatened major mining developments. Since 2023, she has served on the board of the Ecuadorian Chamber of Mining, helping shape industry policy. Her strength lies in turning uncertainty into strategy and conflict into dialogue.

Beyond her advisory work, Gabriela is determined to open doors for other women. As a co-founder of Women in Mining Ecuador, she helped advance female leadership through mentoring and education initiatives, including the Soy Minera, Soy Bilingüe scholarship programme. Bold, determined and empathetic, she draws inspiration from her mother, who encouraged her ambitions. Having fought for her own place in mining, Gabriela hopes to leave "the door wider open than I found it."

> “Don’t let gender define the way you see challenges. Build your expertise, focus on solutions, and let your work speak for itself.”



ROKHAYA SALL MBAYE

Founder and General Manager

COMPANY:
EPC MINEEX SA

COUNTRY:
Senegal

The first time Rokhaya Sall Mbaye witnessed a mine blast during an internship, she was hooked. Captivated by the science and precision of explosives, the young Senegalese geological engineer had found her calling in one of mining’s most male-dominated fields. She built her expertise across some of West Africa’s most demanding mining operations, gaining hands-on experience in Senegal, Mali and Guinea. But breaking into an industry dominated by men and international companies meant overcoming prejudice and scepticism towards local expertise. Rokhaya refused to be deterred. “I never let gender shape the way I faced challenges,” she says. “I saw them as opportunities to learn, and problems to solve.”

In 2011, Rokhaya founded MINEEX to prove that a Senegalese company could compete with international mining contractors. Despite financing hurdles and doubts about local capabilities, she built the drilling and blasting business into a major industry player. In 2019, MINEEX became Senegal’s first mining company to secure triple ISO certification for quality, environmental management and occupational health and safety. Following the 2022 merger with France’s EPC Groupe, which created EPC MINEEX SA, she now leads the company as CEO, overseeing 400 employees.

Rokhaya is equally determined to open doors for others. Women hold half of EPC MINEEX’s senior management positions and more than half of site leadership roles. Through MineUp, her mining startup incubator, she supports emerging entrepreneurs, with women making up most of its first cohort. A lecturer at Senegal’s National School of Mines and Geology since 2009, she is also pursuing a PhD in Mathematics and Computer Science at Cheikh Anta Diop University in Dakar. Named among Forbes Afrique’s Top 50 African Women in 2025, Rokhaya believes mining’s greatest resource is not what lies underground, but the people whose potential it can unlock.



"Lead with curiosity, creativity, and care, and you'll discover that the brightest ideas often come from the most unexpected places."

LINDY SCOTT

Founder

COMPANY:
Amber, The Health and Safety Communication Platform (Amber Safety)

COUNTRY:
South Africa

Lindy Scott never imagined that a degree in fine art would lead her deep underground into South Africa's mines. Her first underground visit was so overwhelming that she broke down in tears. Yet rather than retreat, she embraced one of the world's toughest industries. Her mining journey began in 2016, when an internal communications assignment exposed her to the challenge of making complex safety messages accessible to frontline workers. She saw an opportunity to combine her artistic background with a growing passion for protecting lives.

In 2018, Lindy founded the Health and Safety Dialogue Company and then developed Amber, a digital platform transforming workplace safety communication. Combining art, storytelling and behavioural insights, she develops visual campaigns and interactive training that make safety messages memorable. Her work increasingly focuses on making women visible in mining and tackling gender-based violence (GBV). She has produced awareness campaigns and films, including a GBV prevention campaign shortlisted for an AfriSAFE award. Her latest initiative, Science of Safety, aims to help frontline workers understand the scientific principles behind life-saving rules.

Lindy is equally committed to opening doors for other women. A former Women in Mining South Africa (WiMSA) committee member, she pushes for safer workplaces, mentors young women and challenges the silence surrounding GBV. She credits mining veteran Lynette Wilsenach, affectionately known as "Big Mama", who took her to a diamond mine in 2017, with helping shape her career. Now guided by the philosophy of "Lift as you rise", Lindy remains focused on one purpose: "to save lives through creativity in the workplace and beyond."

> “Find a place where you can be true to yourself and valued for what that is.”



DR ELIZABETH (LIBBY) SHARMAN

Director

COMPANY:
Proserpina Consulting

COUNTRY:
United Kingdom

Libby Sharman’s proudest discovery is one she did not make herself. A company she mentored drilled its discovery hole “as a direct consequence of my work with them,” she recalls. Drawn to mining by the chance to “explore the world, understand how deposits formed, have fun and get paid doing it”, Libby has since evolved from exploration geologist to helping others make discoveries of their own. From field geology and a PhD in economic geology at McGill University, Libby built experience across deposit types and five continents before joining BHP in 2017, moving from global geoscience and project generation towards helping others find what comes next.

The turning point came when Libby became Technical Lead for BHP Xplor, shifting from predominantly technical work to a more strategic role. Across commodities and jurisdictions, she helped bridge the gap between early-stage explorers and a major miner, coaching teams and advancing promising ideas. Lead Principal Mineral Systems at BHP until July 2026, she helped shape how mineral systems are applied to exploration decisions globally. Now Director at Proserpina Consulting, she will also take over as President of the Society of Economic Geologists in 2027.

Libby’s leadership also reflects her own struggle to be taken seriously and have diverse thinking valued. A peer describes her rare ability to “cut through the noise”, asking incisive questions and challenging constructively, while leading “without ego” and building confidence in others. A Formula 1 fan, Libby dreams of driving a fast car around a racetrack. Her ambition is to leave mining “even better than it is now”. Her message captures how: “Build bigger tables not taller walls, we’re going to need the brightest minds to solve the challenges faced by mining now and in the future.”



"No one is going to hand you anything on a platter of gold. Prepare diligently, work smart to achieve your goals, and reach boldly for what you desire."

FATIMA UMARU SHINKAFI

Chief Executive

COMPANY:
Solid Minerals Development Fund (SMDF)

COUNTRY:
Nigeria

Where others overlooked artisanal miners, Fatima Umaru Shinkafi recognised untapped talent. Working with mining communities in north-western Nigeria early in her career, she discovered their remarkable expertise despite their lack of formal training. "I discovered that artisanal miners, while not academically trained, knew a great deal about the earth and its minerals, about how to find them and how to extract them," she recalls. Convinced that better tools, training and finance could transform their livelihoods, she saw an opportunity to unlock the potential of a sector long overshadowed by Nigeria's dependence on oil and gas.

As Chief Executive of Nigeria's Solid Minerals Development Fund (SMDF), Fatima is reshaping how the country's mining projects are financed. She restructured the fund, established its first dedicated mining investment pool and secured a partnership with Africa Finance Corporation to advance major projects, including a US$1.3 billion alumina development. She also launched the Early-Stage Mineral Exploration and Research Grant Endowment (EMERGE) to address critical exploration and research funding gaps. Among her proudest achievements is leading the aggregation of Nigeria's first artisanal-mined gold refined to London Bullion Market Association standards, helping integrate artisanal production into the formal economy.

Fatima is equally committed to breaking barriers for women and girls. Through her foundation, she funds scholarships for girls and supports women in rural communities. Challenging gender stereotypes, she rejects the notion that women must adopt masculine traits to succeed. "I am in the kitchen, and I am a CEO. The two are not a contradiction," she insists. "A woman is enough, as she is."

> “You need the courage to be who you are, to do things differently and to open paths for those who will come after you.”



VERA LUCIA SILVA

Head of People and Culture

COMPANY:
Samarco Mineração

COUNTRY:
Brazil

The 2015 Fundão tailings dam disaster profoundly reshaped Vera Lucia’s understanding of leadership. As Samarco faced one of the most challenging moments in its history, she led psychosocial support initiatives for affected employees and communities, helping people navigate loss, uncertainty and trauma. The experience left a lasting impression. “I witnessed, firsthand, the extraordinary strength of human resilience,” she reflects. It reinforced her conviction that effective leadership must be grounded in empathy, dignity and accountability. A psychologist by training, Vera Lucia joined Samarco in 2001, drawn by mining’s potential to transform lives. It was a conviction that would shape her career.

Vera Lucia rose through Human Resources roles to become Head of People and Culture in 2019. A pioneer in organisational transformation, she introduced structured culture management in 2006, long before it became a priority in Brazilian mining. She later helped place people, sustainability and inclusion at the heart of Samarco’s recovery. Under her leadership, women’s representation in the workforce rose from 11.5% in 2015 to 29.7% in 2025, while their share of leadership positions increased from 6.3% to 28.7%. For Vera, inclusion means changing workplace culture, not simply meeting targets.

Her influence extends beyond Samarco. Since 2024, Vera Lucia has coordinated the Diversity and Inclusion Working Group at the Brazilian Mining Institute (IBRAM), mobilising the industry around more inclusive practices. Courageous, optimistic and deeply empathetic, she believes leadership means opening doors for others. Her ambition is to build a mining industry where women can thrive and shape its future. As she often says, “The future of mining will not be defined only by what we are able to extract from the earth, but by what we are able to build in people, organisations and communities.”



"The fossilised mindset needs to go green!"

SUCHANDRA SINHA

Chief Manager, Electrical & Mechanical (CIL) | DGM, Elect/Project (HURL)

COMPANY:
Coal India Ltd (CIL) | Hindustan Urvarak & Rasayan Ltd (HURL)

COUNTRY:
India

When Suchandra Sinha chose a career in India's coal industry in 1991, its overwhelmingly male workforce was not a deterrent. It was part of the attraction. A young electrical engineer from Ranchi, in mineral-rich Jharkhand, she wanted to challenge stereotypes and prove she belonged. Thirty-five years later, she has become the first woman General Manager (Electrical and Mechanical) at Central Coalfields Ltd, having spent her career breaking barriers in one of India's most traditionally male industries.

Suchandra's determination to master her profession took her underground at a time when Indian regulations restricted women from working in mines. She became the first woman in India to conduct energy audits in underground coal mines, earning a national Best Woman Executive Award in 2016. Rising through Coal India, she built expertise spanning mine power systems, project management and energy efficiency. Today, she leads renewable energy and first-mile connectivity projects at Central Coalfields Ltd, overseeing solar power developments and helping reduce the environmental footprint of coal operations.

Beyond engineering, Suchandra has spent decades fighting for women's rights and opportunities. As a child, she "wanted to become a doctor to serve the poor free of cost". That desire to help others never left her. Guided by what she considers her greatest qualities, courage and compassion, she has campaigned for childcare leave, safer workplaces and greater opportunities for women. She also supports education and skills training for disadvantaged women and girls, personally funding children's projects. Suchandra entered mining determined to prove she belonged. Thirty-five years later, she wants to ensure that the women who follow never have to.

> “The tools to make better decisions, faster, are already here. We just need the courage to use them.”



FLAVIA TATA NARDINI

Co-Founder & Chief Executive Officer

COMPANY:
Fleet Space Technologies

COUNTRY:
Australia

What does rocket science have to do with mining? For Flavia Tata Nardini, the answer is – everything. As a child, she dreamed of becoming an astronaut. Instead, she became a propulsion engineer at the European Space Agency before co-founding Fleet Space Technologies in Australia in 2015. Mining was never part of her plan. But Flavia recognised that space exploration technology could help tackle one of the industry’s greatest challenges: discovering the critical minerals needed for the energy transition, faster and with less environmental impact.

As Co-Founder and CEO of Fleet Space, Flavia led the development of ExoSphere, combining satellite connectivity, geophysical sensing and AI to help exploration teams make decisions in days rather than months. The technology has expanded across five continents, attracting major miners including Rio Tinto, Barrick and Maaden, while Fleet Space secured A$150 million in funding. Yet Flavia learnt that technology alone is not enough. “A geologist who has spent thirty years reading the rock in one district holds knowledge no satellite or algorithm can replicate,” she says. Winning their trust has proved as important as developing new tools.

Driven by curiosity and a determination to challenge convention, Flavia defines leadership through “vision, courage and humility”. She also champions opportunities for others, with Fleet Space’s STEM initiatives reaching more than 18,000 students since 2023. Her ambitions extend beyond mining: after testing technology in Antarctica earlier this year, she plans to send a version of ExoSphere to the Moon. And her childhood dream remains alive: going to space is still on her bucket list.



"Never let anyone make you feel like you don't belong in the room."

NAHOMIE TSHIKADI

Senior Geologist

COMPANY:
Tenke Fungurume Mining (TFM) SA

COUNTRY:
Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

Nahomie Tshikadi had always wanted to study medicine. But in her final year of secondary school, she noticed there were almost no women at the Faculty of Science she passed each day. When she asked why, she was told the course was so difficult that few women made it through. "I realised that was exactly where I needed to be, because I've always loved a challenge," she says. That choice led Nahomie to Tenke Fungurume Mining (TFM), a copper and cobalt producer in the DRC. Joining more than nine years ago, she became its first female geologist. Breaking gender stereotypes in a heavily male-dominated technical environment, she established herself as a trusted leader in mine geology and union advocacy.

But Nahomie did not want to remain an exception. She began encouraging girls to pursue science before co-founding RFSE, an association of women scientists, which now brings together more than 100 women and maintains a database used by mining companies seeking female recruits. The association has also reached more than 600 schoolgirls in rural and urban communities and engaged more than 50 women in artisanal mining. For Nahomie, mentorship means opening doors that were closed when she began her career.

For Nahomie, the future of mining lies in combining technological innovation with "human-centric leadership". Trained in smart mining technologies, including robotics and drones, she wants to help build an industry that is both more sustainable and more inclusive. Away from the mine, she recharges through writing, music and kung fu, a fitting pursuit for someone drawn to challenges. Her determined approach is captured in her own tagline: "At the table, when I am not served, I serve myself."

> “Walk a mile in someone else’s shoes. You’ll learn more than you ever will from the sidelines.”



KERRY TURNOCK

Head of Global Geoscience

COMPANY:
BHP

COUNTRY:
Australia

“Some people collect stamps; I collect geological experiences.” For Kerry Turnock, geology is a lifelong passion for discovery and understanding the Earth. Mining offered a way to turn that curiosity into value. But she was never content to stay within one discipline. Venturing into mine planning, technical marketing, logistics and innovation, she learnt to see connections others might miss. It became her greatest strength: “My ability to connect things that others see as separate.”

Over more than 30 years at Rio Tinto, Cliffs, Fortescue and BHP, Kerry has repeatedly broken new ground. Among the first women in technical marketing at a major miner, she combined her iron ore expertise and fluency in Japanese to work with Asian steelmakers. Her career also brought setbacks. Early on, hiring managers sometimes assumed she was a man. Made redundant three times, she bounced back, even establishing her own consultancy. Today, she leads BHP’s Geoscience Excellence team, supporting geoscientists globally.

For Kerry, technical excellence matters, but mining ultimately depends on people. Committed to collaboration and inclusion, she brings disciplines together and mentors emerging talent. She is known for spending hours with colleagues in her garden, discussing not just careers but ambitions in life. Her influence extends beyond BHP through university partnerships, advisory roles and industry engagements. Kerry values the impact she has on people more than the titles she has earned. Her ambition is to leave the industry, and the people in it, better than she found them. Her advice? “Never stop asking ‘But why?’”



> “The future belongs to resource companies that treat data integrity, environmental limits and community trust with the exact same rigour as safety and production.”

OYUNSARUUL UDAMBOR

Adviser – People Experience

COMPANY:
Rio Tinto

COUNTRY:
Mongolia

Growing up in a small mining city in Mongolia, Oyunsaruul Udambor watched buses carrying miners to shift change set the rhythm of daily life. “From an early age, I understood that mining is never only about extracting ore,” she says. “It shapes household incomes, water security, opportunity and what an entire community believes its future can hold.” With backgrounds in information technology and finance, Oyunsaruul found her place at the intersection of mining and data, tackling fragmented systems at Rio Tinto’s Oyu Tolgoi copper and gold mine and using data to improve decision-making.

At Oyu Tolgoi, she helped move reporting from manual processes to integrated analytics, making operational challenges and opportunities more visible and enabling business teams to automate more than 85% of manual workflows, cut procurement cycle times by up to 40% and improve supplier performance by 15%. She also co-founded the Oyu Tolgoi & Rio Tinto Data Community, bringing together more than 80 specialists across 15 departments, and contributed to establish a Digital Learning Centre alongside colleagues. “The biggest transformations aren’t technical. They are human,” she says. By giving teams access to data and skills, Oyunsaruul has worked to break down barriers between functions and empower people to make better decisions.

Beyond the mine, Oyunsaruul mentors investigative journalists and rural educators through DataValue and encourages young Mongolian women into mining and technology. Ultimately, she wants natural-resource wealth to build more transparent, equitable societies. “Mining earns its future when the value beneath the ground becomes lasting value above it for people, communities and generations to come.”

> “Don’t be afraid to take up space. Your voice matters, and the mining industry needs your talent and perspective.”



MARISOL VALERIO

Senior Principal Rock Mechanics Engineer

COMPANY:
WSP

COUNTRY:
Canada

At a major mine slope stability conference, Marisol Valerio was struck by how few women were on the technical programme: few presenters or session chairs, and no female keynote speakers. Rather than accept the imbalance, she decided to change it, an instinct that has shaped her career: identify a problem, bring people together and turn ideas into action. Originally from Costa Rica, Marisol moved to Vancouver on a scholarship in 2004 to study geological engineering at the University of British Columbia. Drawn to mining by its mix of analytical and field work, she found her niche in rock mechanics, where every rock mass is different and no solution fits all.

Today, Marisol is Senior Principal Rock Mechanics Engineer at WSP and Global Lead for its open pit mining practice. Over nearly two decades, she has worked on more than 100 mining operations and advanced the use of discrete fracture networks in open pit slope design, earning Golder’s Milligan Award in 2022 and WSP’s Ground Engineering Technical Excellence Award in 2025. She has also helped develop industry guidelines, and mentors engineers across WSP’s global practice. Her technical journey reinforced her belief in “collaboration, trust, and diverse perspectives”.

Marisol turned that philosophy into action by co-founding Women in Mine Stability (WIMS), now a global community of more than 600 members. “Mari is the person who keeps the group moving,” says one peer. As Chair, she champions women’s visibility at technical conferences, mentoring, professional development and scholarships. Her advocacy extends to Women in Consulting Engineering and VIBE, a 2SLGBTQI+ employee resource group. “Our differences should be celebrated,” she says, because they “enrich our industry and make us stronger collectively”.



"Do whatever you want, but do it well. Embrace challenges and remember: you can do it!"

AURORA WILLIAMS BAUSSA

Former Minister of Mining

COMPANY:
Government of Chile

COUNTRY:
Chile

Aurora Williams Baussa made history twice. In 2014, she became only the second woman to serve as Chile's Minister of Mining, under President Michelle Bachelet. Nine years later, she returned under President Gabriel Boric, becoming the first woman to hold the post twice. Born and raised in Antofagasta, Chile's copper heartland, Aurora grew up surrounded by mining. "Mining has been present throughout my personal and professional life," she says. Her roots shaped her conviction that mining should drive regional development and improve lives, guiding her career from public and private sector leadership to government.

Aurora put that conviction into practice. In 2015, she established the National Women and Mining Roundtable, uniting government, mining companies and unions to tackle gender inequality. She pushed for commitments on recruitment, career progression and working conditions. Through this initiative, women's participation in Chile's large-scale mining industry rose from 7.7% in 2014 to 24% by the end of her second term. She also helped shape Chile's lithium strategy through the creation of the National Lithium Commission, which later evolved into the National Lithium Strategy. As one colleague puts it, Aurora "does not just open doors, she builds the institutions that keep them open."

Now working with the Catholic University of the North and leading a corporation dedicated to Antofagasta Region's development, she continues to promote social progress. For Aurora, mining must create opportunities beyond the industry itself. "Mining is an industry that changes the world," she says. "Let us ensure that it also changes the lives of people in mining communities, fairly and equitably."

> “Believe in your potential before others recognise it.”



PAMELA YÁÑEZ JARA

Exploration geologist

COMPANY:
Antofagasta Minerals

COUNTRY:
Peru

At just 26, Pamela Yañez Jara has already achieved several “firsts”. The first engineer in her family, she became the first woman to win the top award in Peru’s national Mining Talent Programme. Now an Exploration Geologist at Antofagasta Minerals, she is determined to open doors for others. Fascinated by the Earth and its mineral wealth, Pamela studied Geological Engineering at the National University of San Agustín in Arequipa, graduating in the top 10%. Her national award proved a turning point, connecting her with industry leaders and mentors and teaching her that every opportunity can open the door to another one.

Pamela began her career at Southern Peru Copper Corporation before joining Antofagasta Minerals in 2025. She now works in challenging environments, from freezing mountains above 5,000m to warmer coastal regions. The only woman on her exploration team in Peru, she has learned to adapt without losing her identity. “I can wear boots in the mountains and heels in the city,” she says. Passionate about technology, she is developing a mobile application to improve real-time drillhole monitoring. She has also presented drilling optimisation proposals at major industry events, including PROEXPLO and PERUMIN.

Ambitious and determined to keep growing, Pamela knows that building a career success takes more than technical expertise. A natural communicator and networker, she uses social media, industry events and professional associations to build connections, share knowledge and create opportunities. Through Women in Mining Peru, the Society of Economic Geologists and mentoring initiatives, she helps young professionals find their place in mining. Committed to continuous learning, she constantly seeks new challenges. Her philosophy sums up her determination: “Good things happen because I make them happen.”



> “Inclusive leadership, diverse perspectives and skillsets are essential to driving innovation and advancing the mining and metals industry.”

GRACE YUNGWIRTH

Global Industry Leader – Mining and Metals / Partner

COMPANY:
ERM

COUNTRY:
United Kingdom

Growing up in Northern Canada, Grace Yungwirth saw mining as part of the landscape and its communities. Early exposure to exploration with junior miners showed her how closely the industry connects people, culture and environment. Drawn by its technical challenge, scale and real-world impact, she built a career around those connections. Trained in civil engineering and hydrogeology, Grace began in groundwater and mine water before moving into complex multidisciplinary projects worldwide. More than two decades later, that early understanding still guides her: responsible mining is not separate from technical excellence, but fundamental to it.

Grace put that philosophy into practice. She built one of Europe’s largest mine water groups, growing it from a handful of specialists and developed practical approaches to integrate sustainability and stakeholder considerations into project decisions. Her career expanded from technical mine water into international-scale multidisciplinary projects, water stewardship and global client leadership. After twenty years at WSP (previously Golder), where she rose to Director of Mining, Mine Water & Sustainability, and Global Account Leader, Grace joined ERM in September 2026 as Partner and Global Industry Leader for Mining & Metals.

Often the only woman in the room or on site early in her career, Grace had to work harder to have her views heard and earn credibility. In an environment where collaboration and communication were sometimes dismissed as “soft” skills, she made sure these became central to her leadership. Today, mentoring and developing younger professionals remain her focus. Grace is passionate about building teams around diversity of skills and opinions, courage of expression and solution-oriented attitudes. Her advice to young women: “Don’t be afraid to use all of your cards”: where your cards are your strengths, experiences, education, contacts, background and perspective – even if they are not the standard set.

> “Stay true to your purpose and don’t let others define your path.”



KARINA ZEVALLOS

Chief Executive Officer

COMPANY:
Perustralia Service & Supply

COUNTRY:
Peru

“Remind me: why are we doing this?” The question captures Karina Zevallos’s approach to leadership. For the Peruvian industrial engineer, purpose matters as much as performance. Her journey into mining was unplanned. When she joined Weir in 1999, she was drawn to industry, unaware of its close ties to mining. Discovering mining’s wider economic and social impact gave her a reason to stay. An assignment in Shanghai later pushed her beyond her comfort zone, teaching her to lead across cultures and see the bigger picture.

In 2016, Karina became Managing Director of Weir Minerals Peru and Ecuador, leading more than 500 employees across six sites and overseeing annual revenues exceeding US$100 million. Under her tenure, the business achieved 70% EBITA growth, while she established Ecuador as a new subsidiary and steered operations through the Covid-19 pandemic. Today, as a Strategic Advisor at Perustralia, she helps companies strengthen their position in Peru’s mining sector through market entry strategies, commercial development and organisational alignment, connecting business decisions with purpose and long-term value creation.

During her presidency of Women in Mining Peru from 2023 to 2025, membership grew by more than 50% and organisation strengthened its national influence. She led the PERUMIN Seal of Excellence in Gender Equity project and development of its practical guide to gender equity, pushing mining companies and suppliers to turn commitments into measurable results. She currently chairs the IIMP’s National School Mining Award (Premio Nacional de Minería Escolar).

Her work reflects a commitment to expanding opportunities for women and strengthening collaboration across the mining ecosystem and inspiring future generations of leaders. “The future of mining depends on our ability to think beyond our own organisations and work together to create lasting value for society,” she says.



"The heart of mining is people. It runs on judgement, trust and teamwork."

WENDY ZHANG

Chief Financial Officer

COMPANY:
Griffin Mining Ltd, Hebei Hua Ao Mining Industry Ltd

COUNTRY:
China

"Most finance professionals never see their budgets take physical form." Wendy Zhang did. Working with production teams on the 1.5 Mtpa mill expansion at Griffin Mining's Caijiaying operation in China, she watched capital expenditure lines turn into concrete foundations, conveyor belts and flotation cells. Wendy had entered mining partly out of curiosity about how geologists discover natural resources and, she admits, the "nice pay". Since joining Caijiaying in 2009, she has moved far beyond traditional finance, learning the business through the people who run it.

Over 16 years, Wendy has helped build financial controls spanning international standards and Chinese regulations, while bridging the operation and its foreign shareholders. Her proudest achievement is more personal: earning the trust of plant-floor colleagues who "had every reason to see finance as the department that only ever says no". She has also developed junior Chinese finance staff, sharing international knowledge and professional standards. For Wendy, mining comes down to trust: "You don't succeed alone. You succeed because a crew of misfits, experts, and dreamers decided to trust each other."

Wendy now wants mining to work better for the women coming after her. She knows first-hand the strain of balancing career and family when fly-in, fly-out (FIFO) work can mean weeks away from home. Her ambition is to help mining stop losing women midway through their careers. "If a woman ten years behind me never has to choose between the site and her family in the way my generation did, that's a better legacy than anything with my name on it."

> “People are resilient, innovative and deserving of much better governance of mining activities.”



LEEZOLA ZONGWE

Critical Minerals Lead

COMPANY:
Enzi Ijayo Africa Initiative

COUNTRY:
Namibia

The 2010 BP oil spill and the 2012 Marikana massacre in South Africa left a lasting impression on Leezola Zongwe. For the young Namibian, these tragedies exposed the human cost of resource extraction and ignited her determination to change the industry. Already drawn to law, she discovered mining law in 2017 before deciding to make it her career while studying at the University of Cape Town in 2020. For Leezola, mining is a question of justice: ensuring communities share in the wealth extracted from their land.

After starting her career at the Bank of Namibia, Leezola moved into mining law and policy research. Now a Strategic Minerals Researcher at Enzi Ijayo Africa Initiative, she advises on critical mineral value chains across southern Africa while pursuing a PhD on revenue mobilisation for mining communities. Unafraid of tackling sensitive issues, her award-winning research on illicit financial flows in Africa’s extractive industries challenges established practices, while she advocates for Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) as a constitutional right in Namibia. “She does not shy away from ‘radioactive’ topics,” says a former colleague. Her achievements include presenting research on critical mineral value chains along the Lobito and Tazara corridors at COP30.

Leezola’s journey has not been without setbacks. Returning from maternity leave, she applied for more than 50 jobs but secured just one interview. Undeterred, she pursued consultancy work while mentoring young legal professionals through AfronomicsLaw and teaching at the University of Namibia. Her ambition is to secure fair compensation for communities harmed by mining. “Let’s do better,” she urges. “Let’s act accordingly in every deal we make, every policy we sign, and every decision we take.”

WE ARE EXTREMELY PROUD OF OUR ALUMNAE

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This book is a collective effort and my sincere thanks go to our Global Outreach Committee and all volunteers for their time and care, our sponsors for their support, and everyone who made a nomination. To the women featured in these pages, a huge thank you for sharing your stories with us."



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