



# WiM Women in Mining (WiM)

Beijing+30: A landmark anniversary in the fight for gender equality.

APRIL 2025  
NEWSLETTER



There is too much bad news to justify complacency. There is too much good news to justify despair.

Donella Meadows.

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The famous quote by American environmental scientist, specialist and educator, Donella “Dana” Meadows, taken from her article titled “Is the Future Our Choice or Our Fate?” which was published in April 2001, aptly describes our collective global reality today, while serving as a lens through which we can look at past, present and future efforts to foster transformation in the South African mining sector.

Great strides have been made to transform the mining sector to a more inclusive and diverse environment in which all workers can safely carry out their trade and advance professionally.

In 2025, we celebrate the 30 years since the signing of the Beijing Declaration and the adoption of the Platform for action in 1995. The declaration was adopted by in 1995, at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, 189 heads of states signed the declaration as a global commitment to the protection of women’s human rights and creating safe equal societies where all can thrive. The signing of the declaration was a watershed moment in the fight for the rights of all women and children and served as a global blueprint for each government to influence domestic and foreign policy as well as investments in laws, policies and programmes to advance gender equality.

“ Is the Future Our Choice or Our Fate? ”

Locally, our collective efforts as a sector have borne fruit as the participation of women in mining has increased notably since the years immediately following legislation changes which repealed the ban on women working underground in mines in 1996. Women now make up 19% of the total mining workforce and

take up various roles working in mining-related jobs or administrative roles within the sector.

International Women’s Day was celebrated globally on 8 March under the theme, “For All Women and Girls: Rights. Equality. Empowerment, and Minerals Council celebrated the auspicious event on 6 March at a breakfast which was also held to honour 10 women who have made notable contributions in mining, as part of their WiM programmes annual WiM Heroes campaign. During the breakfast, Ms. Ayanda Mvimbi, the Lead and Women’s economic empowerment specialist for the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) in the South Africa Multi-Country Office lamented the progress made and expressed the sentiment that “the promise is slipping away”, referring to the hope surrounding the signing of the Beijing Declaration and the commitments to global gender equality made by heads of states and policymakers 30 years ago. Much notable progress has been made globally and specifically in South Africa, to advance women’s participation in the formal economy, ensure their

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human rights and create safe spaces for women to thrive. South Africa has enacted progressive laws and workplace policy frameworks to ensure the realisation of these ideals. However, despite this notable traction, challenges faced by women and girls when the declaration was signed 30 years ago still persist not only in our society, but in the mining sector.

Gender discrimination remains deeply rooted in our collective societal psyche, translating to persistent biases in the world of work. Income inequality as illustrated by the gender pay gap continues to render women disproportionately susceptible to poverty. This is exacerbated by

unequal domestic care burden, which is exacerbated by climate change. The global crisis of violence against women and girls continues with few signs of abating, especially in South Africa, which has one of the leading incidences of Gender Based Violence and Femicide globally. Furthermore, women and girls still face far greater risks from gender discrimination when they also confront other forms of exclusion, such as those based on disability, race, age, income or sexual orientation. The post-covid economic, and geo-political climate have contributed to conflicting priorities for leaders, policymakers and business. This is more so in a South African context, where systemic disruptions from unstable energy supply, logistics challenges and volatile commodity prices have significantly impacted the mining industry.

However, even within this context, Minerals Council and its members remain committed to industry-wide transformation and the creation of a safe, equitable world of work that is diverse, inclusive and sustainable.

Building on the learnings and successes of the WiM strategy, which was first launched in 2020, which successfully

raised awareness of gender diversity and inclusion in mining, the Minerals Council and its members approved the crafted of a revised WiM strategy that is cohesive, allows for a targeted approach to address the challenges faced by women in mining. Placing an emphasis on; inclusive leadership; respectful workplaces; safe, equitable and dignified work environments; diverse talent and development and career advancement; and data-driven accountability and continuous improvement, all under-pinned by industry collaboration so achieve real societal impact.

The business case for gender equality in mining remains compelling, and the human imperative undeniable. Therefore, as we celebrate our achieved advances in realising a feminist society, we ought to remain steadfast resolve to acceleration action to make Rights, Equality, Empowerment a reality for All women and Girls.

**Tumi Nkomo, Project Manager,**  
Minerals Council  
Women in Mining Programme

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# Future-Proofing Careers, Skills, and Values: Gender-based Violence and Harassment: A Social Barrier in Attracting and Retaining Young Talent

The 2025 Mining Indaba, themed “Future-Proofing African Mining, Today!”, convened key stakeholders including government, private sector, suppliers, and service providers to explore the future of African mining. Over five days, discussions focused on sustainable mining practices, workforce development, exploration, and critical minerals, with the Minerals Council South Africa actively contributing to these conversations.



One of the sessions during the indaba was the Young Leaders Programme, a discussion on equipping future mining professionals with the necessary skills, values, and leadership qualities to navigate an evolving industry. The panel included Minerals Council South Africa representatives Ms Lindokuhle Zwane and Mr Mustak Ally as well as Zenzi Awases (President, Association of Women in Mining Africa), Mpho Mookapele (CEO, Water & Energy Sector Education and Training Authority), Nevashnee Naicker (Interim Executive Head of External Affairs – Anglo American, Africa & Australia

Region) and Glen Nwaila (Director, GeoData Analysis, University of the Witwatersrand).

The panel analysed findings from a recent Brunswick report on the perceptions of mining by students in the United Kingdom and South Africa. The aim of the research was to understand how students view the mining industry and the factors that make it attractive or unattractive to potential candidates, and to gain insight into what the industry should do to better communicate to these important stakeholders who are the

future of mining. According to the report, the mining industry faced several perception issues that impact on its ‘employer brand’, including views of the industry being a male-dominated, macho environment, being stagnant and slow moving, lacking innovation, having negative health and safety issues, and a perceived poor work/ life balance. Of the respondents to the survey, 60% expressed an interest in mining careers, however they were deterred by the social challenges endemic to the industry, particularly GBVF.

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# Future-Proofing Careers, Skills, and Values: Gender-based Violence and Harassment: A Social Barrier in Attracting and Retaining Young Talent (continued)

## GBVF: A Barrier to Attracting and Retaining Talent in the African Mining Industry.

A key concern was whether the mining sector was doing enough to create safe, inclusive workplaces. GBVF remained a major deterrent, threatening the industry's ability to attract and retain young talent, particularly women. Lindokuhle Zwane emphasised that while upskilling and career development programs were crucial, they must be accompanied by workplace safety measures to ensure mining environments are free from harassment, discrimination, and violence.

Efforts to address GBVF in mining host communities have been made through initiatives such as the Thuthuzela Care Centres partnership. However, more direct action was needed within workplaces.

These initiatives aim to remove systemic barriers, enabling women and young professionals to enter and excel in the sector without fear.

Beyond safety concerns, panelists emphasised that technical expertise alone was insufficient for long-term

career success in mining. Future professionals must also develop the following skills:

- **Leadership and ethical responsibility**
- **Adaptability and resilience**
- **Collaboration and emotional intelligence**

Panelists stressed that workplace policies also play a crucial role in fostering a new generation of mining leaders and career growth should be holistic.

## A Call to Action for the Mining Industry

The session concluded with panelists sharing personal experiences and insights, reinforcing the urgency of workplace transformation. The discussion was not just about future-proofing skills and careers but also about shaping an industry culture that prioritises safety, equity, and inclusion.

Ensuring a zero-tolerance approach to GBVF is not just a compliance issue—it is essential for the industry's future viability. Mining companies must act decisively to create environments where young professionals—especially women—can thrive without fear of violence or discrimination.



The 2025 Mining Indaba sent a clear message:

The future of mining depends on its ability to create safe, equitable, and empowering workplaces where the next generation of talent can flourish and lead the industry forward.

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## Fraser Alexander



**For ALL  
Women and Girls:  
Rights. Equality.  
Empowerment.**

**Accelerating Action at  
Fraser Alexander**



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## Fraser Alexander (continued)

Women in mining leadership are redefining the industry, proving that resilience, expertise, and strategic vision are key drivers of success and optimised in diverse and inclusive workplaces. At Fraser Alexander, women leaders are accelerating progress, breaking barriers, and paving the way for a more inclusive and equitable mining sector.

Fraser Alexander actively creates an inclusive and diverse workplace. Claire McMaster, Executive Head of HR and a member of the company's 40% female executive representation, emphasises the organisation's commitment to gender equity, ensuring that policies, equipment, leadership practices, and technology promote an equitable environment.

"Key to our success is the work being done by the Women in Mining Fraser Alexander (WIMFA) team which is an internal association of volunteer employees currently headed by Humbulani Havhi, the Executive Technical Advisor. Havhi aims to create an inclusive and empowering environment through WIMFA by



**Key to our success is the work being done by the Women in Mining Fraser Alexander (WIMFA) team...**

strengthening networks, establishing advocacy & support platforms, creating professional growth through mentorship, and raising awareness on workplace safety and harassment reporting in 2025" states McMaster.

"In 2024, women represented 15.6% of the Fraser Alexander global workforce, up from 14% the previous year. We are aiming for 20% female representation in 2025, with a women-led board comprising 43% female members.

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### Fraser Alexander (continued)



Additionally, within Fraser Alexander, women hold 40% of top management roles, 50% of senior management positions, and 30% of middle management roles,” McMaster adds.

Thembeke Mkhize, General Manager for Mineral Processing illustrates the feats women in mining at Fraser Alexander can achieve through dedication, determination and taking advantage of the opportunities present in the organisation. Her journey is a testament to the power of self-driven

growth. Mkhize has built her career on continuous learning and adaptive leadership. “Every interaction, whether with seniors, peers, or juniors, presents a learning opportunity that I actively seek out,” she explains. While her expertise is in Extractive Metallurgy, she realised early on that her true strength and passion lie in leading people.

This self-awareness has propelled her across the mining industry value chain, allowing her to drive impactful change. “My success has been driven by my passion and intentionality—by reading, seeking advice, asking questions, and truly listening,” she adds.

Following in the footsteps of leaders like Mkhize is Nondumiso Nkuna, Senior Superintendent, has worked across tailings dams in Limpopo, Mpumalanga, and KwaZulu-Natal, developing a deep passion for the industry since she first joined the organisation in 2014. “It was during this time that my love for mining took root. I knew I wanted to grow in this field and make a real impact,” she recalls.

Nkuna later made history as one of Fraser Alexander’s first female contract managers, leading by example and creating opportunities for other women

in an industry historically dominated by men. “Breaking new ground wasn’t easy, but it was necessary. Women have a place in mining, and I am committed to ensuring we take up space confidently,” she asserts.

Mkhize challenges the notion that women require different opportunities or treatment to succeed in mining. “I have never expected special treatment based on my gender, nor have I managed my teams with any gender-based bias,” she explains.

Her advice to women aiming to grow in the sector is clear: “First and foremost, believe in your competence. Women, like any other professionals, belong in boardrooms, on-site, and in offices—they must work hard to earn their place. Just like every success-driven individual, women should consistently seek opportunities for learning, growth, skills transfer, showcasing expertise, and leadership.” By staying intentional, open to learning, and committed to excellence, she believes that women can break barriers and thrive in this dynamic industry.

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## Northam Platinum Mine

On the 2nd of December 2024, Northam Platinum Mine's Zondereinde's management and workforce came together to mark two pivotal global initiatives: World AIDS Day and the 16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children. The event was crucial for shedding light on these issues that profoundly impact society.



A walkathon took place on the day, symbolising Northam's collective journey towards health, solidarity, and social change. Employees and management walked shoulder to shoulder, transforming a simple walk into a meaningful statement of shared commitment for change at all levels of the organisation.

Platinum Health General Practitioner, Dr. Ntando Makatini, emphasised the importance of prevention, regular testing, and access to treatment for those living with HIV. He stressed that medical advancements have made it possible for people living with HIV to lead healthy, productive lives, and early

diagnosis and adherence to treatment protocols are key to achieving this.

Senior General Manager, Thomas Ntuli highlighted the connection between World AIDS Day and 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence and echoed the sentiments, underscoring the importance of awareness and education. He expressed his hope that through collective action, the employees could work towards eradicating the stigma and discrimination surrounding HIV/AIDS and all forms of harassment. He encouraged employees to take the lead in fostering an inclusive, supportive environment where individuals can

speak freely about their health without fear of judgment.

To observe World Aids Day, the employees lit candles in support and remembrance of our loved ones who are living with the disease and those who succumb to this global

**With shared efforts, awareness, and collective action, together, we can make strides toward a healthier and more equitable world for all**

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pandemic. As the world continues to face the challenge of HIV/AIDS, the commemoration of World AIDS Day serves as a reminder of the ongoing fight for health equity, the importance of supporting those living with HIV, and the need to continue working towards a future without stigma and discrimination.

“With shared efforts, awareness, and collective action, together, we can make strides toward a healthier and more equitable world for all” alluded Ntuli.



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The Minerals Council expresses gratitude to the following members who contributed to the articles of the newsletter:

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**Mining Indaba Future-Proofing  
Careers, Skills, and Values: Gender-  
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A Social Barrier in Attracting and  
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Northam has requested that we  
don't credit a specific individual

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