



Centre for Conflict Management and Transformation

**EXPLORING THE CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES AND EXPERIENCES OF
WOMEN IN MINING IN ZVISHAVANE DISTRICT OF THE
MIDLANDS PROVINCE IN ZIMBABWE**



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Centre for Conflict Management and Transformation 28 Oxford
Avenue, Newlands, Harare P.O. Box A 1755, Avondale, Harare

Telephone: +263 242 746016, 776784

Email: ccmtzimbabwe15@gmail.com

Website: www.ccmt.co.zw

In collaboration with

Midlands State University

The Gender Institute

P Bag 9055 Gweru Zimbabwe

Tel: +263 54 2260359

Fax: +263 54 2260233

infoandpr@staff.msu.ac.zw

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Authors: Gladys Balance, Nyevero Maruzani, Shadreck Vengesai

Research Team: Wonder Phiri, Alethea Chinowaita, Rosemary Detserai, Ennie Flora Gatsi

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Map of Zvishavane

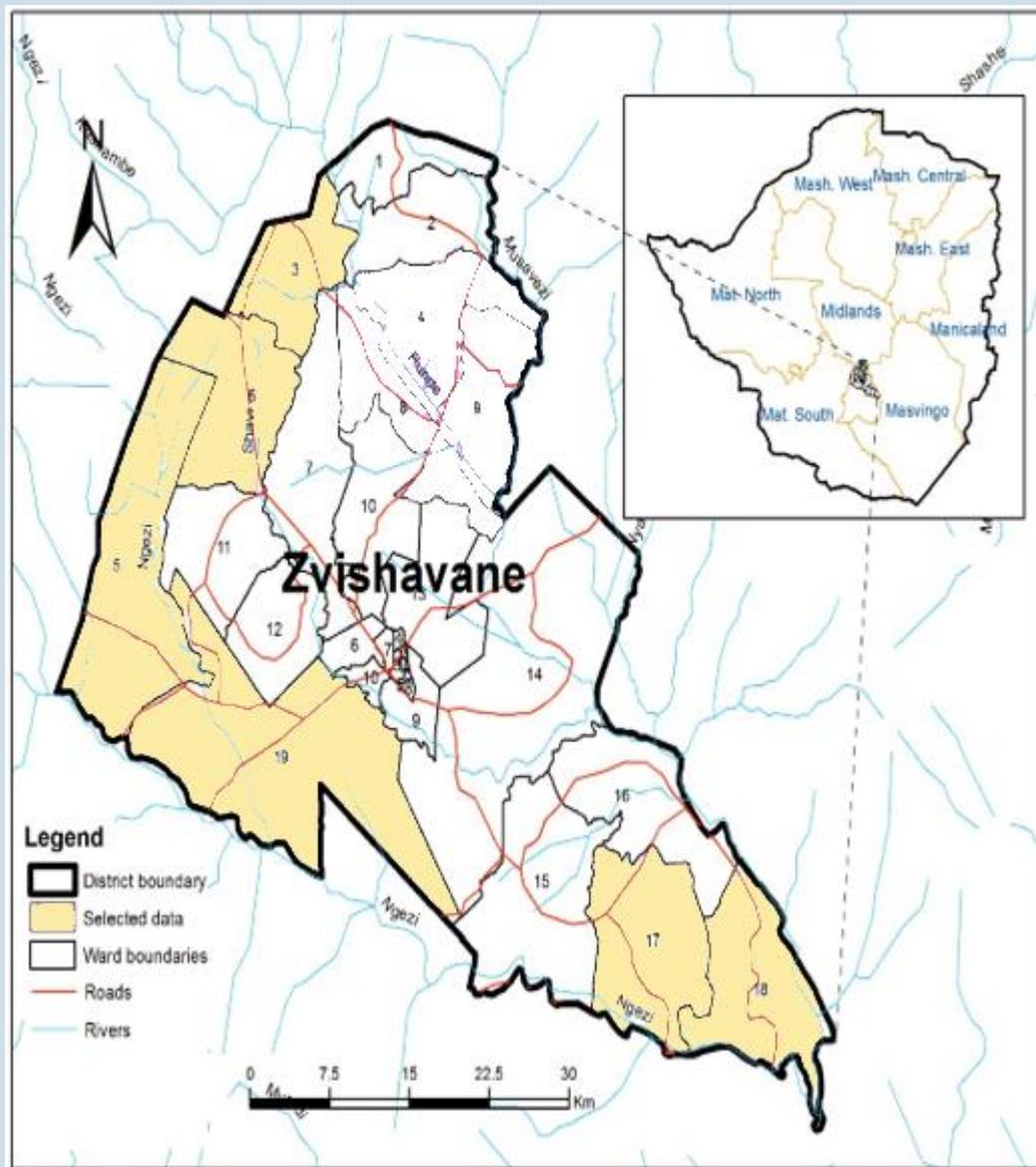


Figure 1 Map of study Area: Data was collected from wards 3,5,6,17,18 & 19

Acronyms

AREX:	Agricultural and Rural Extension
ASSM:	Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining
CCMT:	Centre for Conflict Management and Transformation
DDC:	District Development Coordinator
EMA:	Environmental Management Agency
EPO:	Exclusive Prospecting Orders
ILO:	International Labour Organization
MSU:	Midlands States University
MWAGCD:	Ministry of Women Affairs Gender and Community Development
RBZ:	Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe
RDC:	Rural District Council
WEE:	Women Economic Empowerment
ZANU PF:	Zimbabwe African National Union: Patriotic Front
ZELA:	Zimbabwe Lawyers Association
ZIMASSET:	Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation
ZRP:	Zimbabwe Republic Police

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The principal dimension of segregation in the Extractive Industry is the degree to which men and women are benefitting differently across the mining value chain. This is despite years of advocacy for gender equality in accessing and controlling mining resources. Arguably, the mining industry has remained a de facto male preserve symbolized by pervasiveness of socio-economic restrictions on women. Many studies have tried to masculinize participation in the extractive industry and as such, very little literature focuses on participation along the axis of gender power relations. For example, when one considers ownership of many lucrative mining claims, processing plants and mineral markets, an insignificant percentage of these are owned by women. Notably 11-15% of the estimated 50 000 small scale mines in the country are owned by women¹. In her speech on the 23rd edition of the Mining, Engineering and Transport Expo (Mine Entra of 2018), Minister of Gender and Women Affairs in Zimbabwe, Sithembiso Nyoni highlighted that 30% of the estimated 1,5 million artisanal and small-scale miners are women. Dimensions on discrimination against women in the extractive industry have remained partly addressed, passed over or discussed from a gender “neutral” standpoint. While there has been much pomp and fare about gender equality in Zimbabwe, women in mining are being failed at supposedly fairness from a legal and policy perspective. According to the Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development, inequality gaps between men and women in the mining sector are too glaring to ignore².

The gendered nature of regularizing women’s operations as miners, access and control of resources in the industry, restricted claim ownership and other factors contribute to these inequalities³. Imperative to note, is how these mining concerns disproportionately affect the economic and social lives of women compared to their male counterparts⁴. The few women who have risen through the ranks of resource ownership eventually crush as a result of

¹ Nyakanyanga S., Women Miners’ Stake a Claim in Zimbabwean Women and Economy Interprets News Agency online <http://www.ipsnews.net/2018/03/women-miners-stake-claim-zimbabwe/>

² “Women Miners more vulnerable to machete attacks”, Herald Online, 4 February 2020, <https://www.herald.co.zw/women-miners-more-vulnerable-to-machete-attacks/>

³ Jain, S. 2015 Empowering Women and Tackling Income inequalities <https://blogs.imf.com>

⁴ Balance; G, Women in Mining :Towards a Gendered Paradigm Shift to Participation in the Extractive Industry in Zimbabwe in Putting Women at the Centre of Extractivism: A Compendium on Gender and Extractives. Women and Law in Southern Africa , 2019 and Maruzani, N, Gender Perspectives and the Sustainability of Work Practices in Artisanal and Small-scale Mining Operations: The Case of Wanderer Mine, Shurugwi in Putting Women at the Centre of Extractivism: A Compendium on Gender and Extractives, Compiled by Women and Law in Southern Africa, 2019

restrictive and artificial gendered barriers. This study seeks to broaden an understanding of the position of women in the extractive industry. This was done by interrogating the discrimination that characterize the experiences of women in the extractive industry. The study dwelt on the opportunities, challenges and experiences of women miners and women mining host community members in Zvishavane District of the Midlands Province in Zimbabwe.



Open pits left by chrome mining in Zvishavane

2.0 RESEARCH PURPOSE AND QUESTIONS

2.1 Objectives of the Research

The overall objective of the study is to explore the inclusion/exclusion of gender in the mining industry, with specific focus on the opportunities and challenges for women in mining. Specifically, the study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- ❖ To explore the inclusion/exclusion of gender in the mining industry in Zvishavane District.
- ❖ To establish the opportunities that exist for women in mining in Zvishavane District.
- ❖ To unpack the prevailing challenges for women in mining in Zvishavane District.
- ❖ To proffer recommendations towards improving work ethics for women in Extractive Industry in Zvishavane District.

2.2 Research Questions

The overall research question the study seeks to answer is:

- ❖ How is gender included/ excluded in the mining industry? What are the opportunities and challenges for women in mining in Zvishavane District?

Specifically, the study seeks to answer the following questions:

- ❖ How is gender included/excluded in the mining industry in Zvishavane district?
- ❖ What are the opportunities that exist for women in mining in Zvishavane District?
- ❖ What are the prevailing challenges for women in mining in Zvishavane District?
- ❖ How can these challenges be addressed?

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Study Design: Project Activities, Action Plan or Approach

The study is located within the Feminist Standpoint paradigm. A feminist standpoint paradigm believes that knowledge is a lived experience hence it is situated and has multiple realities. The paradigm attempts to pay attention to situational knowledge, that is knowledge that reveals the experiences and voices of marginalized others⁵. These experiences and voices are not only incorporated but serve as a starting point for building gender knowledge in the mining sector. This study analysed the Zvishavane female artisanal and small-scale miners' as well as female mining host community members' narratives, guarding against homogenization of their experiences by looking at different aspects contributing towards their exclusion or inclusion in the mining sector. The study was thus guided by a Phenomenology approach which because of being deductive⁶, addresses descriptions such as "what women experience' and how they experience participation in the extractive industry. These aspects include claim ownership, access to mining resources, and regularization of mining operations, their experiences in syndicates, just to mention a few. It involves the generation and analysis of data that seeks to uncover meanings and to promote the understanding of their lived experiences as miners and mining members of the mining host communities⁷. The study is underpinned by ecofeminism as a theoretical framework as well as the agency and capabilities analysis framework⁸ as a tool of gender analysis in the extractive industry. The study was informed by Richard Aunty's studies which indicate that in many instances, there is negative correlation between natural resource abundance and development⁹.

⁵ Cresswell J., *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 2009

⁶ Moustakas, C. E. *Phenomenological research methods*. Sage Publications, 1994

⁷ Balance, G, *Women in Mining :Towards a Gendered Paradigm Shift to Participation in the Extractive Industry in Zimbabwe* in *Putting Women at the Centre of Extractivism: A Compendium on Gender and Extractives*. Women and Law in Southern Africa , 2019 and Maruzani, N, *Gender Perspectives and the Sustainability of Work Practices in Artisanal and Small-scale Mining Operations: The Case of Wanderer Mine, Shurugwi* in *Putting Women at the Centre of Extractivism: A Compendium on Gender and Extractives*, Compiled by Women and Law in Southern Africa, 2019

⁸ Sen A., *Social Exclusion: Concept, application and scrutiny*, Social Development Papers No. 1 Office of Environment and Social Development Asian Development Bank, June 2000

⁹ Aunty, R., *Resource Abundance and Economic Development*, Oxford University Press, 2001

3.2 Study Population and Sampling

Sampling in the study was purposive and sequential. Network referencing was used to select respondents from each category for in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, the categories which include, female claim owners, aspiring claim owners, females displaced by mining activities, women not displaced but whose livelihoods were impacted by mining activities. Male's views and perspectives were solicited to provide disaggregated data on the situation of women in this sector. Total sample for interviews was determined by data saturation¹⁰. Saturation is when no new information is obtained by collecting new data. Therefore, the study sample size was not determined; instead the size was determined in the field when the point of saturation was reached. 78 questionnaires were administered on artisanal and small-scale miners (45 women and 33 men). Another 115 questionnaires were administered mining host communities (50 men and 65 women). Focus group discussions were held for men and women, per category. Officials from Government Institutions linked to the mining sector were interviewed for their expert knowledge on mining, and for issues relating to gender mainstreaming in the mining sector.

3.3 Data Collection Methods and Instruments

This study made use of a qualitative approach with an aim to understand and describe human behaviour from the insider's perspective¹¹. In order to adopt this emic perspective, the methods which target subjective understanding were deemed relevant. This study employed four methods of generating data: analysis of the documents, especially records of claim ownership, possession of mining resources, records on displacements and livelihood losses due to mining, individual in-depth face to face interviews, questionnaires as well as focus group discussions.

Documents were useful in making inferences about the women who own mining claims. The use of documents was therefore restricted largely to literature reviews; the literature helped in theories and gave an appreciation of the context and the challenges and prospects available for women to participate in the mining sector. They also provided a glimpse into the due

¹⁰ Glaser and Straus 1964; Straus and Corbin 1998; Elam 2003; and Flick 2006

¹¹ Babbie, E., *The Basics of Social Research*, 2013, retrieved on the 5th of February 2020 from https://books.google.co.zw/books/about/The_Basics_of_Social_Research.html?id=vGP1QJ99bVgC&redir_esc=y

practices and processes of acquiring claims, challenges and prospects of completing the processes. Also, documents analysed revealed the gendered nature of claim ownership. Secondly, in-depth face to face interviews were used in this study to understand, from the women's point view the extent and nature of socio-economic challenges they encounter in the extractive industry. In keeping with views from Diccico-Bloom¹², the study used semi structured interviews and these interviews formed the nerve of the qualitative data collection. These were scheduled in advance and they were organized around a set of predetermined open-ended questions, with some of the questions emerging from the dialogue between the interviewer and interviewee. In-depth interviews facilitated access to the story behind the interviewees' lived experiences. In this regard this study gained insights in relation to perceptions, meanings and definitions women give for their participation in the male dominated mining sector.

Coupled with interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs) become part of the ensemble for data generation. FGDs are a form of qualitative strategy in which attitudes, opinions or perceptions towards an issue, product, service or program are explored through an open discussion¹³. In this study open discussions were held with female miners from Zvishavane District and these were useful as they gave insights on challenges and obstacles faced by female miners as well as community related challenges experienced within the community. Having to work with the villagers in these communities was important and in providing their real-life views¹⁴. The study also used quantitative methods to collect and illustrate data using figures, graphs and pie charts.

3.4 Data Analysis Methods

Analysis of data in the study was both qualitative and quantitative. Specifically, in this study two levels of data analysis were involved. First, the agency and capabilities analysis framework was used and the second level employed was thematic analysis of the data to search for emergent themes for each category¹⁵.

¹² Diccico-Bloom, B., *The qualitative research interview*, March 2006

¹³ Kumar, R., *Research Methodology: A Step-by-Step Guide for Beginners*. 3rd Edition. Sage, New Delhi, 2011

¹⁴ Sood, A, Rani, S, Mazta, S, Sharma, A, Bhardwaj, A, Raina, S, Verma, G, *A Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Based Study to Understand the Patient Perspectives of Health Care Along with the Satisfaction to Services Among the Adult HIV/AIDS Patients*, 2016

¹⁵ Braun and Clarke, *Using thematic analysis in psychology*, in *Qualitative Research in Psychology* Volume 3, 2006 – Issue 2

3.5 Mechanisms to Assure the Quality of the Study [Reliability and Validity]

Strategies employed to address rigor in this research included authenticity and trustworthiness. Authenticity dealt with the wider political impact of research.¹⁶ To ensure authenticity and fairness through representation of different groups were upheld while for trustworthiness, three measures were used: credibility, triangulation and member checking.¹⁷ .Instruments were pilot tested to a group of women who are in mining which enabled the restructuring and re-ordering of questions.

¹⁶ Taylor, Peter and Medina, Milton, Educational Research Paradigms: From Positivism to Multiparadigmatic. Journal of Meaning Centred Education, Vol 1, Issue 1, 2013

¹⁷ Moser A., and Korstjens I., Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 4: Trustworthiness and publishing, in European Journal of General Practice, Vol 24, Issue 1

4.0 CHALLENGES FOR ARTISANAL AND SMALL-SCALE MINERS

4.1 Claim Ownership

Though not the majority, a sizable number of women have acquired their claims through the ZIMASSET program and through traditional leaders. The ZIMASSET program was basically a process of claim allocation and it was reported that this was through ZANU PF structures. Although the ZIMASSET allocation program has since been discontinued, no efforts were made to assist the miners who got their claims through this program to regularize their operations. The fact that claims were distributed on a partisan basis by the ruling party demonstrates that government is contributing to informality, and by extension to the problems associated with it such as environmental degradation, violence, lack of safety of miners, illicit financial flows, non-compliance to tax regulations, perpetual threat to claim dispossession by miners, to mention just a few, in the mining sector. This also casts a shadow on the government’s sincerity to formalize the operations of artisanal and small-scale miners. Although traditional leaders do not have a legal mandate to allocate claims, they are still doing so as illustrated in Fig.2 below. Although there were fewer male respondents on the data illustrated below, there were still more male respondents who got their claims through formal means than women despite there being more female respondents.

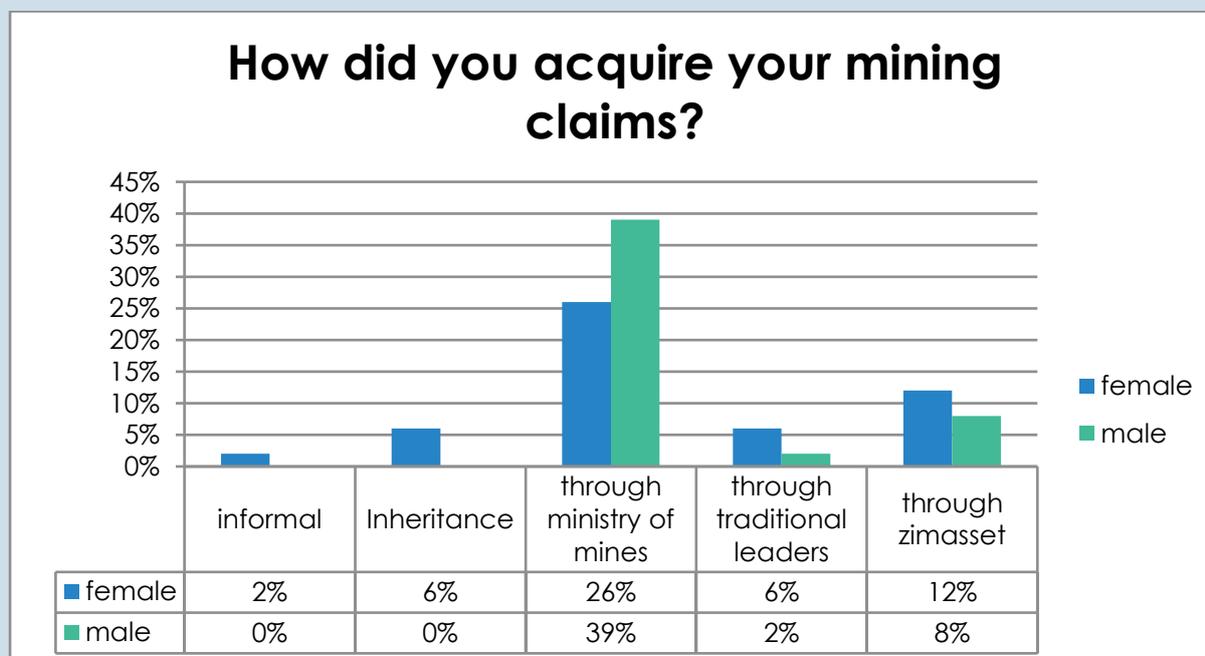


Figure 2 How did you acquire your mining claims?

As illustrated above, widowhood contributed to some women venturing into mining to protect their inheritance from being taken away by extended family. Women, faced with possibilities of losing mining claims to relatives, were forced to forego cultural norms, values and beliefs to enter the male dominated industry as means of safeguarding family inheritance. This reinforces the notion that women enter into mining as a result of familial relations, that is, through their close relations to males and their survival therein is also owed to these relations. This is consistent with gender socialization. However, other women indicated that they decided to venture into mining to fight the feminization of poverty¹⁸ as they felt that often their needs are not being met by their male counterparts who are already enjoying benefits from mining, despite the cultural perspective that males are the providers or the heads of the families.

4.2 Claim Registration

Claims allocated by traditional leaders and through the ZIMASSET program are not registered and as such, are illegal. Owing to their registration status, they do not practice Safety and Health requirements in terms of the Environmental Management Authority (EMA) Act and face a perpetual risk of being dispossessed of these claims. Their informality also impedes them from accessing finances to boost their business. They are also at the mercy of law enforcement agencies like the EMA which regularly fines them, enlarging the dent in their already dwindled fortunes. As illustrated by Fig. 3 below, it takes up to five years for one to complete registering a claim. Small scale miners have to travel long distances to licencing areas. The closest licencing offices are in Gweru, some 120 km from Zvishavane. Once papers are submitted, participants pointed out that the processing time is unreasonably lengthy and marred by uncertainties. These observations were said to contribute towards women abandoning the process midway. High licencing costs also act as deterrents in obtaining a licence at all points in the supply chain, from mining to milling and even buying. Licencing costs are not only high, they are multiple. These include Environmental Impact Assessments/Environmental Management Plan, water permit, explosive purchasing and storage permit, ore movement and mining permit, council levy, mining timber permit, ZIMRA

¹⁸ Balance G.; Women in Mining :Towards a Gendered Paradigm Shift to Participation in the Extractive Industry in Zimbabwe in Putting Women at the Centre of Extractivism: A Compendium on Gender and Extractives. Women and Law in Southern Africa, 2019

levy, gold buying permit, waste disposal licence, effluent discharge licence, emission licence, just to mention a few. These administrative challenges disproportionately affect women. One women miner had this to say:

“As women, it is difficult for us to acquire the mining claims in our own right, we often are forced to seek permission from our spouses to travel to Gweru for these procedures, and you know it is always difficult for us to be away from home even for a single day.”

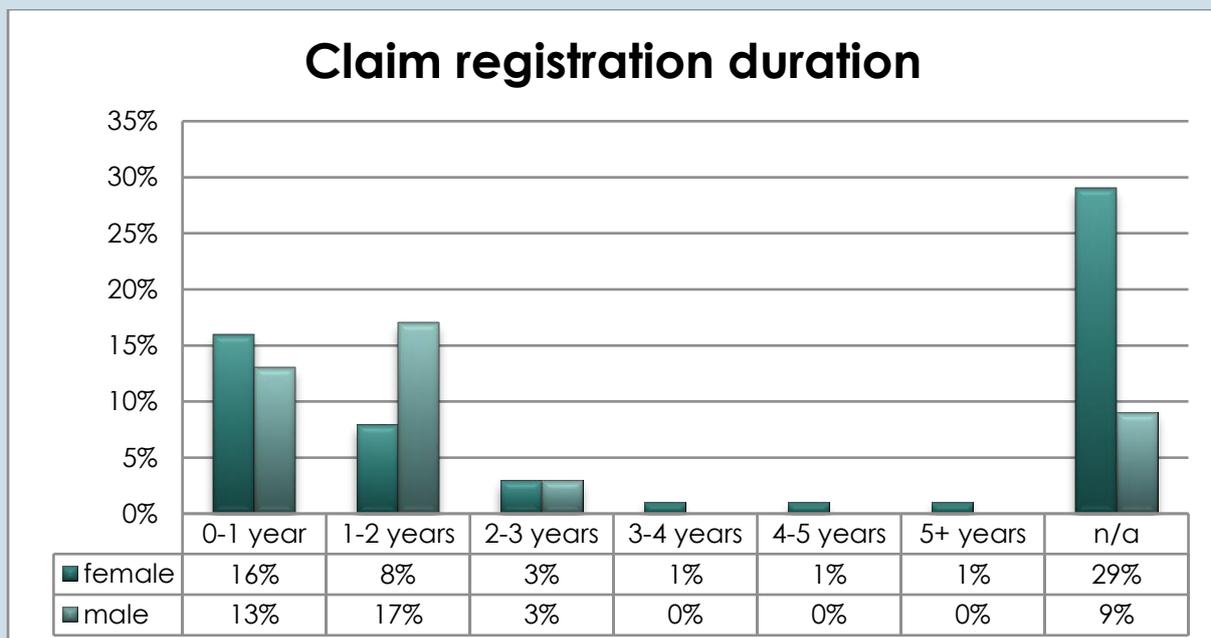


Figure 3 Claim registration duration.

As shown by Fig. 4, existing barriers to claim registration by artisanal and small-scale miners affect women disproportionately compared to their male counterparts.

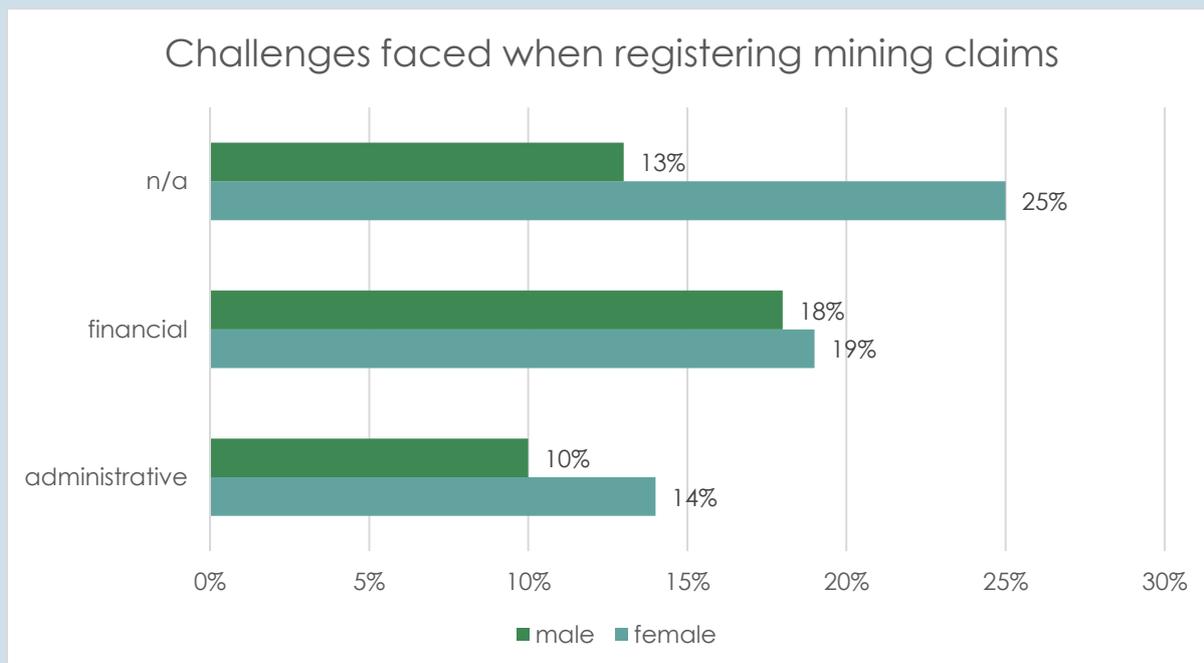


Figure 4 Challenges faced when registering mining claims

From the findings below, there is more informality on women than their male counterparts. This is because all financial, administrative and other challenges that impede small scale miners from formally registering their claims disproportionately affect women compared to their male counterparts (Figure 4 above). The study also noted that amongst the participants, there was a significant percentage of females who claimed to be mine owners compared to the percentage of male participants to the study. These findings however do not cancel the existence of disaggregated mine ownership to the generality of male and female miners in Zvishavane District. The findings therefore demonstrate that with opportunities freedoms and an enabling social conversion¹⁹ , more women can be encouraged to formalize their mining operations.

¹⁹Sen A., SOCIAL EXCLUSION: CONCEPT, APPLICATION, AND SCRUTINY , Papers No. 1 Office of Environment and Social Development Asian Development Bank June 2000

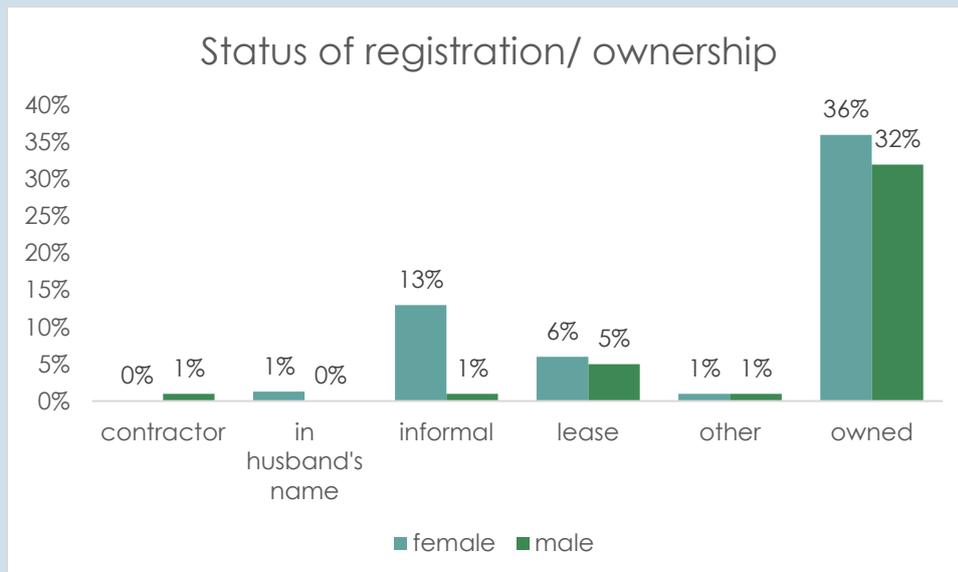


Figure 5 Status of registration/ ownership

4.3 Syndicates

Both men and women small-scale miners work as syndicates. The number of people in each syndicate range between three to fifteen. Findings from the focus group discussions show that it is not by preference that men and women small scale miners work as syndicates. Rather, it is a matter of necessity as it is not easy for an individual to mobilize the needed financial and human resources as well as equipment needed to operate a mine. In some instances, depending on the agreements between syndicate members, proceeds from the operations of a syndicate are supposed to be shared equally after all the expenses had been deducted. In some instances, proceeds are shared according to agreed percentages depending on the contribution of each syndicate member financially, materially or otherwise.

These syndicates are *Hobbesian* in nature; that is, each syndicate member lives in a constant fear of loss and each member constantly struggles to outdo the other. This is so because most of these syndicates are not guided by any written contractual agreements. Rather, they are based on verbal agreements which, in most cases, are not fulfilled. Where opportunities for entering into written contractual agreements exist, women lack the capacity to negotiate for contracts which protects their interests, let alone to understand the technical jargon in these contracts. Eventually, weaker syndicate members fall by the wayside. The syndicates comprise of both men and women and it is usually the women who are either elbowed out of the syndicates or short-changed by their more powerful male counterparts. In instances

where some syndicate members short-change others, it is usually the female syndicate members who are victims. One syndicate member had this to say:

“The viability and profitability of small-scale chrome mining operations is being jeopardized by the parasitic activities of loan sharks who masquerade as sponsors. The sponsors provide working capital to women miners with chrome mining claims in exchange for a percentage of the chrome ore sales receipts. The Sponsors are taking advantage of low functional literacy rates amongst women involved in the chrome mining business to defraud them using written contracts/mining agreements that give them control over the chrome ore produced from the ‘joint venture’. When the chrome ore is graded, milled and sold to buyers, sponsors then disappear with the proceeds of chrome ore sales or underpay women chrome miners using dubious provisions in the written mining agreements.”

Within the syndicates, women experience gender stereotyped role expectations. The gender roles are such that women carry out the care work, service provision and all other feminine jobs while their male counterparts engage in the politics and management of the mining activity. That includes sending the mineral ore to the millers while women remain behind waiting for the men to give them their share. In these syndicates, it is usually men who bring in more resources, that is financial and human resources and as such, it is them who emerge from the syndicates with more resources. Men usually come into syndicates as “sponsors”. The gender problem associated with such sponsorship was identified as an unfortunate situation where women are exploited by the men who because they have access to the milling companies give women lesser percentages of the value of the mined product. It is against this background that less women prefer to work as syndicates than their male counterparts as illustrated by Fig. 6.

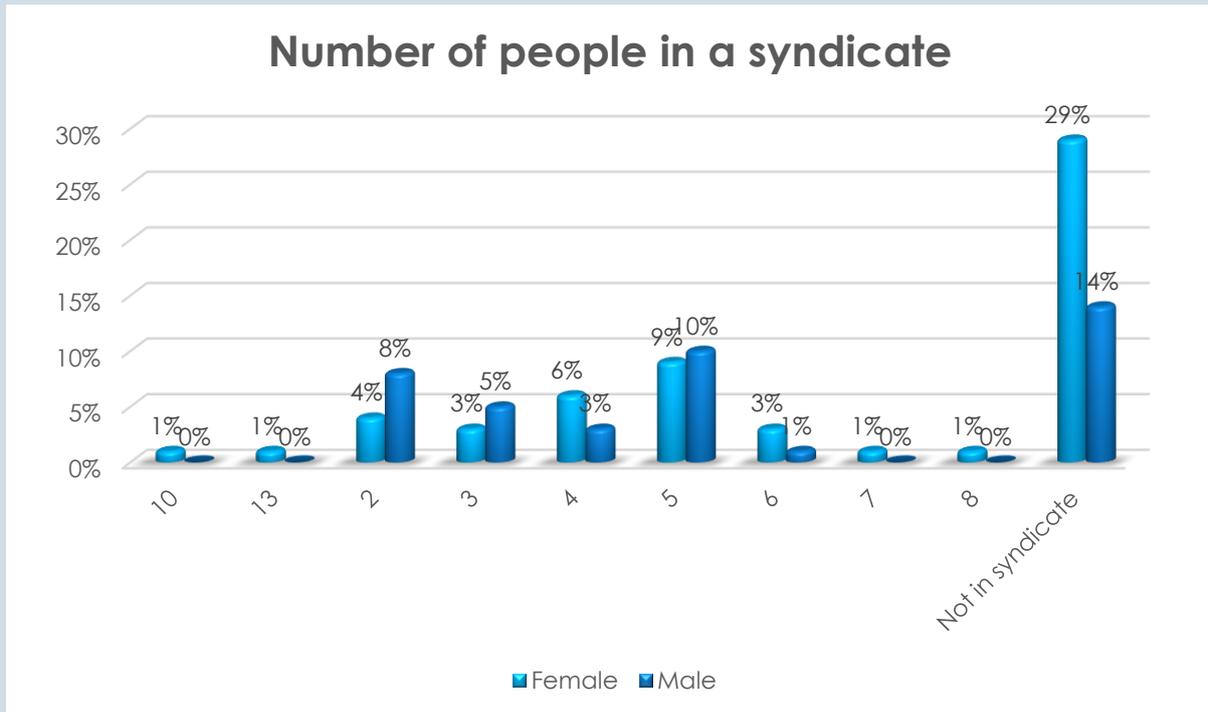


Figure 6 Number of people in a syndicate

4.4 Association Membership and Benefits Thereof

Because of the presumed benefits that accrue to one by virtue of being an association member, small scale-miners, both men and women, prefer to belong to associations as demonstrated by Fig. 7 below. The presumed membership benefits include access to claims, capacity building, access to finance, access to mining equipment, representation, collective bargaining for collective interests such as taxes, fair prices for mining produce and regulatory frameworks that are friendly to the small-scale miners, legally and policy wise. Small-scale miners also join associations because of a general sense of belonging to a community of like-minded individuals. There is also a belief that owing to their numbers, small-scale miners can, if they act collectively, harness sufficient clout to compete with big mining companies. This belief is particularly true given the fact that small-scale miners control 65 percent of the gold deposits in the country²⁰ and that they produce over 50 percent of the gold output annually²¹.

²⁰ Pact World, Training Handbook for Artisanal and Small Scale Miners in Zimbabwe, March 2019, page 30

²¹ Pact World, Training Handbook for Artisanal and Small Scale Miners in Zimbabwe, March 2019, page 30

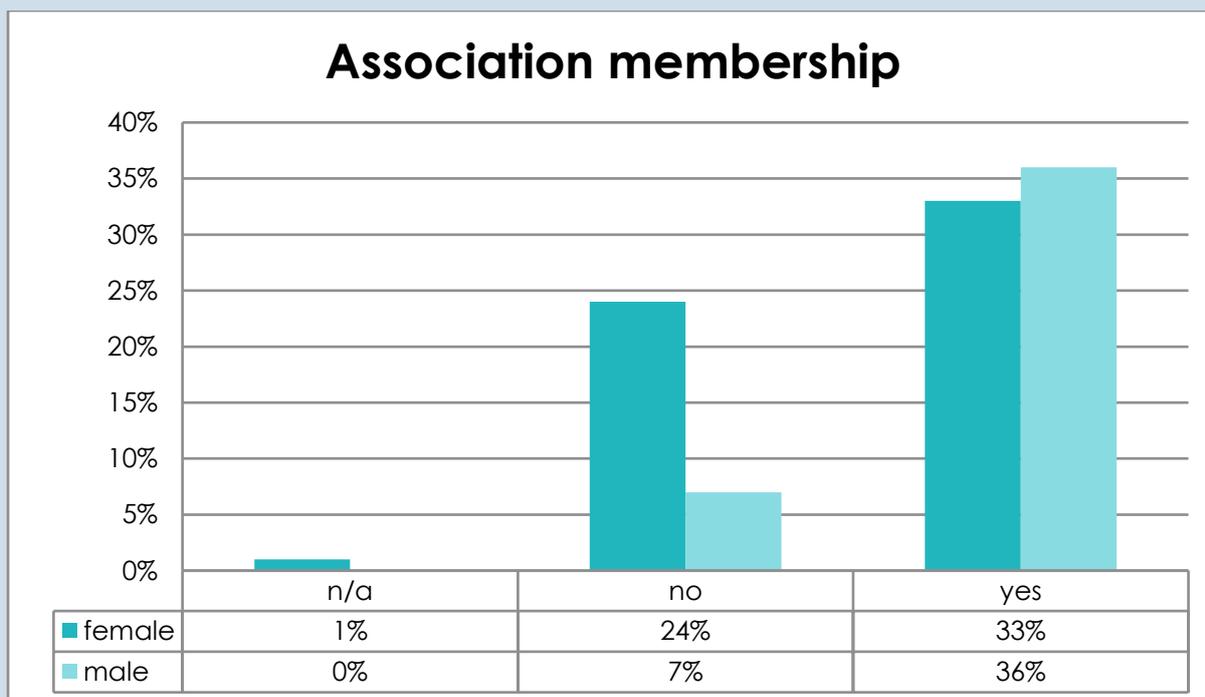


Figure 7 Are you an association member?

However, findings from this research demonstrate that there are very few benefits, if any, that the associations are providing to small scale miners, particularly women small scale miners as shown on the table below. This is regardless of the registration fees (USD20) and monthly subscription fees (USD3) they pay to the associations. In Zvishavane, there are two Associations that represent small scale miners; that is, the Zvishavane Mberengwa Miners Association and the Zvishavane Women Miners Association. It is interesting to note that women miners in Zvishavane are members of both associations. In fact, the Zvishavane Women Miners Association is an offshoot of the Zvishavane Mberengwa Miners Association, formed in 2018 by women who felt that there is a need for an association which represents specific interests of women. According to the leadership of the Zvishavane Mberengwa Miners Association, the Association has 100 confirmed members and up to 150 women who regularly participate in its activities. The Association provides technical support to women miners such as knowledge on timbering, setting up tunnels, how to handle chemicals and representation. The study looked at the sex composition of the Zvishavane Mberengwa Miners Association Executive and membership. Out of 14 Executive Members, only four are women occupying the following positions: Treasurer General, Vice Secretary and two Committee Members. The Chairperson and the Vice Chairperson are all male. Out of the 230 members of the Zvishavane Mberengwa Miners' Association, 90 are female.

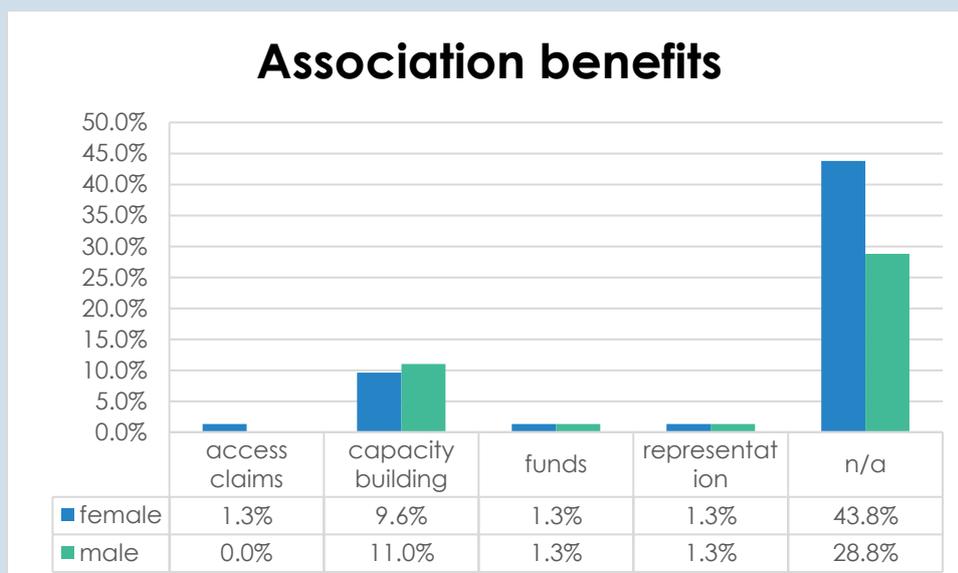


Figure 8 Association benefits

4.5 Access to Finance

Almost all miners have problems of accessing finance from the formal financial system because of lack of collateral security and other administrative challenges countrywide²² as illustrated on Fig. 10. In addition to lack of collateral security, informality has also proven to be an obstacle for small scale miners' access to capital. The majority of small-scale miners do not have properly registered claims. They also lack capacity to keep important records such as employment/labour records, accurate and up to date financial records. Some do not even have bank accounts. The informal nature of the small-scale mining sector in Zimbabwe makes it incredibly attractive to illicit actors in the form of gold buyers and sponsors who offer higher prices in the much needed foreign currency as opposed to formal channels where the produce is only partially paid for in foreign currency. This results in a self-reinforcing cycle of informality and illegality which is difficult to break²³. All these factors, which in most cases form part of the considerations by financial institutions before funds can be advanced, inhibit small scale miners, particularly women from accessing capital to invest on their mines.

²² Pact World, Training Handbook for Artisanal and Small Scale Miners in Zimbabwe, March 2019, page 30

²³ United Nations Industrial Development Organization, "Follow the Money: Zimbabwe: A Rapid Assessment of Gold Supply Chains and Financial Flows Linked to Artisanal and Small Scale Gold Mining in Zimbabwe", April 2018, page 1

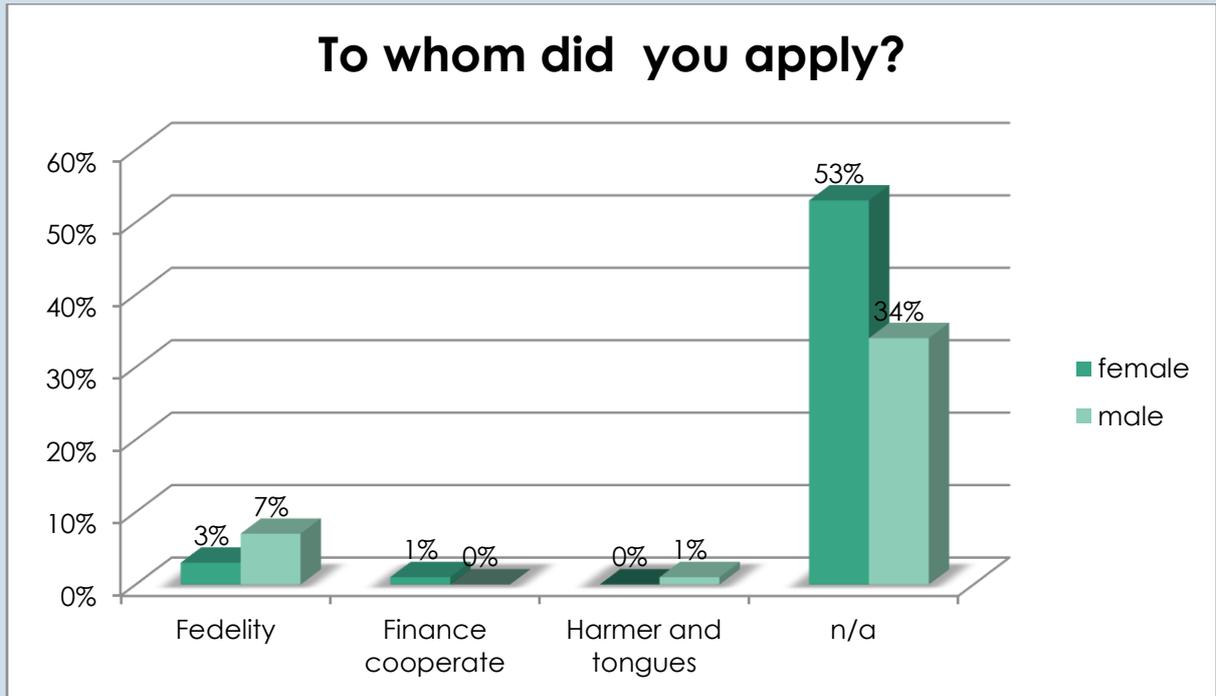


Figure 9 To whom did you apply?

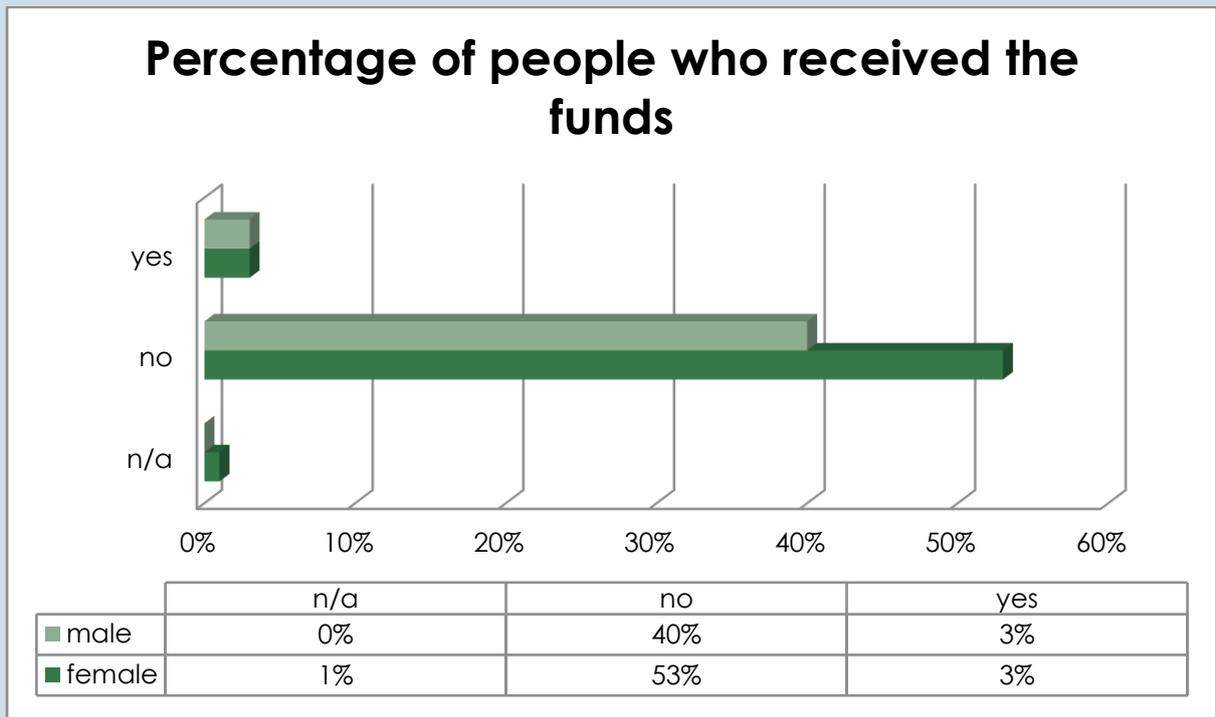


Figure 10 Percentage of people who received the funds

4.6 Access to Markets

During the focus group discussions, women revealed exploitative tendencies by Chinese chrome buyers who connive with local middlemen to form cartels that artificially deflate chrome producers' prices and 'systematically rob' small-scale women miners. Women chrome miners are victims of unfair fixing of producer prices. They also do not understand the weighing and grading criteria used by the buyers. Most chrome miners do not have freedom to choose buyers of their product because they are tied down by the agreements, they enter into with these buyers for the supply of mining equipment. They lack the capacity to collectively bargain for fair prices for their chrome. For example, women chrome miners can easily reverse market inequalities by collectively withholding chrome ore supplies during low price cycles and increasing supply when prices rise. This will then force the Chinese buyers to increase prices to meet the huge demand for chrome in international metal markets. Women chrome miners do not have access to information on both local and international trends on demand, supply and prices for their mineral produce. This makes them vulnerable to price distortions by the buyers.

4.7 Access to Mining Equipment by Small Scale Miners.

As illustrated below by Figure 11 and 12, very few artisanal and small-scale miners own mining equipment. Owing to little or no access to capital, small-scale miners are under-capitalized, under-equipped and are characterised by labour intensive operations where technical skills are lacking²⁴. Lack of adequate equipment for prospecting and exploring result in artisanal and small-scale miners erratically producing limited amounts of minerals from uncertain reserves²⁵. It also results in inability to conduct long term planning and adequate mining development. Lack of adequate equipment such as drilling and pumping machines also leads to miners abandoning their deposits prematurely once hard rock or water is encountered²⁶.

²⁴ Zimbabwe Economic Policy Analysis and Research Unit, "Best Practises for Supporting Artisanal and Small Scale Mining in Zimbabwe", October 2016, page 5

²⁵ Ibid, page 5

²⁶ Ibid



Women miners are under-capitalised and under-equipped

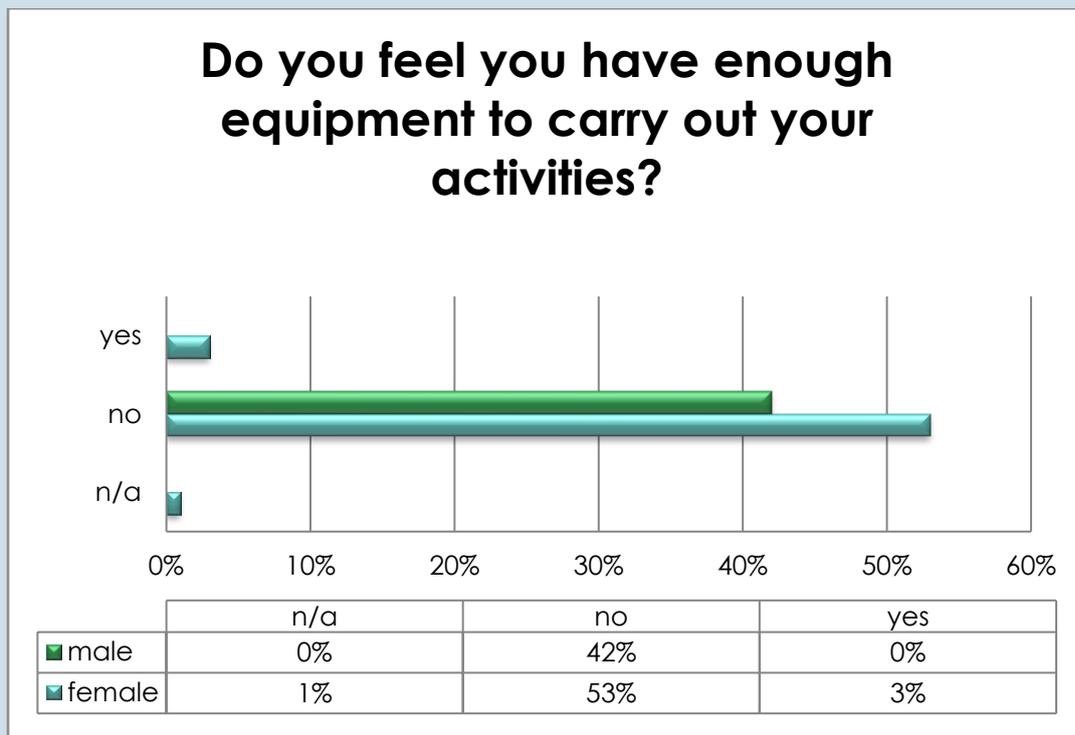


Figure 11 Do you feel you have enough equipment to carry out your activities?

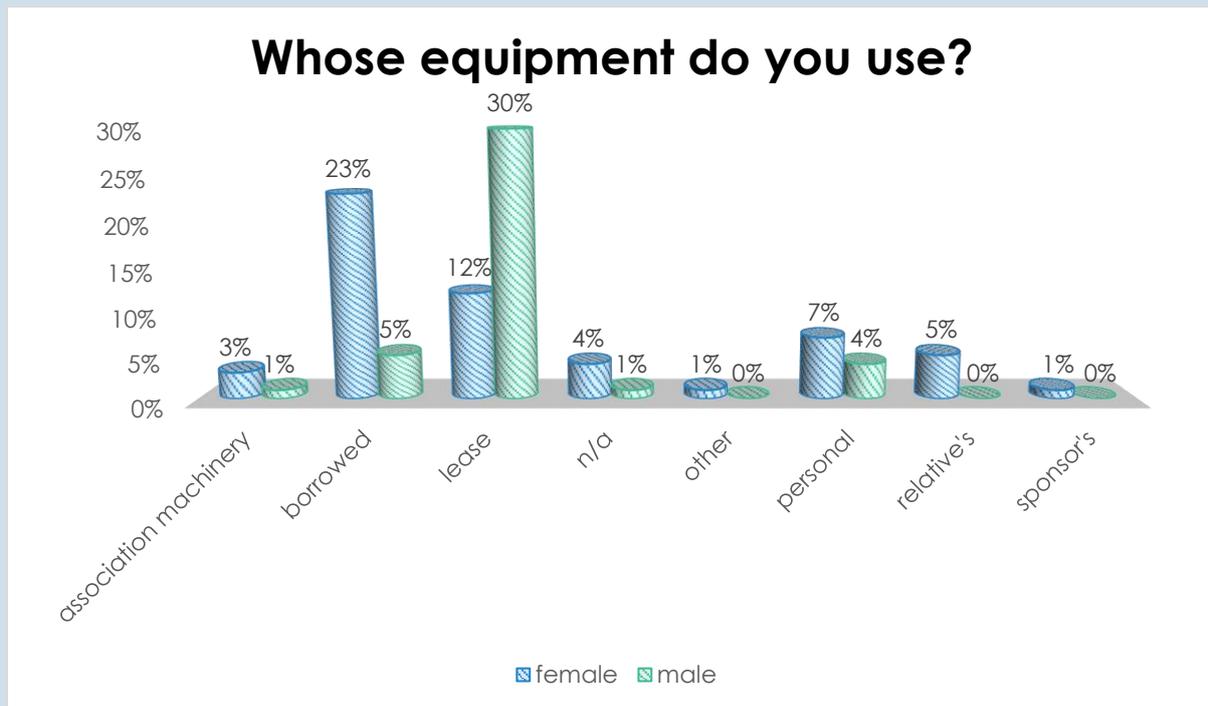


Figure 12 Whose equipment do you use?

4.8 Physical and Structural Violence Against Women Miners

As illustrated below, more women face workspace challenges than their male counterparts. Women are victims of violence, sexual harassment, bullying and insults from male workers. Although the figures for sexual violence appear to be very low from the data, actual figures may be much higher as women find it uncomfortable to share details of their private lives.

Women miners are also victims of structural violence from their male counterparts. In fact, the mining sector is characterized by a hyper masculine culture which upholds the view that women have no place in the extractive industry²⁷. One widow from Oreti said that she has had to face insolence from male relatives working on her mining claim. She had this to say;

“I have a problem; my husband’s brothers do not listen to what I tell them to do on my mine, I cannot even decide on when to take the ore for milling without them contesting or arguing others wise.”

²⁷ Balance G.; Women in Mining :Towards a Gendered Paradigm Shift to Participation in the Extractive Industry in Zimbabwe in Putting Women at the Centre of Extractivism: A Compendium on Gender and Extractives. Women and Law in Southern Africa, 2019

Insolence by the majority of the male relatives working with female miners was a strategy employed to create way to frustration in a bid to force women out or to force them to surrender their claims. These tendencies have thus been identified as extremely patriarchal. The study recorded two cases where women were evicted from the mining claim due to the inheritance wrangle. These evictions bring to the fore challenges of masculinities that continue to create a gendered sector²⁸ and inhibit women from realizing their full economic potential. Structural violence is also evident in the gendered access to lucrative mining claims. Lucrative mining claims are those that allow miners to realize profitable outcomes with minimal losses. A quote from one of the women miners summarizes the perception of women on their access to lucrative mining claims:

“Women are unfortunate; it seems as if when pegging is done, they know that there is nothing. You would think that the mineral disappears as soon as a particular claim has been allocated to a woman. We are not given access to lucrative mines. I have had to open a shaft that went for more than 20m and what I got was not worth the input I used.”

An analysis of the findings brings to the fore a gender dimension, that centres on discriminatory practices. Further discussion brought out a general feeling that authorities were also trying to systematically discriminate against women by allocating them claims with less mineral value. The outcomes from these claims have arguably contributed towards some women being forced to work on what they referred to as ‘fine’ chrome while those from the gold fields worked on what they called ‘rubbles’. The term ‘fine’ refers to small pieces of chrome that remain after the chrome ore is extracted while the ‘rubble’ are the by-products of the milling process of the gold ore. Women were said to rework the rubble in an effort to recover some remaining gold particles. Interviewed males suggested that this was the safest activity that women can do compared to shaft mining, that male’s practice. Our exploration

²⁸ Hinton I., Veiga M. and Veinhoff C., Women and Artisanal Mining: Gender Roles and the Road Ahead, in *The Socio-Economic Impacts of Artisanal and Small Scale Mining in Developing Countries*, eds Hilson G., Rotterdam, 2003

of the mining sites showed us that indeed the lucrative mining shafts were predominantly male owned.

Female participants interviewed opinionated that such gendered access of the mineral resources was stereotypical, and patriarchal in nature. Participants did not want to believe the idea that these shafts were too deep, and risky for them as was emphasized by their male counterparts, neither did they want to believe that it was out of due consideration of their health and wellbeing. Female participants were convinced that the discrimination against them was because shafts were considered as more lucrative than the 'rubble' and 'fine' sites that they were encouraged to mine. One participant had this to say;

“These men are too clever; the shafts pay more than rubbles and how can I make money when I am expected to skate on this rubble? I will not go anywhere, I can't develop. I only work from hand to mouth here.”

Important to note from the above discussion was the female miners' concern over barriers they are exposed to towards accessing high value mines. Not only is their concern about access, important to note is how the participants expressed their feelings about doing unsustainable mining activities. The study's perspective on these views was also compounded by the extent to which female miners, particularly those without claims ownership, have been subjected to the 'revolving door', a situation where there is nothing significant they have achieved as individuals from mining as a result of mining for the satisfaction of gender practical needs without any investment as is done by their male counterparts.

Female miners also revealed how they suffer double patriarchal dominance and constraining gendered expectations both from the private and the public sphere. Interviewed married women shared their experiences within their matrimonial homes, and these experiences were largely characterized by male domination and the need for women to tow the socio-cultural gender expectations. It was revealed that husbands at home as much as they enjoy financial resource women bring home after a successful milling ventures, failed to appreciate the nature of the mining sector, for-instance they refuse to accept that an individual has to

be physically available during the processing of the gold ore to minimize chances of being cheated. Interviewed women pointed out that for some husbands being away from home after stipulated times was synonymous with being out 'prostituting' while for the female miner being home 'snug' in bed while the ore was being processed was as good as not venturing in the field. In reality the conflicts between satisfying the gender expectations and fulfilling an economic need, become a source of tension and conflict that has often surged towards gender-based violence. The female participants bemoaned strain as a result of their demanding jobs. It was pointed out that most female miners are subjected to sexual harassment by their spouses. The narratives from the women reveal that partners who are not involved in mining together are often the ones that succumb to these challenges, because one might fail to appreciate the demanding nature of the other partners' job.

"I am at times forced to spend days and nights either at the mine or the mill. This does not go down well with my husband who thinks I will be out prostituting myself."

5.0 ECONOMIC DISPLACEMENT OF MINING HOST COMMUNITIES

Displacement occurs when one is forced to leave an area of their habitual residence as a result of various reasons, development, such as in the case of mining, being one of them. Scholars' focus on displacement has however been overly parochial in that it tends to focus more on physical displacement and less on economic displacement. The latter occurs when one is not forced to leave an area of habitual residence, but their means to a living, or their ability to pursue gainful economic activities is decimated, say, by mining or other development projects taking place in their area. This is precisely what this study found to be happening in the mining host communities in Zvishavane. The latter have lost farmland, grazing land, livestock, sources of clean water, their *kith and keen* and a healthy environment as a result of mining activities taking place in their areas as illustrated by Fig.13.



Figure 13 Community losses from mining activities

5.1 Proximity of Mining Operations from Homesteads

According to the Mines and Minerals Act, Chapter 21:05, “no person shall be entitled to exercise any of his rights under any prospecting licence or any special grant to carry out prospecting operations or any exclusive prospecting order within four hundred and fifty metres of the site of the principal homestead on such holding or on such State land, whether such homestead is already erected or actually in the course of erection; (ii) within four hundred and fifty metres of the site of any intended principal homes, within ninety metres of any area set aside on which housing constructed of brick or concrete has been erected for occupation by farm employees, if the total value of such housing is not less than five thousand dollars; (iv) within ninety metres of any other building or permanent improvement of a value of not less than five hundred dollars; (v) within ninety metres of any permanent cattle dip tank or spray race; upon any land under cultivation or within fifteen metres thereof; within nine metres of any other permanent bona fide farm building, except on payment to the landowner of such compensation as may be fixed by agreement or, failing agreement, by the Administrative Court to whom the matter shall be referred for decision”.

Contrary to legislation, mining activities are taking place from as little as less than ten meters away from homesteads. In the Mapanzure area, Shauke village, there is a chrome processing plant and a slime dam which are situated less than 5 metres away from a homestead. The slime dam is only fenced by a barbed wire, making it accessible to children and livestock. When the research team visited the plant, children and goats were seen roaming just at the edges of the slime dam, endangering their lives. Asia Ferry is located less than 50 metres away from a homestead in Mateka village. Although the slime dam for China Zim is located 500 metres from Ngezi river, it is not fenced. During the focus group discussions at Oreti, mining host communities complained that toilet waste from the China Zim compound is disposed into the Ngezi river, from which local communities drink.

Fig. 14 shows that 53 percent of the respondents were affected by water pollution. They also complained that waste from the slime dam flows into the Ngezi river and may contain harmful substances for not only humans and livestock, but even for the fish and other aquatic creatures.

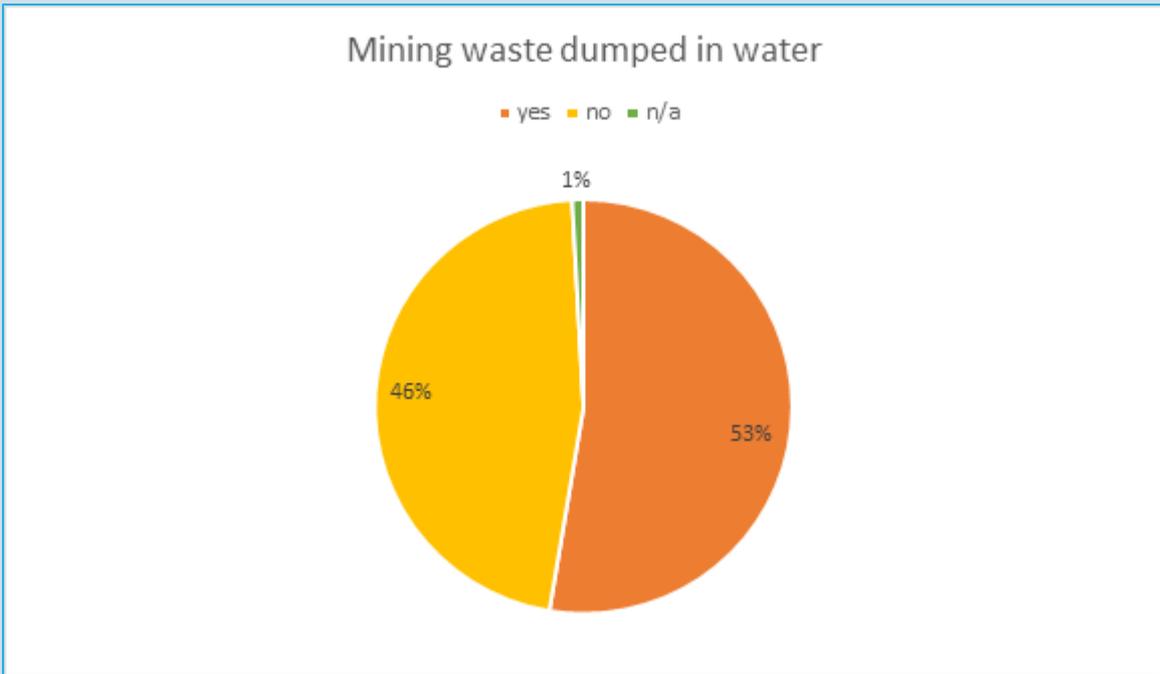


Figure 14 Mining waste dumped in water

5.2 Environmental Degradation

5.2.1 Open Pits

Zvishavane district has become a sorry sight because of open pits which have been left by chrome and gold miners. The pits have destroyed the once scenic environment. In addition to destroying the scenery, they are a danger to humans and livestock. There were identified cases of loss of human lives between 2017 and 2018 at the mining sites in Chief Mapanzure jurisdiction. The first victim, a man suffered intense injuries and later died. The second reported case was that of a girl who fell into a pit full of water and drowned. Besides being death traps, the pits are said to have become hideouts for criminals who sexually assault women when they go out to fetch water and firewood. Participants in the focus group discussions did not identify specific cases where women were sexually exploited in the open pits or dumpsites. The Zimbabwe Republic Police also stated during the key informant interviews that they did not handle any such cases. Owing to the culture of silence socialized into women, particularly rural women, it is possible that women are not able to talk about such abuses, let alone report them, due to the stigmatization that also comes with it.

Although the research team could not ascertain the exact number of livestock lost as a result of open pits, estimates are in their hundreds, if not thousands. During one focus group

discussion with only seven women at Oreti Compound, participants reported of five donkeys, fifteen goats and nine cattle which fell into the pits of China Zim gold. In another focus group discussion with the same number of women at the same place, it was reported that a family lost fifteen herd of cattle into one of Mimosa's pits. The pits are so deep that once an animal falls into them, its impossible for it to escape or for anyone to rescue it. In some instances, once an animal falls into them, its practically impossible for the owner to know what happened to it as it simply vanishes and recorded as missing.



Open pits have become death traps for livestock

Open pits on the edges of the Zvishavane-Gweru highway are endangering the same road. Open pits have become so big a challenge that the former Midlands Provincial Affairs Minister, Owen Ncube formed a Provincial Taskforce to spearhead their rehabilitation. The taskforce has however, become redundant with his reassignment to the Ministry of State Security. This happened before the Taskforce could record any meaningful success.



Gweru -Zvishavane, Boterekwa road collapses due to underground illegal mining activities

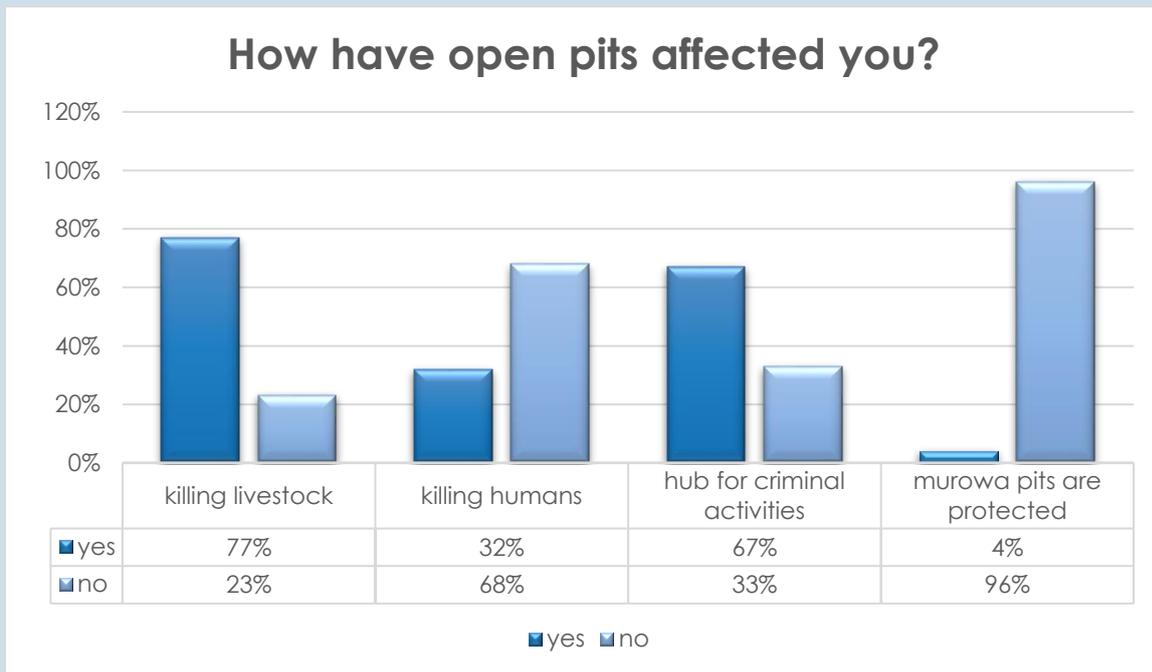


Figure 15 How have open pits affected you?

5.2.2 Blasting

Mining host communities are forced to endure all the environmental challenges that emanate from their close proximity to mining operations. In Village 3 and 4 Mapirimira, houses were destroyed by blasting, a classroom block at Shonhayi Secondary School cracked,

and Chief Mapanzure's house also cracked from blasting. During focus group discussions at Nyama, mining host communities indicated that it had become a norm to feel their houses shaking from blasting. One participant in the focus group discussions at Nyama said that when the blasting occurs, pots, pans, plates, spoons and knives fall from the shelves. These mining companies do not have equipment and technology to silence the blasting or to minimize its effects on the surrounding homesteads, if at all they care about it.



A classroom block at Shonhayi Secondary School cracked due to blasting

5.2.3 Dust

Mining host communities from Nyama, Chief Mapanzure, and Mutambi, Chief Mazvihwa, complained of dust pollution as a result of mining operations taking place in their area. Dust pollution exposes mining host communities to coarse particles which causes coughing, wheezing and worsening of asthma cases. Mining host communities also lamented the deposits of dust on fabrics, houses and contamination of breathing air. In worst case scenarios, visibility is reduced as a result of deposition of dust particles in the air. They also bemoaned dust deposits on vegetation which affects photosynthesis, respiration and

transpiration²⁹ and as such, eventual decline in vegetation, in addition to the fact that mining activities also result in the loss of vegetation through massive clearing.

5.2.4 Grazing Land

Mining host communities in all the areas visited have lost either grazing land, farming land or both as a result of mining activities. Villagers do not participate in the environmental impact assessments of the mining companies and in most instances only learn that mining licenses have been issued on their land when the actual mining rights are being exercised. In other instances, mining host communities are not even aware whether a mining company which is operating in their area is encroaching onto their farming or grazing land and causing environmental degradation is licensed or not. They do not even know that they have to give consent to the mining activities in terms of the Mines and Minerals Act, and that they have to participate in environmental impact assessments. Mining host communities under Chief Mapanzure have lost approximately 672 hectares of grazing land to pave way for mining activities in their area.



An excavator destroying grazing land in the Mapanzure area

²⁹Andrew M. Farmer, The effects if dust on vegetation-A Review, in The Journal of Environmental Pollution, Vol 79, page 63

6.0 COMMUNITY BENEFITS FROM EXTRACTIVE PROCESSES TAKING PLACE IN THEIR AREAS

6.1 Corporate Social Responsibility

In terms of Section 13 (4) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe, mining host communities must benefit from the extractive processes taking place in their areas. Under the indigenization framework of 2010, foreign companies in the mining sector were required to cede 10 percent of their equities to communities. This created the basis of the establishment of Community Share Ownership Trusts. Although the legal backing of most Community Share Ownership Trusts were destroyed by the Finance Act of 2018 which states that all mining companies (except those mining diamond and platinum) are no longer required to cede 10 percent of their equities to Community Share Ownership Trusts, the Zvishavane Community Share Ownership Trust was not affected because its key contributors, MIMOSA and Murowa, mine platinum and diamond respectively. MIMOSA contributed seven million while Murowa contributed three hundred thousand to the Community Share Ownership Trust.

The Zvishavane Community Share Ownership Trust has embarked on infrastructure development in all 19 rural wards of Zvishavane District. Some of the notable infrastructure developments include construction of classroom blocks at eight schools, construction of Dayataya Clinic, construction of staff houses at Dambudzo Clinic, electrification of Mutambi Clinic, drilling of four boreholes in Chief Masunda, Mazvihwa and Mapanzure's jurisdictions, electrification of Bilashaba Primary Schools, Ingome Primary School and Chivizina High School and the establishment of Mupani Mhototi Irrigation Scheme.

MIMOSA contributed seven million while Murowa contributed three hundred thousand to the Community Share Ownership Trust. The Zvishavane Community Share Ownership Trust has embarked on infrastructure development in all 19 rural wards of Zvishavane District.

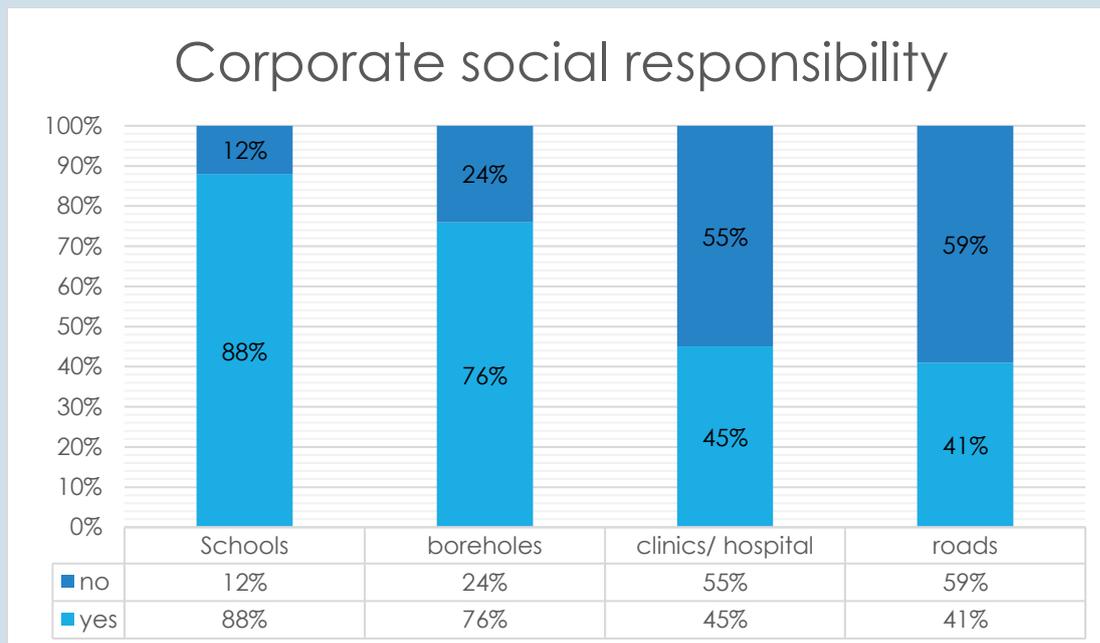


Figure 16 Corporate social responsibility

It should however be noted that out of the several mining companies in Zvishavane, only Mimosa and Murowa contributed to the Zvishavane Community Share Ownership Trust. Several others, particularly medium and small-scale mining companies did not. In terms of corporate social responsibility outside the Zvishavane Community Share Ownership Trust, mining host communities complained that the companies are not doing much. Of particular concern is the fact that the companies which are not giving back to the communities are the same companies that are responsible for much of the environmental degradation taking place in the area. A notable example is the Chinese Chrome and Gold mining operations in the area which have resulted in an outcry over environmental degradation, unfair labour practices (sometimes assaulting workers) and noncompliance with tax regulations.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Recommendations to Government

- ❖ Remove the financial and administrative barriers that inhibit small-scale miners from easily registering their claims. Relaxation of financial and administrative restrictions will result in more pre-registered miners registering their claims, formalizing their operations and complying to tax and environmental regulations.
- ❖ Establish a one stop shop for claim registration. The one stop shop must be decentralized to districts. This will curb informality by increasing the number of pre-registered miners who register their claims.
- ❖ Establish a quota system on the allocation of claims to women. This will result in more women participating in the extractive sector.
- ❖ Establish a loan facility for women miners. The facility must have relaxed collateral security requirements. This will help women miners to purchase equipment and finance their mining operations.
- ❖ Make mining rights bankable or mortgageable. This will assist claim holders in accessing funds from financial institutions.
- ❖ Depoliticize claim allocation.
- ❖ Curb violence in the sector which makes mining an unsafe venture for women
- ❖ Reinstate legal framework for Community Share Ownership Trusts.
- ❖ Perceive pre-registered miners as small-scale business people, who, given an opportunity, can grow their businesses and create employment and generate foreign currency.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO CIVIL SOCIETY

- ❖ Build the capacities of women miners to negotiate fair deals e.g. with their sponsors, with syndicate members, service providers and so on, and to put them down to paper in form of contractual agreements which protect their interests.
- ❖ Build leadership and advocacy capacities for women so that they can challenge masculinity and assume leadership positions in mining associations.
- ❖ Organize women miners to collectively withhold mineral ore supplies during low price cycles and increasing supply when prices rise.
- ❖ Facilitate access to information on local and international mineral market trends.
- ❖ Enlighten small scale miners on the advantages of formalization e.g. opportunities for growth, access to finance, protection by the law etc.
- ❖ Strengthen the capacities of women miners on organizational development such as financial literacy, record keeping on labour, inputs and outputs, tax compliance, entrepreneurship.
- ❖ Train mining host communities on economic and environmental rights so that they can defend these rights when they are violated.
- ❖ Bridge the gap between small-scale miners and authorities (EMA, Ministry of Mines, ZRP, DDC, RDC) by facilitating constructive engagement as opposed to adversarial approaches. Authorities must perceive pre-registered miners as small-scale business people, who, given an opportunity, can grow their businesses and create employment and generate foreign currency.
- ❖ Assist women in defending their inheritance rights to claims belonging to their deceased spouses.
- ❖ Raise awareness among women miners and mining host communities on national mines and minerals policies/legislation.

Centre for Conflict Management and Transformation

28 Oxford Avenue
Newlands, Harare
P.O. Box A 1755
Avondale, Harare

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ccmtzimbabwe15@gmail.com
+263 242 746016, 776784
www.ccmt.co.zw

