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Women in Mining

Z I M B A B W E

ISSUE
63
2023



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ABOUT PUBLICATION

Mining Zimbabwe is the premier source of unfiltered Zimbabwe Mining News. Our core focus is the Zimbabwe Mining Industry, trends, new technologies being developed and used to improve this crucial sector, as well as new opportunities and investments arising from it. Mining Zimbabwe's sole purpose is growing and empowering the Mining Industry and highlighting all its challenges as well as putting forth expert solutions

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Shine on girl. Not just this month but every day!



Dophia Takwa

THE CLEAR PERSPECTIVE

Large- and small-scale mining is the main livelihood of millions of men and women in Zimbabwe. Women are also active players in the extraction and processing of minerals. Despite their significant contribution to the extraction of valuable resources and raw materials, they have been excluded from the decision-making table, marketing of minerals and are underappreciated for the work they do underground and when operating machinery.

For decades women face discrimination and barriers to decent work in the mining sector.

This women's month we have seen great support for women in mining from companies around Zimbabwe with Freda Rebecca leading with many women holding underground leading roles. We applaud the company for choosing women to lead. We also recognise the recent progress by women in small-scale mining, they have organised themselves by creating an Association of Women in Mining Associations in Zimbabwe (ZAWIMA) that represents all women in ASM mining with the aim to help women in ASM to formalise work and benefit from it.

We also recognise the great work of the women leading the mining industry

decision-making boards namely Elizabeth Nerwande and Dr Mercy Manyuchi with the Ministry of Mines.

We celebrate the work of women in the extractive sector, we strive to find innovative and sustainable solutions to help women and girls unleash their human capital and become leaders, entrepreneurs, and agents of change for equal and inclusive development.

We encourage all the mining stakeholders, companies and suppliers to employ, engage and promote women's inclusion, including in the economic decision-making process and climate action as this results in more creative solutions and has greater potential for innovations that meet women's needs and promote gender equality.

Happy Women's month to all the incredible women in the extractive industry! Don't be afraid of anything because you are a woman, because you are strong at heart and that's your greatest strength.

Shine on. Not just today but every day!



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Interview: Eng Amanda Tigere - Mine Captain Projects , Trojan Nickel Mine



Engineer Amanda Tigere

Please give us a brief description of yourself

Im an Ambitious and articulate Engineer with a proven track record in delivering initiatives in development and production mining. Well conversant with and trained as an internal auditor for ISO 14001:2015 and ISO 45001:2018 Integrated Management Systems. I am an industrious lady who is highly motivated and determined to leave a lasting mark on every role and position that I am assigned through exhibiting excellence and ingenuity. Proficient in technical planning and monitoring of underground mining operations.

Kindly describe your role at BNC.

I am currently working as a Mine Captain Projects, Contracts and Best Practices at Bindura Nickel Corporation which is a subsidiary of Kuvimba Mining House (KMH).

My role involves managing all capital and operational projects that are happening underground as well as bringing fresh ideas to always improve our way of doing things underground. Because part of my work is done with contractors, the

number of men Im leading is always fluctuating but it's nothing less than 100 men at any given time. This is a very upbeat and exciting role, calling for a consolidation of the skills I have acquired in my previous roles i.e. mine planning and the operations side.

What inspired you to venture into Mining Engineering?

Mining chose me, rather than me choosing it, getting into mining I didn't even know what mining was, I thought of Geology as being mining. This is a story for another day. However, I will say, what inspired me to keep on pursuing mining was the

combination of science and arts that you find in Mining Engineering. There is a thrill which comes with knowing that I can come up with a design and 2 months down the line I will be walking and living in that design, the wide span of knowledge and portfolios a Mining Engineer is exposed to is just amazing and it's a beautiful discovery of just how much strength and capability your brain has in amassing knowledge. In summary, Mining is an unending challenge to me and that in itself inspires me to keep going and employing myself on these various challenges.

An Ambitious and articulate engineer with a proven track record in delivering initiatives in development and production mining.

Women constitute 52% of the total population what's stopping them from taking on Mining engineering?

Lack of exposure and stereotyping. Take for example when we were growing up, the number of careers I knew could be counted using my fingers. There was no exposure to what else you can do besides being a doctor, nurse, teacher or police officer just to mention a few of the popular ones. For those that were fortunate enough to be exposed to the mining environment, it was always stereotyped as being a man's world and it was rightfully so. The journey that the mining industry has gone through to be more inclusive of women is a long one and certainly a topic for another day. It is only in recent times, that a lot of myths about females in the mine are starting to be demystified and there is no better time than now for the girl child to explore her mental and physical capabilities by joining the STEM field, the mining field.



Describe your first experience underground.

Intriguing, dark and handsome. Funny Enough my first underground experience was here at Trojan Nickel Mine, I was still at University, and it was our first field trip. It was winter time, so I had layers of clothes on myself. When we got to Trojan they told us we had to walk just below a Km in the Adit before we could get to the Shaft which would then take us underground. The Adit happened to be the main air intake and resultantly it was very cold due to the high amount of air which was being pulled through it. When the training Officer told us to go light on clothing because as we get deeper the temperatures will begin to rise. Amanda decided to just disregard all of that and I kept a sweater beneath my work suit. To cut a long story short, I learnt the importance of experience and the value there is in listening to those who have gone before you.

Apart from my little rebellion which I heavily regretted, the experience was amazing more like out of this world. I couldn't believe my eyes that there was a whole world, a whole life happening underground. Offices, Computers, Huge equipment being moved up and down serving different functions but all in a sort of coordinated manner, which I couldn't understand. When I got into a little corner, I switched off my cap-lamp light and from that day onwards I also learnt that Dark Black is a colour.

How has your presence benefited the mine you are working for?

I have been with BNC since 2017, and over the years I have had the opportunity to work on various initiatives, taking the leading role in some and working as part of the team in some. My valuable experience which comprises the planning element (Mine Planner, July 2021 – January 2023) as well as the execution element (Shift Foreman, April 2019 – June 2021) is exactly what BNC needs even as we are embarking on various capacity and efficient building projects underground as we drive towards the high-volumes, low-grade strategy.

Your word to those who say Mining Engineering is a man's job?

To quote the inspirational Trevor Ncube, I would say, 'the future is young, the future is STEM and the future is FEMALE'. Come join us in the 21st Century, where your skills, tech-savvy and adaptability can take you to

places where gender stereotyping has no room.

In your view is a woman only mine possible?

An only woman mine is possible, but that will also be gender discrimination *laughs*. On a more serious note, yes I do believe that an only-woman mine is possible via automation. With automation in mining operations, it becomes more about the right skills, tech-savvy and adaptability and more females are starting to move towards these 3 elements.

What is your leadership style and how do you make sure that your presence is felt?

I have seen myself move from one leadership style to another depending on the task at hand. However, in my current role as the Mine Captain Projects, Contracts and Best Practices, and the kind of Projects I am leading. I see myself leaning more toward the transformational leadership style. I need my team to understand the drive that the company is moving towards and I also need that team to be free enough to share their great ideas which will take us there and I need them to run with this vision as though their life depended on it (because to some extent it does *laughs*)

Where do you see yourself in the next 5 to 10 years?

- Heading the mining division of a recognized mining House.
- Board member for a couple of companies even for non-mining companies.
- Renowned Animal Husbandry Farmer

Does your organization recognize your role and how's it supported as a woman in a leadership position? What can you tell others out there about BNC

Having joined BNC in 2017, I have had the opportunity to see and be part of the company's growth in terms of female inclusivity. When I joined the company, in mining, there were only two females and most females were found in administration but as we speak the number of females working underground and in other technical fields have spiralled. Through myself and other female leaders within the Organisation, BNC has shown its commitment to just honoring the skills carried by a person regardless of gender. The organization is taking strides first and foremost to just ensure female-friendly facilities are available at the mine. We are carrying out various outreach activities, just to catch the girl child young and make them believe in themselves that if they can dream it, then they can achieve it. Trust me there is no better time for the girl child to just unapologetically rise and BE.

You are a young woman holding a demanding role in an environment that is said to be difficult, how do you balance social life and work?

Very good question and I will try to be as honest as possible. It is not easy bringing that balance and if I'm to be honest it's something I have struggled with for a long time. In more instances, work has just swamped my life away but I do think I'm getting better at managing that. The key is in time management and systems development. Failure to establish a working system means you are supposed to always be there, physically present for any task to be completed. Manage your time well, if it's work time, let's work and get the task completed so that there is enough time for the socials. The two (work and social life) both need each other to be enjoyable. But when the going gets tough a good work team and supportive family and friends make the job easier and I'm blessed to be surrounded by such.



Interview - Patricia Marufu Senior Resource Geologist



Who is Patricia Marufu?

I am a geologist with over 16 years of work experience, mainly in the gold mining industry. I hold a BSC degree in Geology and Physics from the University of Zimbabwe which I completed in 2005. Apart from being a career woman, I am studying for an MSC in Mineral Resources Management with a South African University. Another very important role I play is being a family person, I am a wife and a mother to 3 beautiful children ages 6, 12 and 14.

Describe your work as a senior Resource Geologist.

My role in the organization in summary is estimation and evaluation of the mineral resources. I spend most of the time analyzing geological data gathered from mapping, drilling and various sampling methods to interpret it and coming up with various geological models. My main output is the delineation of the orebody and the estimation of the quality and quantity of the mineral resources.

What do you emphasize when evaluating geological data?

I must say the most important aspect is ensuring that any geological data you are making use of is valid and of high integrity. As the saying goes, garbage in, garbage out, I always make sure that I dedicate a lot of time to verifying data and assessing the quality of data available before inputting it into my ore body interpretation

Any words to all women in the mining industry?

Although the mining industry is

male-dominated, I have seen that women are equally capable of producing good results comparable to their male counterparts. I have seen quite a good number of women who are good managers in the workplace. So I encourage women not to fear or feel intimidated to target challenging roles or managerial roles.

Some say Mining is men's work, as a person who has been in the business for years what would you say to such a statement?

That statement is wrong. While some jobs can be physically taxing for women, there are a lot of other tasks that women can carry out in a mine environment. When I started my career 16 years ago, there were indeed a few women and most of these would work in administration offices and as secretaries. Nowadays the percentage of women in mines has increased and we now have more engineers, geologists and technicians who are equally good at their work in comparison to their male counterparts.



As an experienced person in the Mining Industry would you recommend your children to take mining as a profession in future?

I would encourage any person interested to join the mining industry. It does have challenges but it's just like any other industry. Those determined to succeed can definitely flourish in the industry.



Who is one inspirational woman you look up to in the mining industry?

My fellow geologist and workmate Kudzai Takaindisa who is head of the Geology section. She is tough and fearless and no doubt is a good manager.

What is your process for identifying and describing a new mineral?

In geology you need to have an eye for the physical characteristics of any mineral such as colour, form, associated minerals etc. but scientific methods such as lab tests and assays are always best to confirm what mineral it is.

Do you think there is enough representation of women in geology?

Very much so. It seems women have understood that geology is not a man's territory. In fact of the 7 geologists and geo-technicians in my workplace, 5 of us happen to be women.

What do you enjoy most as a Geologist?

I enjoy the fact that it allows one to think deeply and make use of their analytical skills. It is challenging at times but I like the fact that it is interesting and there is always a great feeling of satisfaction whenever you succeed.

Do you think a woman-only mine is possible?

Very much so.

Describe your process for analyzing rock samples.

I look at physical attributes such as colour, rock type, associated minerals, any alteration of minerals etc

How do you manage risk when conducting fieldwork?

A thorough risk assessment is always crucial before any work commences so that the hazards can be eliminated or mitigated to a reasonable level.

Any words parting words to young women out there who would like to venture into geology?

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Interview - BNC Production Superintendent Engineer Perseverance Chavhunduka



Eng Perseverance Chavhunduka

Perseverance, tell us about your career as an Engineer.

My career has been an interesting one as I have seen myself grow and develop, not only as an Engineer but as a person as well. The integration of academic knowledge and real-life application and actually seeing positive results has been motivating for me. There have been times when things have not gone as planned, but even in those circumstances, I have learnt something and that for me is the positive I always draw.

Do you ever regret choosing the profession?

I do not regret choosing my profession. I love what I do. Yes, it can be taxing at times, but nevertheless, I find it exciting and fulfilling.

Kindly describe your role.

Am currently working as a Production Superintendent, in a mining house. Essentially, my role encompasses giving technical and operational direction to the teams to ensure that the product is produced safely and sustainably. I interact with personnel in executive positions as well as those in the field to ensure that the required resources are availed for production to occur on time. The business is there to make money and I must continually look at ways to make our processes more efficient.

I also do mentoring and coaching of the teams including graduate learners. Human capital is one of the critical intangible assets of an organisation. Thus, it is essentially key that these are aligned and bundled up appropriately to meet

the customer value proposition. So in short my role involves strategic planning, budgeting, project management, human resources management, research and development, etc among others.

In your view as a woman in an industry that has many risks to your health and well-being, do you encourage any young girls to join the industry? How safe will they be?

Most definitely. Is there any industry which doesn't have a risk to your health and well-being? I doubt it. The thing is to do a proper risk assessment and manage the risks as and when they happen. Any person can be and can do whatever they desire. As long as any girl has a passion for this industry, they should go for it!



What are the challenges that you think you have overcome either professionally or personally that can help inspire others?

I have learnt to be comfortable in my skin. I don't desire to be someone else but to be the best of myself. I do not have to act like a man to prove that am able. Learn to maximise your strengths, hone your skills and work on your weaknesses, is the remedy that keeps me going. I do not take a lot of things to heart: not everything is about me. So let's say a male colleague, acts in a particular manner, it could be that they have their own insecurities and I don't have to make myself part of their problem. I mind my own business and focus on what I have to do.

As a family woman, do you share the stories of your work with the kids? Any chance that they will one day consider Engineering as a job?

I definitely share some of what I do with my children and they also see how I work. I see my girls putting on my helmet in the instances I take it home and they will be like, "Mommy, look, am an engineer like you". It's fun to see them doing that. One thing for certain though they do not like the long hours I put in but I try to spend as much time as I can with them.

In your experience in the industry, and career progression do you owe it to favours offered by leadership because

you are a woman? Do you think your organization is breaking the bias on gender?

I would say, I have put in my pound of flesh. I do not work with an eye that I am a woman. I do not believe in playing that card. I am where am because I truly deserve it and have worked for it! My organisation has of late been opening up to more females and ensuring that there is inclusivity and development of females. It being an old mine, facilities generally were not female-friendly but that has changed. We now have female restrooms underground, lactation rooms for those ladies who may be breastfeeding and stuff like that. So I would definitely say, my organisation is breaking the bias and embracing females in the workforce.

What can the mining industry do to promote women in mining?

I think it starts with the individual female. Once they decide to join the industry they should not expect to be given everything on a silver platter but they have to play their part and work. On the part of the organisations, it is about being sensitive to some of the issues that females go through and making allowances for those. Like having proper restrooms, lactation facilities etc. the environment has to be such that the females are somewhat able to balance being employees and family people. You know in our culture, the mother is critical in the family and hence the work schedules should be flexible to ensure the family structures are not affected by having the mother away for long periods.

What would you like others to know about your organization and its leadership?

My organisation is a dynamic one which has overcome many challenges over the years to ensure its continued survival. It is a learning organisation and promotes its workforce to continually be learning in order to stay relevant. This brings agility to the business and ensures that the business remains productive and profitable.

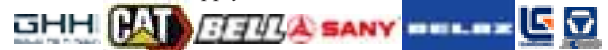


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Eng Nyasha Muzata - The young woman changing the Narrative in the mining industry



MZ This is women's month and we are privileged to have you Nyasha. I hope this interview will inspire other women, especially the young generation to take part in the mining industry. Let me begin by congratulating you on having your Technical paper winning the 2022 AECI WEETR Conference, in South Africa.

NM Thank you Mining Zimbabwe for recognizing the significance of women in Mining and giving us an opportunity to air our views. Please keep it up! To me, it's a great honour to feature in your magazine, especially in this women's month. It gives me confidence that at least we are headed in the right direction.

MZ Before we get into our discussion, please tell me who is Nyasha and what do you do.

NM Nyasha is a young lady with big dreams. Dreams to impact the world positively. I was born and raised in Zimbabwe, a place called Chiweshe, in Mazowe District. Just like any other humble background African child, lacked career guidance but I should hasten to say academically I was in a safe place. At one point I wanted to be a Medical doctor, at another an Aeronautical engineer and the list goes on. But what aided my final decision to be a mining engineer is my strong relationship with my Father to whom I give credit for suggesting that I

consider mining engineering. And so, I became a Mining Engineer who is now working for AECI Mining Explosives, a world leader in the manufacturing and supply of explosives and blasting solutions. I joined AECI in 2018 as a graduate trainee and am now part of the front-end engineering personnel, working as an Explosives Engineer.

MZ Back to the WEETR Conference, tell me a bit more about this conference, your achievement, your experience and the opportunities it opened for you?

NM WEETR stands for Workshop for Explosives Engineers and Technical Representatives, so this is a gathering of all the technical people in the field of Explosives Engineering for AECI. During the two-day conference, the delegates get to listen and participate in various discussions and technical presentations around best and next practices in the world of explosives and blasting from the different business units around the world. The theme for the conference was BETTER BLASTING with Sustainable Technology. The conference was held in September 2022, in Sandton South Africa.

So earlier during the year a call for papers was announced and I took the challenge. So from all the submissions from around the world, the technical committee gets to choose 5 presentations that will then be presented at the conference. My paper was



Eng Nyasha Muzata

about the Shock Tube initiation system and the value it was giving to one of our customer sites. I stood there among the giants in the industry, it was a tight contest and I give it to other presenters. My presentation was then voted the best and as part of the competition prize, I was sponsored to attend the International Society of Explosives Engineers Conference in San Antonio, Texas USA.

From the WEETR conference, I learnt that every presentation is a story. You as the presenter know the story better than everybody else so when it's coming from you, it has to flow. You can't be afraid to tell your story, not when every person is ready to listen to you and you have prepared for that. Seize the moment with your audience and leave them wanting more!

Continued on the next page>>

MZ You then had the privilege to attend the ISEE 49th conference on Blasting in San Antonio. What were the key highlights from this conference?

NM I loved the technical presentations more than anything else, they were perfectly designed to educate in a way many could relate to. I remember when I did the Train the Trainer course and the facilitator told us about the use of visual aids when presenting, and the presenter on Fly rock Control and Monitoring at the Conference did just that. He brought a piece of rock he had extracted from the fly rock incident he was once involved in decades ago and this just brought the moment back to life.

There was training, presentations from around the world, opportunities to network and share experiences with other delegates and access to the latest technology on display at the exhibition stands. What stood out the most about the conference was the opportunity to learn in a number of ways and be part of the ISEE Emerging Professionals. For someone who was in America for the first time, the experience was just exhilarating and having the opportunity to be in dialect with other professionals in the industry was also exciting and rich in experience. After this, I feel supercharged.

MZ Was this your first exposure to an international platform or audience?

NM This is definitely the biggest exposure to an international audience that I have had. I have always been someone who enjoys taking up challenges and giving my best to it. I remember back in 2014 whilst pursuing my undergraduate studies in Algeria I attended the Global Development Network Conference in Accra, Ghana. This was after the paper I had co-authored in an essay contest, Imagine-Africa-2025 won. However, everything at ISEE was bigger.

MZ We also hold several conferences here in Zimbabwe, comparing with what you saw in San Antonio are we far off? What advice would you give to conference organizers?

NM From my experience attending local conferences and exhibitions I don't think we are far off. What I saw and emulated at the ISEE conference was the Introduction of engaging activities like the ISEE social where people meet, greet, chat and drink. There was an inclusion of spousal

programs and families on the agenda where they get to engage in activities as spouses or families. This helps the spouses to understand the kind of industry their partners are in and who knows, this may be a way of cementing more families together. In terms of the technology on exhibition, we are almost there and let us just keep looking at opportunities to do it better.

MZ We have ISEE at an international level, do we also have similar local bodies or chapters?

NM ISEE is an international organization and they have members from around the world. They also have local chapters in different regions. Here in Africa at the moment, we don't have a board such as ISEE which is focused on explosives engineering and there is no ISEE chapter as well but we have similar organizations such as the Southern African Institute of Mining and Metallurgy SAIMM that one can join and be a member. Going into the future, and now with the active involvement of Women (laughing) in the explosives engineering scene very soon we are going to see a chapter coming out of the African Continent.

MZ Is the Explosives Engineering profession a common profession in Zimbabwe? How does one become an explosives Engineer?

NM Explosives and blasting work are very common in Zimbabwe but the profession (qualified Explosives Engineers) is not very common. For one to be an explosives engineer, you need a mining or blasting background and training. Back in the day you needed to join explosives supplying companies like AECl and they would train you but now they are universities that can train one to be an Explosives Engineer. As for me, I did a mining engineering degree then I specialized in Explosives Engineering. I did the course with North-West University in South Africa in partnership with AECl. Other international bodies such as ISEE offer courses in the field of explosives engineering as well.

MZ Can you describe the working environment of an Explosives Engineer, the duties, tools, equipment and technologies you use in your day-to-day work?

NM Explosives Engineers work with explosives. They work in different environments such as mining and construction, military and other manufacturing industries. They use both science and engineering principles to safely design, initiate and monitor the use of explosives. In the mining industry, they play a pivotal role in the extraction of minerals that provide raw materials for industrial processes. Explosives are used to break ore or waste or to create space for other infrastructure.

Explosives Engineers use a lot of technology and tools in their day-to-day work. This includes drilling and charging equipment, blast design and predictive software, explosives and blasting performance monitoring equipment.

MZ Besides Explosives, what other specializations can one pursue in the mining industry? Are they all friendly to women?

NM There are lots of opportunities in the mining industry and slowly the world is moving from gender-based careers. One can get into production, mine planning and design, mine support services such as survey, geology, mine ventilation, and machine operation The list is endless. In all these areas, women have participated and matched their male counterparts. Remember in everything that a man can do, a woman can do better. There are many opportunities you just have to identify your area and pursue it with diligence.

MZ The art of blasting has evolved over a long period, from the discovery of gunpowder and the safety fuse to the current technologies. Is blasting going to continue into the future and which products and blasting systems are we going to be using? What are the factors that are shaping these changes?

NM In my opinion, blasting is the way to go for the foreseeable future, however, we are headed towards more sophisticated technologies, more than just electronics... Maybe a completely autonomous way of doing things! This is due to the need for not just more efficient but safer and more sustainable ways of mineral extraction.

I could never regret the great decision I made, I wouldn't be here today. In fact, I regret the time I wasted thinking I could do something else.

Remember in everything that a man can do, a woman can do better - N Muzata

continues on the next page>>

MZ You are one of the few females who is leading in a male-dominated environment, what are some of the challenges you face and how do you overcome them?

NM Apart from the muscle power and deep voice (chuckles), I would want to believe am equally equipped. Situational leadership always wins! It's true the world is in the process of accepting women in male-dominated industries. When you get appointed people around you would want to see if you really deserve the title and in some cases want to prove that. I apply the technical, management and soft skills that I have acquired over the years and I get results every time. That level of scrutiny pushes me to do better and to play my small part in convincing the world that women can do it. Why not.

MZ The mining environment is considered to be harsh, looking back in your career, do you sometimes regret ever choosing the mining profession?

NM Yes indeed mining is not for the faint-hearted. When the going gets tough, the tough get going. I could never regret the great decision I made, I wouldn't be here today. In fact, I regret the time I wasted thinking I could do something else.

MZ What qualifications do you hold?

NM I hold a Bachelor's Degree in Mining Engineering from the University of Anaba, Algeria. As part of my professional development, after completing my Blast Competence Programme with AECI, I then went on to pursue Explosives Engineering with Northwest University, South Africa. I have also completed a Foundation Management Development Programme with Stellenbosch Business School and a Sales Development Programme with Mercuri Sales International. I hold a Train the Trainer Certification from the Zimbabwe Institute of Management. Training is something I really enjoy; I come from rich training background - both my parents are teachers by the way. I am currently in my final MBA semester with the University of Zimbabwe.

MZ You did your first mining degree in Algeria, and you have done some qualifications locally and in South Africa as well. Based on your exposure to all these universities and colleges, how do you rate our education and curriculum? Are we producing students fit for the industry?

NM It's true, I have had exposure to some courses with universities and colleges in different countries. My opinion is that we are producing fairly good students who are in demand on a global scale. Hardly a day passes without one of the Zimbabweans making it big on a global scale. Of course, we have our own challenges that need to be addressed. If you look at it right now, the industry is not really coming to the party and supporting the colleges to produce graduates that are fit for the industry. If you look at it now, only a few companies are investing in training and taking in students on attachment and graduate traineeship. The colleges should produce graduates who are entrepreneurial and not only look for work but focus on creating work. Look at graduates from universities like MIT and Harvard, they are geared and supported to create multibillion-dollar industries. Something which is lacking in our curriculum.

MZ Let us talk more about your career and development. What role did the companies you worked for play in moulding you to be the person you are?

NM I have worked at different companies from the days of my industrial attachment into my professional life. I have also been exposed to the different customer operations. This has allowed me to close the gap between theory and practice and an opportunity to be mentored and provide mentorship to others as well. My current employer invests in developing people and I am very grateful. The company's strategy encompasses PASSIONATE, PURPOSE-LED PEOPLE as one of its strategic themes.

MZ You mention the issue of mentorship, why is it so important that one needs to have a mentor in their career?

NM That is very key, especially in the early days of one's career. You need to have someone who has walked the path before you. It's like you are doing it for the second, third or fourth time and yet you might just be giving it your first shot. Mentorship played a big role in my career and will continue to do so. Be intentional, choose a mentor and let them know that they will be mentoring you.

MZ Our small-scale miners are contributing significantly to the mining industry, in terms of blasting are they using the right technologies?

NM The small-scale mining industry is contributing immensely to the

Zimbabwean economy. There is a need for continuous improvement in terms of the equipment and blasting technologies that they can adopt so that their mining can be sustainable (profit, people and planet). A lot has changed in the industry and the small-scale miners need to catch up. It's the responsibility of those in the industry to assist this sector so that they can also reap the benefits of advances in technology. Some low-hanging fruits are the use of bulk explosives, the emulsion type using PCU pumps, remote blast initiation systems etc.

MZ What are some of the mistakes that young female mining professionals make in their early career and what do you think should be done to correct them?

NM Female mining professionals are not exempted from the mistakes that their male counterparts make. Over and above that, the females are intimidated by the dominance of male professionals to the extent that they don't go all out to explore their full potential. They need to confront the environment positively just like any other working environment and they also have to keep the interactions professional.

MZ Let us talk about sustainability and impact. Besides your work contribution, what other roles are you playing to help in making the mining industry a better place for future generations?

NM Nowadays you can't talk about running a business without talking about how the business is going to contribute positively to a better tomorrow. Companies are investing a lot in achieving this and individuals also have a role to play. In my small way, I am passionate about gender equality and the improvement of quality education. Whenever I get the opportunity to mentor, coach and develop young people I do it with passion. I will use my skill to better the profession and contribute to the sustainable development of my country.



MZ What opportunities are there for the young and innovative minds in the industry?

NM If the rate of change outside is faster than the rate of change inside, you know the end is near. - Jack Welch. The opportunities lie in optimized efficiency and productivity, establishing organized supply chains, promoting safety and sustainability, compliance obligations and even people's welfare. The mining industry is an ever-changing working environment and hence there is a need to have evolving patterns in managing change to remain relevant and competitive in the region. You mentioned we started with gunpowder, who knows in the future we might be blasting in the comfort of our homes.

MZ Where do you see yourself in 5, 10 years from now?

NM I am shooting for a goal. I have very big dreams and the sky will never be my limit. I have been with AECI for 5 years now and looking at my journey thus far... As you have seen, I am honing my skills in both technical and business management. I am

preparing myself for Senior Management or Executive role in the mining industry. I believe in the power of words.

MZ We are in the women's month, what changes (if any) would you like to see in the work environment to promote women's participation at all levels?

NM Participation begins with involvement and inclusion; the more women we have in some of these crucial positions, the more we will see more women motivated to participate. It calls for support not just from men but from other women as well, let us not be our own enemies. It's a general tendency for women to shy away from seemingly harsh working environments but, believe me, women might just as be better suited for any environment just like our male counterparts or even better.

MZ Your word of advice to young women and young professionals?

NM Carpe diem – Seize the day! Every day is an opportunity to get you where you want, if you can imagine it you can achieve it. Put yourself out there like Steve Jobs

said, "You can't connect the dots looking forward, you can only connect them looking backwards", at some point and time, it will all make sense. Never be afraid to try and if you want to try better, try with a mentor.

MZ Who is your role model in the mining sector?

NM I am challenged by women who have done so well in the mining industry. People like Mpumi Zikalala (Kumba Iron Ore CEO), Meagan Van Den Berg (AECI Executive for Southern Africa), the former Larfage CEO Precious Murena Nyika and the list goes on. These are the mighty women that I look up to and I believe one day I will also be there as a torch bearer for the girl child.

MZ Off the work environment, what occupies Nyasha?

NM I am an outdoor and quite adventurous person who loves nature walks and sightseeing. I enjoy spending quality time with family, as the family-oriented person that I am. I also think of myself as a very artistic person, visual art is my thing!

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Interview: Annie Margaret Sikhosana BNC Marketing Manager



Annie Margaret Sikhosana is a Master of Science in analytical chemistry graduate who has worked as a teacher, a forensic scientist, an analytical chemist, Laboratory and Quality Assurance Manager for various mining houses. She has set up, managed, and maintained ISO-certified systems for mining operations. She broadened her science qualifications through postgraduate qualifications in business management. In 1999 Bindura Nickel Corporation saw it fit to move her into a marketing role to leverage her technical skills for the organization's benefit. This exposed Annie to a new level of management, business analysis and metal trading. We interviewed the legendary figure and this is how the interaction went.

Do you remember your first week at work?

The first week that I came in, there were a lot of things that were done at the induction level. They introduced me to the mine, the company values, the usual Vision, and the Mission statement, and then they took me out to all the sections during the first week. I was taken around to meet all the other HODs in all the sections so that I understood the business. They also took me to meet the Managing Director who is the most senior person in the organization and it made me feel important. We also did the usual safety health quality systems. And then they also took me around Bindura town to show me where the banks and clinics are, it was an exciting experience. So the formal induction is what I remember the most about my first week and it's something that I value about BNC.

What is your favourite memory of BNC

In 2008 BNC went into care and maintenance. What that kind of maintenance entailed is most operations were stopped. I stayed on with a team that was selected to stay behind during the

entire period. After four years of being in Care and maintenance, we went back into production in 2012. In March 2013 we started selling again. We asked the truck drivers as we were dispatching them to hoot and we shouted as a way of saying BNC is back again. It was a very emotional time for me and everyone was excited. The bulk of our workforce had not been able to do anything for four years and were just sitting around. To be able to get the mine running again, resume production and get revenue in again was so exciting.

So what motivates you to keep working at BNC

I came into BNC in my early-20s as a young chemist in this company and I have been trained. I have moved from different departments from being a pure scientist researcher stuck in the corner to marketing. The fact that I'm valued, I can make a difference and my contributions matter motivates me. I am not a statistic or just one of the 1000 people employed by BNC but I am valuable and I contribute.

So what are the duties of a chemist in a mining operation

Chemists are involved in exploration and mining. In exploration, we determine if there is any mineral present and in mining, we are involved in grade control in short if you are taking this ore out, how much valuable mineral is there? We also determine the value of the final product. There is a lot to do for a chemist at a mining operation, we are involved right through the value chain.

Tell us about your transition from a chemist into marketing

One of the things I talk about when I talk about BNC is the value of the training. BNC has Staff Development Panels (SDP) that look at your potential, talk to you about career progression, ask you where you see yourself in 5, 10 years and so on. I became the manager of the lab and went to quality assurance. During one of the SDP, after the company had sent me for some business courses, we were discussing how well I was doing but had reached a ceiling on the technical side of being a chemist. I excelled in the Non-Degree Purpose (NDP) with UNISA and got a gold medal in 1998.

During the award ceremony, there was someone very senior from Anglo who said they didn't know the company employed women in the lab. There was a discussion

that if the company did not do something they feared they would lose me so they decided to move me to Marketing. Initially, my title was contracts manager. We were tasked with finding additional feed for our smelter. It was a technical job but on the commercial side. After some time the Marketing Manager resigned and the CEO appointed me as the new Marketing Manager.

What are the by-products of Nickel

Wherever Nickel occurs you normally find copper and cobalt moreover there are also PGMs.

Would you encourage your children to join Mining?

Definitely! There are lots of opportunities in mining. It can be very fulfilling working in this industry. I think as a country we need to go out there and do more to educate the nation about careers in mining, especially to young kids in schools so that they know there are more careers in Mining like I.T, marketing, HR, lawyers and many more. People think when we say a career in mining it's just technical which is not true.

Do you think a woman only mine is possible

Yes, it's possible! Small-scale miners are already there. Big mines there are putting up plans, we hear some saying they need to double the number of women working for their mines. But also a women-only mine is reverse sexism. People must not be judged by their sex. If mines are made female friendly more women will come.

Any words to women in the Mining Industry?

Be authentic, be yourself. Don't try too hard to fit in, be comfortable with who you are. Never be too afraid to speak up. If you are put at the table contribute. Show your skills and your competencies. Don't be shy. I like the Obama phrase Yes we can. As women, Yes we can, we are good enough. We can make it in the Mining Industry.

Lastly besides mining what does Annie enjoy doing

I enjoy reading. I read a lot about anything. I also like to mentor people but only on a one-on-one basis. I also love gardening. I love flowers and I enjoy travelling.



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Interview: Bianca Munakandafa - Planning Engineer, Freda Rebecca gold mine



Eng Bianca Munakandafa

At 28 years of age, Bianca Dairai Munakandafa is a professionally qualified Mining Engineer with developed skills and +5 years' experience in underground and open pit mining operations. According to Bianca's her greatest strength is in Mine planning and optimisation which she attained through the various roles held at Freda Rebecca Gold Mine. Her current role as a Planning Engineer involves mine design and scheduling of mining activities with the aim of safely and economically extracting ore reserves productively. The solid skill set in Mine Planning is also attributed to the educational background derived from the Master's in Mining Engineering degree that she is completing with the University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa.

Why did you choose Mining as a career?

I was inspired by my late mother who ran a small-scale chrome mining project during my teenage years. I was intrigued by the processing activities and the blasting systems in particular but, my decision was split between metallurgical and mining engineering. I had very little knowledge of what the large-scale mining environment would be like but I was sure I wanted to be an engineer working on a mine.

Mining is a man's job some say. Is it?

With regard to how physically demanding the nature of the job is, most would agree with this notion. This however in my opinion applies mostly to conventional mines that have activities such as hand lashing and coco panhandling, as well as some small-scale mines using rudimentary mining methods. With the shift towards mechanization, the mining

workforce is becoming more of think tanks. In Zimbabwe, more women are participating in mining roles and a few are in senior roles. We seem to be leading the industry well and setting strides.

How would you determine the most efficient way to extract minerals from the earth?

The different concepts of mining a mineral resource are dependent on the characteristics of the mineralized rock such as its dip, width, shape, and depth from the surface which has to be estimated accurately.

What is the most challenging project you've worked on as a mining engineer?

It would be without a doubt the digitizing and analysis of the stresses and strains of our underground mining environment in relation to the existing open pits. I solely set out to learn a geotechnical software that is called Map3D from others within the industry that had this skill set. I had fun challenging my capabilities.

Any regrets about choosing mining as a career?

I have no regrets with my choice, mining is an interesting and challenging field. Someone once said to me "if you can't grow it, you have to mine it".

What would you do if you noticed that mining operations were not following safety regulations?

There should be no compromise with regards to safety, health and the environment. A "stop and fix" approach should be adopted in all circumstances. No task should be allowed to proceed in the absence of proper safety controls. I would stop the unsafe act from proceeding henceforth until the breach in safety regulations is rectified.

Are there any challenges you face as a supervisor with men working under your instruction?

Working with men is a challenge but, in some instances, the constraint has been my emotional nature as a woman. I have often misunderstood men's rebellious nature as resistance and being undermined because of my gender or how I am

expected to be soft as a leader.

What do you think is the most important aspect of mine safety?

The most important aspect of mine safety is to ensure that every individual goes back to their respective homes and families safe, as well as healthy.

What would you do if a mine was at risk of flooding?

Different flood management systems can be established dependent on the risk cause. A mine can be at risk from flooding mainly due to either surface run-off, percolation or the intersection of an aquifer in highly water-logged areas. For run-off, controls such as canals and bundt walls for water diversion and reduction of water ingress into the mine can be used. In cases of high percolation, sumps can be developed at the bottommost part of a mine and stage pumping at different levels can be exploited. Where aquifers are concerned, drainage holes can be drilled to intersect the aquifer.

Describe the process you use to plan and execute a successful mining project.

This is dependent on whether the project is classified as a brownfield or greenfield project. With mining, a greenfield project for example, exploration and reconnaissance is the first stage used to determine the volumes, metal content and characteristics on the ground. Different exploration methods such as sampling, IP survey or diamond drilling can be employed. The appropriate mining method and equipment selection process, labour requirement plans, risk and safety management plans, as well as financial profitability models can be done thereafter. The main objective of mining is to make a profit.

What are you doing to ensure you use your influence to inspire other young women who wish to excel like you?

The number of young women venturing into different mining fields nowadays is increasing. We currently have female graduate trainees and students on attachment from different fields such as mining engineering, geology and ventilation. I have been given the opportunity to mentor these young women during the foundation period of their careers. They are inspired by my work ethic and how far I have come.

As the first female mining engineer at the organization did you face any challenges with acceptance from men in the same field?

Although I am the first female mining engineer at the organization, there were already a few women employed at the mine as HR Practitioners, Geologists and electricians. Settling in was thus not a challenge but I had to work hard to get to where I am. I was fortunate enough to receive good mentorship and support from my supervisors.

Who is your female role model in the mining industry and why?

It would have to be the first female CEO of Anglo- American Platinum, of which Unki Mine Zimbabwe is a part of. Natascha Viljoen has set a precedent by impressively leading the world's largest platinum group since the year 2021. How she managed to navigate the group through the Covid times is inspirational. She has held various executive roles within her 30 years of mining experience.

Describe your first day underground.

If someone would ask me to write a story

summarizing the day that I would never forget, this would have to be it. My first underground visit was during induction in the early days of my mining attachment. I was excited but yet terrified because I had only been exposed to the underground environment from watching videos and stories that my peers would share. The graduate trainee that was assigned to induct me surely did not make it a walk in the park. This was surely the longest walk of my life, carrying what I felt at that moment was 10kgs of a rescue pack and portable light. This coupled together with my first underground mid-shift secondary blasting experience had me second-guessing my career choice by the time I went to sleep that night.

Any words of advice to women who would like to be Planning Engineers like you?

To persevere in the mining industry, as a woman you have to grow a thick skin and challenge the status quo, women can do it too. The foundation is to transform your mindset and believe in your capabilities.

Do you think a woman-only mine is possible?

The small-scale mining industry supports the feasibility of this scenario with the existence of women-only mines. In larger scale operations, however, given the shift towards mining mechanization and vast technological innovations which requires less and less physical labour, I don't see how this is not possible in the upcoming future.

Besides planning what is Bianca into?

I am an extroverted introvert. I enjoy outdoor activities such as hikes, swimming and travelling. At the same time, I enjoy staying indoors, catching up with my reading and research.





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Women are doing it all in the Zimbabwe Mining sector



Kuvimba Mining House Beyond generations

Although women currently represent a small fraction of Zimbabwe's mining industry, there are compelling reasons for them to explore career opportunities in this vital and dynamic sector.

Supported by prominent players in the field, now is an ideal time for women to enter mining.



Kuvimba CEO Simba Chinyemba

Kuvimba Mining House (KMH), one of the country's largest mining companies, proudly features women in key leadership positions within its portfolio.

KMH Chief Executive Officer Mr Simba Chinyemba says the mining giant has women leading in key roles.

"We have a strong commitment to engaging women and provide with strategic roles and responsibilities across all areas of our work. While women remain underrepresented in the mining sector, our company, together with our subsidiaries have women leading in key roles," Chinyemba said.

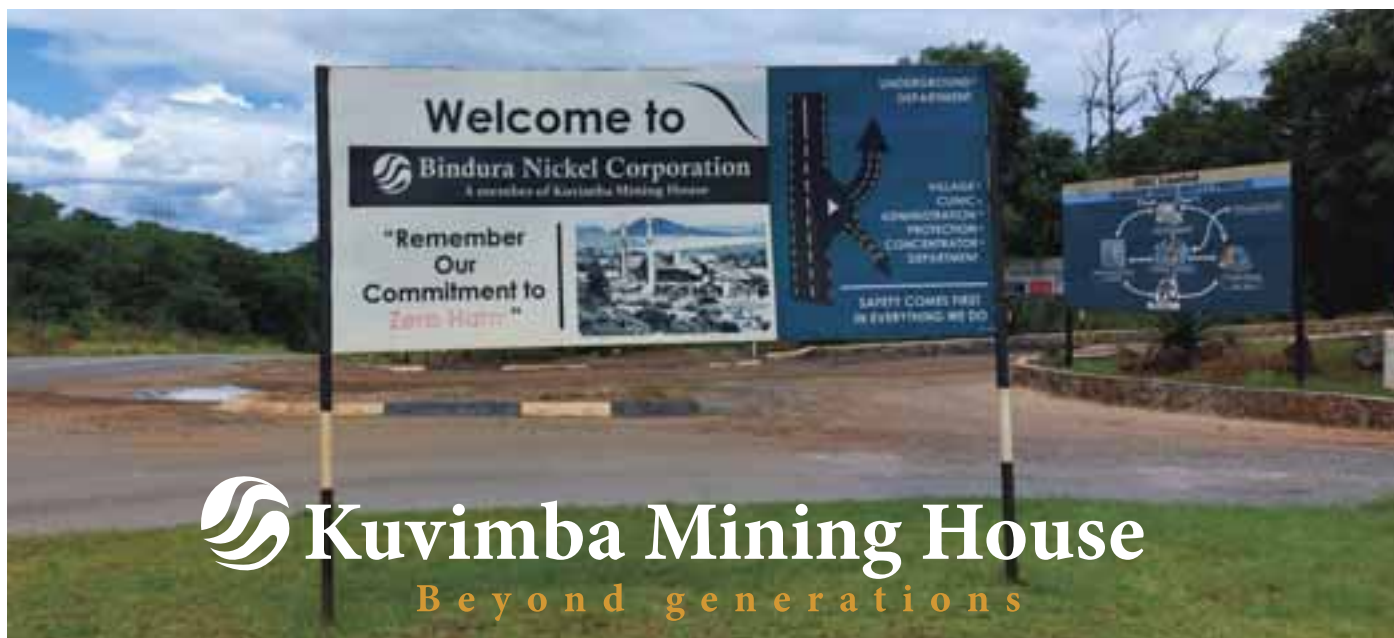
One of the most inspiring stories at one of Kuvimba Mining House's subsidiaries is of Anne Sikhosana. Sikhosana joined Bindura Nickel Company (BNC) in 1991 as a chemist and rose through the ranks to marketing

Manager.

"I came into BNC in my early-20s as a young chemist in this company. I have moved from different departments from being a pure scientist researcher stuck in the corner to marketing. The fact that I'm valued, I can make a difference and my contributions matter motivates me," Sikhosana said.



Annie Sikhosana



Orthodox thinkers consider the mining sector to be a very dangerous industry that is not fit for women. But Engineer Amanda Tigere who currently plies her trade as a Mine Captain Projects, Contracts and Best Practices defies the odds and successfully manages underground projects supervising over a hundred men at any given time.



Eng Amanda Tigere

"I am currently working as a Mine Captain Projects, Contracts and Best Practices at Bindura Nickel Corporation which is a subsidiary of Kuvimba Mining House (KMH). My role involves managing all capital and operational projects that are happening underground as well as bringing fresh ideas to always improve our way of doing things underground. Because part of my work is done with contractors, the number of men I lead is always fluctuating but it's nothing less than 100 men at any given time. This is a very upbeat and exciting role, calling for a consolidation of the skills I have acquired in my previous roles i.e. mine planning and the operations side," Amanda said.

One of the most outstanding issues brought up when Mining is a subject matter is safety. According to the Ministry of Mines and Mining Development in 2019 Zimbabwe recorded a total of 116 accidents with these resulting in 182 fatalities. As at 30 September 2022, the country had recorded 125 accidents and 139 fatalities.

In 2019 an accident occurred in the Battlefields area near Kadoma when Heavy rains flooded two mines leading to the death of eight. This usually makes women dread joining the mining sector in fear of losing their lives in mining setups.

Freda Rebecca Mine Planning Engineer Bianca Munakandafa says safety is crucial in any mining operation and proper measures should be taken on what must be done if a mine was at risk of flooding.



Eng Bianca Munakandafa

"Different flood management systems can be established dependent on the risk cause. A mine can be at risk from flooding mainly due to either surface run-off,

percolation or the intersection of an aquifer in highly water-logged areas. For run-off, controls such as canals and bundt walls for water diversion and reduction of water ingress into the mine can be used. In cases of high percolation, sumps can be developed at the bottommost part of a mine and stage pumping at different levels can be exploited. Where aquifers are concerned, drainage holes can be drilled to intersect the aquifer," Eng Munakandafa said.

Zimbabwe's mining sector is getting a much-needed transformation as women take up more mining-related jobs. Women have shown that they are capable of doing it all in the industry, from leadership positions to technical roles. As more women get involved in the sector, the industry will benefit from their diversity and fresh perspectives, leading to growth and development.





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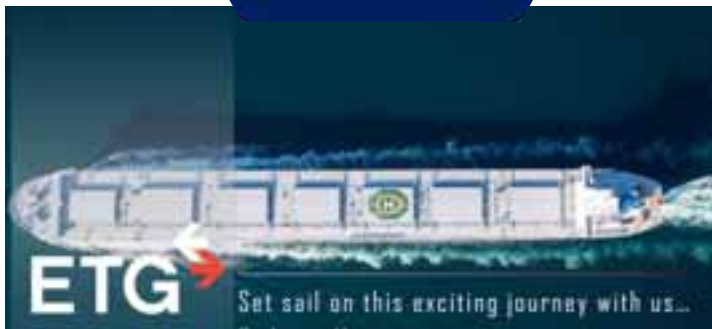
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Interview: Yevai Goto Deputy CEO ETG - CURECHEM



Why celebrate women in mining

Coming from a service provider for Mining Reagents & Explosive for small, medium, and large Mines I do understand it takes courage, strength, confidence, innovation, and talent of beautiful women out there to run Mining operations at different levels.

What is IWD

International Women's Day is a time to reflect on progress made, call for change, and to celebrate acts of courage and determination by ordinary women, who have played an extraordinary role in the history of their Communities, Countries and the World.

You are a Director of one of the most prominent Companies supplying quality chemicals not only to the Zimbabwe mining industry, what is your working day like?

Each day is a challenge, and truly comes

As a woman, you need to be always ahead, thus seeking new areas of research and working with experts to help you quickly grasp the concepts and start implementing them.

with its own challenges as we are a solution provider, not only selling Mining Chemicals and Explosives. As a woman, you need to be always ahead, thus seeking new areas of research and working with experts to help you quickly grasp the concepts and start implementing them.

How safe are chemicals in the Mining industry?

All chemicals are hazardous, and it's important to have the necessary knowledge on how to handle hazardous chemicals. That's where Women in Mining score the BEST as we have the privilege of being Mothers, Sisters, and Wives, this gives us the instinct to ensure safety, and understand the environmental impact of our surroundings.



The Chemical People

Do you have programs to train miners on the safe use of chemicals?

Yes, we do conduct " Safe handling and Use of Hazardous Chemicals Training" at the Mine level, Province level, and Country level in Partnership with Government Environmental Authorities.

CURECHEM is now ETG-CURECHEM with Mining Support Activities in Zimbabwe, Zambia, DRC, South Africa, Tanzania, Sudan, Mozambique, Ghana, Ivory Coast, and soon Nigeria. What is in those countries that we should emulate here in our mining industry?

From Engineering, Metallurgy, and Mining to Mineral Resource, Finance, and Protection Services, women are represented in all departments and Government Policies puts more effort to improve female representation in the workforce by removing barriers and providing full and genuine access to all occupations for women, including leadership roles which give Scores to the Mining Company rating system. It would be good to see such initiatives in Zimbabwe and other Countries.

What are your key competencies and skills in your current role?

I refer to them as CUC:
 C - capitalize and leverage my strength
 U - understand which competency or skill I need to capitalize on for the situation at

hand, develop and adapt.
 C - Commit to a process, person, or program that will help build the complete range of competencies required for success.



You are one of the few females who is leading in a male-dominated environment, what are some of the challenges you face and how do you overcome them?

I wouldn't say the "challenges are because I'm a Woman" but there is criticism direct or indirect, and I have learned to not be afraid to speak up and never stop learning. As a woman, I should not try to fit in, but just be myself and learn how to say "No" as opposed to just being a "Yes" woman I think this has earned me respect & loyalty

in the industry.

What role did Curechem play in moulding you in your career?

The company has always believed in talent identification, nurturing that talent, and perfecting that talent by providing all the resources and support. This has been my journey and I am not the only one at the company who has benefitted from this wonderful philosophy over the 25-plus years of the company's existence. This philosophy continues to be implemented to this day and has worked wonders for the Company.

Who is your female role model and why?

My Mother, every day would remind us "A Woman should always do more than one chore at a time, and all planning of the following day's chores before sleeping" This concept of multi-skilling, especially in today's fast-paced nature of modern Mining Technology advancement is key for growth.

We are in the women's month, what changes (if any) would you like to see in the work environment to promote women's participation at all levels?

It starts with us women, from an individual level to the corporate level, let us stand for what we believe in with a "louder Confident Voice" for Strategic Growth at all levels.

In your free time, what do you enjoy doing?

I'm always on the move from one country to another, and free time is a luxury now (laughs), however, in any country I look for nature spots, sit and soak in the beauty of nature that has existed before us and will continue to exist long after us. This keeps me humbled and always environmentally conscious.

Words of advice to women who wish to follow in your footsteps career-wise?

Flexibility is a key strength for women in businesses, I'm an Agronomist by profession but crops grow in soil and the soil is ore in mining language, as women let us learn to go beyond our immediate role and become flexible and responsive to business needs.



Interview: Blessing Hungwe inspirational leader, Miner



Can you tell me a bit about your background and how you became interested in Mining?

I went to school in Kwekwe where I stayed with my uncles who are into gold mining and they inspired me. I tried going to Diaspora but my heart and passion was back home to establish in the mining sector. I rose from humble beginnings as an artisanal miner and reinvested my earnings to mechanise and expand my mining operations.

Why did you venture into Mining and why specifically gold mining?

The inborn passion that grew in me is from my uncles (the Kadenhe's) who took me to the gold pits. Because of them, I have an eye on opportunities in that sector. Zimbabwe is a blessed country, with a vast of minerals. I got so much interested in gold mining since it's a valuable mineral with a readily available market. Gold mining is a major contributor to economic growth due to the creation of employment and business opportunities for local people and I grabbed the opportunity.

How is working with men and being the one in charge?

Indeed, it is perceived as intimidating to work in a male-dominated industry but personally, I hold the fort and stay determined. Mining is not usually selected as a career choice by women as they give value to jobs that are aligned with the traditional roles for women. Mining is considered a male-oriented sector while

women are perceived as naturally weak, so you need to go the extra mile in performing your duties as a woman in the industry. Commitment is one key driver to success.

You are one of the most looked up to women miners in the Zimbabwe mining industry, what are you doing to use your influence to inspire women miners?

I am making every effort to bring more women into the mining industry. I am a miner and a top producer of gold and hence inspiring women to invest in the mining industry hence our mantra "Women can do it". My passion for empowering women miners has resulted in me occupying various leadership positions in women in mining associations and platforms including the Zimbabwe Miners Federation (ZMF), Guruve District Women in Mining Association, Mashonaland Central Province Women in Mining Association, Zimbabwe Association of Women in Mining Associations (ZAWIMA). I am the founder and leader of the Women in Mining Association under the wings of the Ministry of Women, Community, Small, and Medium Enterprises. I also served as SADC Secretary General for SADC Women in Mining Association which I am a board member. I played a key role in the formation of the Zimbabwe Women in Mines and Mining Development Trust to make sure the interests of women in the mining industry are prioritized. I am a member of the Artisanal Small Scale Mining Committee in the African Women in Mining Association (AWIMA). Currently, I am the Regional

Knowledge Exchange Coordinator for Anglophone Africa for the Delve Exchange programme being sponsored by World Bank.

Women are still considered a vulnerable group within the mining sector and we are ring-fencing the interests of women by creating platforms like ZAWIMA which brings all women's associations together to create a formidable force and talk with one voice and be heard.

Since joining the mining industry what have been your achievements?

- Lobbying for the affordable charges for Environmental Impact Assessment for small-scale miners at Zimbabwe Alternative Mining Indaba in 2018 (ZELA) which has brought up the Environmental Management Plan (EMP)
- Zero Mercury Project (UNDP), Capacity Building for Women in Mining and managed to make Zero Mercury awareness with ZELA in Midlands
- Lobbying and achieving Women in Mining Training with the School of Mines in 2018
- Lobbied for the establishment of a gold milling centre in Guruve which was then established by ILO and AfDB through the Ministry of Women's Affairs and benefited over 200 women
- Commission on the Status of Women CSW 61 in 2017 and pushed the agenda of establishing Women in Mining Associations in Africa and speaking with one voice
- I am one of the members who contributed to the establishment of the SADC Women in Mining Association.



Can you walk me through your main roles and responsibilities at the mine?

I started small roles that involved pegging, getting the required paperwork, organizing human resources and machinery and running a day-to-day business even catering for my employees. After taking my mining venture as a real business I acquired more mining claims and created employment where I am employing supervisors, engineers, safety officers, and young technical skilled people from universities thereby creating employment. I assumed the duties of a Managing Director of my mining business, implementing internal policies and regulations which include, health and safety, gender equality, etc. I am using my mine as a free training site for women in mining.

You are one of the few females who is leading in a male-dominated environment, what are some of the challenges you face and how do you overcome them?

Women miners are always short-changed, they take ages to realize profits due to a lack of access to financial resources, mining knowledge, technical skills and equipment. It took quite a lot for me to gain confidence due to the lack of career guidance. The success of women in this male-dominated sector is usually perceived to some sexual favours, nepotism or witchcraft which was never the case in my way of achieving. So many times as a woman you are silenced when you want to speak out and it's never been



the case with me I keep lobbying. I am pushing for a regulatory framework that is accommodative of small-scale miners who are largely women. It took me time to realise substantial amounts from mining until I got money to do exploration.

Who is your female role model and why?

My role model is Honourable Applonia Munzverengi (Dr) who is currently the Minister of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution in Mashonaland East and a Senator for the Hwedza-Marondera constituency. That woman inspired me and she has women at heart. She achieved to break the stereotypes in a strongly male-dominated sector when she was the ZMF President. She lobbied for the downsizing of a number of EPOs and downsizing of ZIMASCO and ZIMALLOYS claims and got small-scale miners to benefit. She helped a lot of women to fit in the male-dominated industry and she has championed me and helped me see my own potential.

We are in the women's month, what changes (if any) would you like to see in the work environment to promote women's participation at all levels?

The interests of women can only be heard if they are involved throughout the value chain including holding leadership positions and the involvement should include increased access to financial resources, increased access to mining claims and capacity building for women.

Words of advice to women who wish to follow in your footsteps career-wise?

I think loving your job is the most important thing in your success. When you love your job, you are not afraid of failures, and through consistency and hard work, you can achieve anything you want. Mining is a vast and challenging field in which to achieve professional excellence but also fights sectoral and rigid cultural stereotypes along the way. There is a need to change the mindset of people that will compel more women to come forward and participate in this sector. I would say to other girls: you need to be self-confident and strong. Your gender should not come in the way of your career. Just be focused and work hard.

Besides the Mining business, what does Blessing enjoy doing?

I am a mother; I enjoy spending time with my family. I love going to church. Most of all I am a God-fearing woman. I am also engaged in some farming activities.



Interview - Eng Tinotenda Chitakunye Acting Section Manager Unki Mines



May we kindly have a brief introduction of yourself

My name is Stella Tinotenda Chitakunye, I am a mining Engineer by profession. I joined Anglo American Platinum Unki Mine in 2015 as Mining Graduate Trainee and have been recently appointed Acting Section Manager. I hold a BSc Mining Engineering degree from the University of the Witwatersrand and I am currently studying towards an MBA in Management Strategy.

In my other life, I am a wife to my husband and a proud mommy of two girls.

Congrats on being appointed acting section manager. Tell us about this new exciting role.

Thank you, Kelvin.

You got it right to say exciting role - I am truly excited to take up the new challenge. I am responsible for all mining operations in the South Section of the underground workings at Unki Mine. I work with a great team of capable shift supervisors and their teams and we are chasing the Anglo-American goal of safe, stable and capable production.

How do you think your colleagues describe you?

Tough one to answer! Recently I had an

earnest conversation with a colleague who described me as an introvert, therefore, I would like to believe colleagues describe me as a woman of very few but impactful words.

How do you deal with conflict in the workplace?

I believe the first step to dealing with conflict is to have an objective conversation and understand the viewpoint of others. From then we would need to agree on the points of agreement and disagreement and map the way forward to address the conflict for the gain of both parties.

You oversee/supervise men at work. What is your working relationship with them like?

I believe we have formed a good working relationship with my team of shift supervisors (all men). Critical to establishing this relationship was getting them to understand my expectations and my understanding their pain points. We then developed a workable plan to ensure that pain points are addressed so that we all pull to one objective, which is meeting business expectations.

Is there any gender discrimination at work for the girl child and can it be stopped?

Gender discrimination is a definite no-no

and has to be eradicated from the mining industry. Any comments passed should be based on merit and not petty stereotypes.

The mining environment is considered to be harsh, looking back on your career, do you sometimes regret ever choosing the mining profession?

Never! I do not regret my decision to take up Mining Engineering as a profession. I remember in college I used to say that Mining Engineering is the easiest of all engineering professions. I still believe this statement though I am also cognisant of the fact that there is great risk in the work we do and it is upon us to make the working place environment safe and conducive for all.

What are some of the most important skills for a mining engineer to have?

Continuous/Business Improvement skills. Before being appointed Acting Section Manager I was an Operational Planning Officer in the Integrated Planning and Operating Model Department. I believe the business improvement skills I acquired in that role have set me up for success in my current role.

What is the most challenging project you've worked on as a mining engineer?

I was part of the project team that rolled out the Anglo-American Operating Model at Unki Mine. The Anglo-American Operating Model is a framework which enables operations to operate in a standardised and structured way to help meet business expectations. With this project came a lot of challenges, especially in change management but I am glad the rollout was a success.



After all your experience in the Mining Industry would you recommend mining to the girl child?

Most definitely. There are vast opportunities in Mining and the girl child should also tap into them.

What do you think is the most important aspect of Mine safety?

Being a brother's keeper. This calls on all of us to correct unsafe acts/conditions in our workings so we protect ourselves and the next person from the hazard.

As "World's Greatest Mum" how do you balance mining and being a mother?

In the few weeks, I have been appointed to this role I have had to rethink my parenting model. For me to be a good mom to my girls I realized I need to make the most of my time with them - this means that when I get home I put down my laptop bag and get on the floor to play with them and give them my full attention. When I am away from them I try as much as I can to keep in touch by video calling them every night to catch up on the day and say good night.

What new technologies or innovations in



mining do you recommend to fellow mines/miners?

With the world going big on data analytics I believe that miners should invest in data – both quantity and quality. The availability of quality data will enable mines to do trend analysis and employ forecasting tools to enable management to make informed decisions.

What was/is your favourite project and why?

My first project as a Mining Graduate Trainee was the 2015 Unki Mines Rapid Results Projects – 100-Day Plan. I enjoyed working on this project as I embraced it as

INTERVIEW: ENG TINOTENDA CHITAKUNYE

an opportunity to showcase my acquired skills as a graduate and add value to the business. The project was later dubbed, "The Everyday Plan" as it saw Unki Mine registering significant improvements in production and productivity beyond the 100 days.

Do you think a women-only mine is possible?

No, I believe to make mining a success we need men and women to merge their diverse skills.

Any advice to Melo who wants to venture into Mining Engineering?

Go for it girl! It will not be easy but definitely worth your while. It all needs you to accept the challenge and face it head-on - no backing down over petty stereotype comments!

Which professional affiliations or Associations are you part of?

I am a member of SAIMM

Besides mining what's Tino into?

I am a Deacon at my church and I enjoy ministering through hosting.

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10

Reasons why more women should venture into Mining

Women make up only a fraction of the mining industry in Zimbabwe, but there are many good reasons why they should consider joining this exciting and essential sector.

With support from major players in the Mining Industry, it is an opportune moment for women to get into this industry.

Past and current women in top Mining positions in the country including Mines and Mining Development Director Dr Mercy Manyuchi, ZMF President Ms Henrietta Rushwaya, Non-executive



Director of the Zimbabwe Consolidated Diamond Company (ZCDC) Ella Muchemwa, the Head of Corporate Affairs for Mimosa Mining Company Ms Elizabeth Nerwande and many many more.

Women have taken the leading role in companies and organisations that were male-dominated and they are proving to be equally gifted as men and sometimes excel.

Here are ten of the most compelling reasons why women should give mining a try:

1. Significant Employment Opportunities

Mining is a significant source of employment for Zimbabweans, and the industry is always looking for qualified individuals to fill various positions, from mining engineers to project managers, geologists, and miners. For women who are seeking stable, long-term employment, mining is an excellent option.

2. Great Salaries

With the high demand for skilled miners,

mining jobs pay well. The industry offers excellent salary packages and benefits, making it one of the most lucrative careers available in Zimbabwe. Women who join the mining industry can expect to earn good pay and enjoy upward mobility within their respective careers.

3. Equal opportunities

In recent years, Zimbabwe has made strides in promoting gender equality in all sectors, including the mining industry. In the mining industry's top echelons, it is not uncommon to find women occupying leadership positions, calling the shots and driving change within the sector.





4. Training and Development Opportunities

Mining companies in Zimbabwe are willing to invest in their employees' professional and personal development, offering various training and development programs to improve their skills and advance their careers.

In conclusion, the mining industry offers Zimbabwean women a platform to contribute to the country's economic development, offer excellent career opportunities, and ensure job security. Women should, therefore, consider joining the mining industry to explore career growth, meaningful and impactful work and wealth creation.



5. Safe Working Conditions

In the past, the mining industry had a reputation of being dangerous, but that has significantly changed. Zimbabwe's mining industry is now one of the safest and most regulated in the region, and companies spare no expense to ensure the safety of their employees.

6. Job Satisfaction

Many women have a passion for

engineering, geology, and other technical professions, and the mining industry presents an opportunity to fulfil that passion. The mining industry provides an opportunity to make a significant contribution to the country's economic development and improve the lives of Zimbabweans.

7. Travel Opportunities

Mining provides a valuable opportunity to travel and work in various regions of the country or the world. Zimbabwe's mining industry is diverse, with many opportunities to work in gold, platinum, chrome, and diamond mines.



8. Dynamic work environment

The mining industry is diverse and dynamic, making it an exciting and challenging industry to work in. There is never a dull moment in the mining industry, and new technologies and techniques are continuously developed to improve mining operations.

9. Job Security

The mining industry is a significant contributor to Zimbabwe's economy, and as the sector continues to grow, the



demand for skilled workers will only increase. As a result, professionals in the mining sector can rest assured that they will always have job security.



10. Lead the way

As women continue to defy gender barriers and move into traditionally male-dominated industries, pioneering women in Zimbabwe's mining industry have an opportunity to inspire others to join the sector. Their leadership can encourage more women to join the industry and help change longstanding perceptions.



AGS Zimbabwe: the reliable service partner to your mining operation

Navigating the Zimbabwean mining landscape can be a challenge without the right expertise and local knowledge.

Fortunately, AGS Zimbabwe is here to help! We spoke to branch manager Yann Yondeau to find out how AGS Zimbabwe can support your mining operations in three key areas.

AGS Zimbabwe brings skills exchange

Zimbabwean mines frequently recruit specialists from China, India, Mauritius and South Africa to manage operations and share their expertise. Finding the right person for the job is only part of the process, however, you still need to move them to Zimbabwe.

"International removals and relocations can be a complex and stressful process, but AGS Zimbabwe makes it easy," says Yann. "We are part of a global network of 147 AGS branches in 96 countries around the world, so no matter where your new hire might be, we will work with the AGS branch in that country to make their move to Zimbabwe seamless and stress-free, providing a single point of contact for all

their international relocation needs."

Do you only need AGS to ship your employee's household goods? No problem! Yann and his team have more than 25 years of experience in international removals. They can also arrange your employee's Zimbabwean work visa, find them a place to stay, and help select the right school for the children if needed.

Legal compliance without the hustles

Records management is another critical component of any successful mining operation. By law, Zimbabwean mines must store a variety of important documents, including contracts, licenses, permits, geological reports, financial records, and more. AGS Zimbabwe's comprehensive records management services allow you to stay compliant with the Zimbabwe Mines and Minerals Act and avoid potential penalties from government audits.

"Our team of experts can help you design and implement a records management system that meets your specific needs and ensures that your important information

and documents are stored securely and are easily accessible," states Yann.

"AGS Zimbabwe offers the full range of records management services, including physical records management, electronic records management and digital imaging."

Storage solutions

In addition to their records management and international removals and relocation services, AGS Zimbabwe offers temporary and permanent storage solutions from their 1091m2 warehouse in Harare. Your items are protected 24/7 by on-site security and kept dry, safe and ready for use when you need them.

"At AGS Zimbabwe, we understand that successful mining operations depend on having the right tools and resources in place," says Yann. "That's why we are dedicated to supporting Zimbabwe's mining industry with the best possible services in records management, international removals, and relocations."



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