

RESEARCH ARTICLE

The role of African feminist philanthropy in effecting change in the working conditions of women in the South African mining industry: A literature review

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Abstract

This literature review examines the potential of African feminist philanthropy to improve the working conditions of women in South Africa's mining industry. Despite legislative measures promoting gender equality, female miners continue to face significant challenges, including discrimination, harassment, and inadequate facilities. This review investigates how African feminist philanthropy, grounded in solidarity and collective action principles, can address these issues. Key themes encompassed the status of women in mining, barriers to gender transformation, and African feminist philanthropic models. The findings indicate that African feminist philanthropy, focusing on African-led solutions and intersectionality, could potentially drive substantive changes. However, further research is required regarding their practical implementation.

Keywords: African Feminism, Philanthropy, Mining Industry, Women's Labour Rights, South Africa.

JEL classification: H2, 01, C33, 055

1. Introduction

The mining industry has long been a cornerstone of South Africa's economy; however, it has also been characterised by deeply entrenched gender inequalities and challenging working conditions, particularly for women (Benya, 2009; Botha & Cronjé, 2015; De Klerk, 2012; Mashaba, 2022). As initiatives to promote gender equality in the workplace have gained momentum globally, there is increasing scholarly interest in examining how various stakeholders, including philanthropic organisations, can contribute to ameliorating the situation of women in traditionally male-dominated sectors such as mining (ILO, 2021; Kansake et al., 2021; Mahomed, 2022).

African feminist philanthropy, emphasising addressing systemic inequalities and women empowerment, presents a potentially significant avenue for effecting changes in the mining industry (IGF, 2023; Odhiambo, 2023; Pimpa, 2019). However, the specific role and impact of African feminist philanthropic endeavours in this context remain underexplored in the scholarly literature (Pimpa, 2019; Read, 2022).

This review aims to synthesise the existing research on African feminist philanthropy, women's labour rights in mining, and gender dynamics in South African workplaces to identify potential pathways for philanthropic interventions to improve working conditions for women in the mining

sector. By examining the intersection of these fields, this review seeks to elucidate gaps in current knowledge and highlight opportunities for future research and action.

2. Research Design and Methodology

This literature review employed a systematic approach to identify and analyse relevant academic articles, reports, and policy documents. The search used academic databases such as JSTOR, Google Scholar, and African Journals Online, focusing on publications from the past two decades (2000–2024). Key search terms encompassed combinations of "African feminist philanthropy", "women in mining", "South African labour rights", "gender equality in the workplace", and "feminist funding". The initial literature search yielded more than 200 sources, reflecting extensive scholarly discourse surrounding the themes of feminist philanthropy and women's working conditions in the mining sector. A systematic screening process was undertaken to refine this broad collection, focusing on the relevance of the sources based on their abstracts and principal findings. This analysis emphasised several key aspects: the methodologies employed by the authors, the theoretical frameworks underpinning their research, and the empirical findings that emerged from their investigations. Such a multifaceted approach facilitated a nuanced understanding of the intersectionality of feminist philanthropy and the specific challenges women face in the mining sector. The final selection of 60 sources underwent comprehensive analysis, emphasising methodologies, theoretical frameworks, and empirical findings about the intersection of feminist philanthropy and women's working conditions in the mining sector (Badenhorst, 2009; Botha, 2013, 2016, 2017; Botha and Cronjé, 2015; Calitz, 2004; Kaggwa, 2020; Mahomed, 2022; Mangaroo-Pillay, 2018; Mashaba, 2022; Moalusi & Jones, 2019; Mudimba, 2017; Odhiambo, 2023; Peetz & Murray, 2011; Roos, 2014; Zungu, 2013).

This study provides an in-depth analysis of the potential role of African feminist philanthropy in addressing gender inequalities in the South African mining industry. It underscores the importance and effectiveness of feminist philanthropic initiatives in promoting equitable working conditions for women in a historically patriarchal sector. By reviewing existing literature, the study articulates how feminist philanthropy can serve as a tool for social change, fostering more significant equity and empowerment for women in mining and the broader South African context.

The review identified persistent gender disparities in the mining sector, with women facing significant barriers to entry and career progression (Benya, 2009; Kansake et al., 2021). Despite legislative efforts like the Employment Equity Act (Republic of South Africa, 1998), implementation challenges persist (Jansen van Rensburg, 2021), and the industry remains male-dominated (Moodley, 2018). African feminist philanthropy has emerged as a potential solution (Pimpa, 2019), but its specific impact on women's working conditions in mining is underexplored (Read, 2022).

The study calls for more targeted research on the intersection of feminist funding strategies and labour rights in South African mining. It examines practical applications of theories and methodologies, detailing programs and organisations that advocate for women's rights and improve working conditions for female miners. Initiatives in advocacy, skills training, and financial support for women in mining communities illustrate how feminist philanthropic strategies can drive meaningful change.

This discussion connects empirical findings and theoretical frameworks, enhancing the relevance of the literature reviewed and providing a clear pathway for understanding the tangible impacts of feminist philanthropy. By bridging scholarship and practice, the study offers a comprehensive understanding of the role of feminist philanthropy in South Africa's mining industry. It highlights ongoing struggles against gender inequality and the transformative potential of targeted philanthropic efforts, reinforcing the significance of such initiatives in fostering equitable working conditions for women in a male-dominated field.

3. African Feminist Philanthropy: Principles and Practices

3.1 Defining African Feminism

African feminist philanthropy is based on the principles of gender equality, social justice, and women's empowerment to address systemic inequalities and challenge patriarchal structures (African Feminist Forum, 2006; Mugo & Midzi, 2023; Reddy et al., 2020). The African Feminist Forum's Charter delineates principles such as the indivisibility, inalienability, and universality of women's rights; the dismantling of patriarchal systems; the recognition of African women as agents of change; the promotion of solidarity among feminists; and a focus on transformative change (African Feminist Forum, 2006; Mugo & Midzi, 2023). These principles serve to guide the strategies of African feminist philanthropic organisations.

The concept of "Ubuntu" emphasises collective humanity, identity, solidarity, and support, underscoring community interconnectedness and collective action (Mugo & Midzi, 2023). This concept challenges Western philanthropy's emphasis on individual donors and top-down approaches. African feminist philanthropy ascribes value to non-monetary contributions, considering time, talent, and other resources as significant (Moyo & Sall, 2024), aligning with traditional African practices of community support. It also emphasises addressing the root causes of gender inequality and social injustice, supporting grassroots movements, advocacy, and initiatives that challenge oppressive systems (Odhiambo, 2023).

3.2 Pan-African and feminist philanthropic movements

Pan-African and feminist philanthropic movements, spearheaded by organisations such as Urgent Action Fund-Africa (UAF-Africa) and TrustAfrica, have substantially contributed to advancing gender justice and social equity across Africa. Through its rapid response grant mechanism, UAF-Africa facilitates the empowerment of women's rights defenders and organisations advocating for equitable working conditions, safety, and anti-discrimination policies in sectors including extractive industries. This funding model addresses pressing needs, enabling activists to confront threats and dismantle barriers impeding women's progress in male-dominated fields (Urgent Action Fund, 2023). Similarly, TrustAfrica supports local organisations in reforming labour policies, fostering inclusive economic development, and promoting social justice. Through partnerships with community-led initiatives, TrustAfrica challenges gender discrimination, advocating for fair wages, equal opportunities, and safe working conditions for women in patriarchal sectors (TrustAfrica, 2023). Examining these movements' contributions elucidates how pan-African feminist philanthropy addresses structural discrimination, potentially serving as a model for interventions to reduce gender inequality in Africa's mining industry.

3.3 Strategies and Approaches

African feminist philanthropy adopts a multifaceted strategy to empower women and address African gender inequalities. Central to this approach is grant-making, which funds grassroots organisations led by and for women. The African Women's Development Fund (AWDF) has granted funds to over 3,500 women's organisations in 42 African countries, illustrating this strategy's extensive reach and impact (African Women's Development Fund, 2023; Mugo & Midzi, 2023). Enhancing financial support and capacity-building involves training, mentoring, and resources to bolster women's organisations and leadership. For example, Akina Mama wa Afrika (AMwA) offers leadership development programs to empower African women to drive community change (Mugo & Midzi, 2023; Philanthropy Circuit, 2022).

Advocacy is crucial in African feminist philanthropy, with organisations engaging in policy dialogue and campaigns to promote gender-responsive legislation and practices. FEMNET exemplifies this by facilitating conversations on critical issues like women's participation in governance and leadership (FEMNET, 2022; FEMNET, 2023; Philanthropy Circuit, 2022). Network building is also vital, fostering connections and collaborations among feminist organisations and activists. This

is evident in the Women Leaders Network for Development (RFLD) work, which aims to establish alliances and strengthen partnerships across sub-Saharan Africa (RFLD, 2024).

Knowledge production supports these strategies by researching and documenting women's experiences and feminist practices. The Urgent Action Fund Africa (UAF-Africa) highlights the importance of generating knowledge for a global audience, recognising African women's role in developing solutions to pressing issues (Urgent Action Fund Africa, 2023). These strategies illustrate a comprehensive approach to addressing complex social problems, acknowledging the interconnected nature of gender inequalities and the need for multifaceted solutions (Odhiambo, 2023; Moyo & Sall, 2024).

3.4 Challenges and Criticisms

African feminist philanthropy has significantly advanced women's rights and gender equality but faces challenges that hinder its full potential. Limited financial resources and reliance on external funding can compromise autonomy (Mugo & Midzi, 2023, p. 2). Grassroots organisations struggle with stringent donor criteria and competition from larger entities (Gawaya, 2022). Ensuring intersectionality remains challenging as organisations address diverse needs across socio-economic backgrounds, ethnicities, and locations (Chiu, 2019). The complex interplay of gender discrimination, economic marginalisation, and colonial legacy further complicates this phenomenon (Moyo & Sall, 2024).

Evaluating the long-term effects of feminist philanthropic interventions, especially for systemic issues, presents difficulties as traditional frameworks often undervalue the transformative nature of feminist work (Makhubele, 2023; Odhiambo, 2023). The tension between Pan-African solidarity and local specificity necessitates carefully balancing continental collaboration and responsiveness to local contexts (African Feminist Forum 2006).

Additionally, challenging dominant narratives and practices in the broader philanthropic sector, including advocating for inclusive and transformative approaches, often encounters resistance (Mugo & Midzi, 2023). These challenges necessitate ongoing reflection and adaptation to enhance efficacy and sustainability. Emphasis is increasing on local resource mobilisation, strengthening pan-African networks, and developing context-specific evaluation frameworks to capture the multifaceted impact of feminist interventions better (RFLD, 2024).

4. Women in the South African Mining Industry: Context and Challenges

4.1 Historical Context

The history of racial and gender discrimination in South Africa's mining industry has significantly influenced female participation. During apartheid, women were excluded from underground mining by legislation such as the Mines and Works Act of 1911 (Mangaroo-Pillay & Botha, 2020). This exclusion stemmed from discriminatory practices and paternalistic perspectives deeming mining unsuitable for women (Benya, 2009). Post-apartheid initiatives such as the 2004 Mining Charter aimed to improve gender equality, with a 2009 objective of 10% female workforce representation (Mangaroo-Pillay & Botha, 2020; Botha & Cronjé, 2015). Despite increased representation from 3% in 2002 to 15% in 2018, the industry remains male-dominated (Mangaroo-Pillay & Botha, 2020). This gradual progress is attributed to entrenched cultural norms, inadequate infrastructure, and stereotypes regarding women's capabilities (Botha, 2017).

Research indicates that the mining industry is not gender-neutral, with job structures and environments often disadvantaging women (Botha & Cronjé, 2015). Physical demands, lack of suitable protective equipment, and sexual harassment constitute significant challenges (Mashaba, 2022). Black women face dual discrimination based on race and gender, compounding their recruitment and career progression issues (Ngoako, 1999; Kansake et al., 2021).

Legislation such as the Employment Equity Act of 1998 and the Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment Act of 2003 has not substantially increased women's representation in management. In 2011, women held only 12% of management roles, rising marginally to 16% by 2019 (Sector Skills Plan for the Mining and Mineral Sector, 2011; Commission for Employment Equity, 2020). Underrepresentation in leadership is attributed to a lack of mentorship, gender biases in promotions, and challenges balancing work and family responsibilities (Botha & Cronjé, 2015; Mahomed, 2022).

4.2 Current Status of Women in Mining

Recent statistics indicate that women constitute approximately 12–15% of the mining workforce in South Africa, with representation varying across different roles and levels of seniority (African Mining, 2022; Minerals Council South Africa, 2020). While this represents a significant increase from previous decades, it falls short of the government's target of 10% women's participation in core mining activities, as set out in the Mining Charter (Department of Mineral Resources and Energy, 2018).

Women in the mining sector are employed in various positions, including underground mining operations, surface mining and processing, technical and engineering roles, administrative and support functions, and management and executive positions (Mining Weekly, 2024). However, women remain underrepresented in leadership roles and core mining activities, with many concentrated in support and administrative functions (Botha & Cronjé, 2015).

According to the 2020 World Bank report, women comprise only 15% of the global mining workforce (World Bank, 2020). In South Africa, despite a notable increase from 11,400 in 2002 to 56,691 in 2019, women still represent only 12% of the total mining labour force of 454,861 individuals (Mahlasela et al., 2023). This growth, while significant, still lags behind other mining countries, such as Australia and Canada, which have slightly higher representation at 17% and 16%, respectively (Mangaroo-Pillay Botha, 2020).

The underrepresentation of women in the mining sector is particularly pronounced in technical and leadership positions. As of 2022, women occupied only 16% of the management positions in the mining and quarrying sector (Commission for Employment Equity, 2022). This disparity is attributed to various factors, including entrenched cultural norms, inadequate infrastructure, persistent stereotypes regarding women's capabilities in the mining sector, and challenges balancing work and family responsibilities in a demanding industry (Botha, 2017; Mashaba, 2022).

Despite these challenges, there are ongoing efforts to increase the participation of women in the mining sector. The Minerals Council South Africa launched the Women in Mining initiative in March 2020, aiming to streamline the mining sector's strategies to advance women in mining by focusing on progressing women's representation and encouraging decisions that are in the best interest of both women and the industry (Minerals Council South Africa, 2020).

4.3 Challenges Faced by Women Miners

Women in the South African mining industry face numerous challenges affecting their working conditions, career progression, and well-being, including gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, and hostile work environments (Botha, 2016; Benya, 2017). Botha and Cronjé (2015) found that 63% of women miners reported gender-based discrimination.

Many mining sites lack infrastructure suitable for women, such as separate changing facilities, sanitary amenities, and personal protective equipment designed for women's physiology (Minerals Council South Africa, 2020). Mashaba (2022) noted that only 35% of South African mining companies have implemented gender-specific facilities and equipment, highlighting a significant gap. This absence creates a physically uncomfortable and psychologically stressful environment, negatively impacting women's well-being and contributing to feelings of isolation in a predominantly male workforce (Botha Cronje, 2015).

The demanding nature of mining, including extended shifts and remote locations, complicates the work-life balance for women (Benya, 2017). Mahomed (2022) reports that 72% of female miners struggle to balance work and familial responsibilities compared to 45% of their male counterparts.

Women in mining face unique health and safety risks, including reproductive health issues and heightened susceptibility to occupational diseases (Botha & Cronjé, 2015; Zungu, 2013). Zungu (2013) found that female miners are 1.5 times more likely to develop respiratory diseases than male miners, highlighting the need for sex-specific health interventions. They are frequently exposed to hazardous substances like heavy metals, silica dust, and chemical solvents, which pose severe reproductive health risks such as menstrual irregularities, infertility, miscarriages, and other complications (Eftimie, Heller, & Strongman, 2009). The physically demanding nature of mining and extended working hours exacerbate these risks. Additionally, the physical demands of mining, such as lifting heavy equipment and operating machinery, pose ergonomic challenges for women, increasing the risk of musculoskeletal injuries, particularly for pregnant women or those who may become pregnant, leading to further reproductive health complications (Minerals Council South Africa, 2020). Ergonomic considerations often neglect women's physical needs. Women miners usually work in remote areas with limited or no access to reproductive health services, delaying or preventing necessary medical care and complicating prenatal and postnatal health management. Consequently, women may prioritise work over health, leading to severe health repercussions (Moyo, 2011). Personal protective equipment (PPE) is typically designed for male body types, resulting in ill-fitting gear for women, compromising protection and increasing accident and injury risks. Poorly fitting gloves may hinder grip, while oversized boots or respiratory masks can impair mobility and protection (Botha, 2016).

Stereotypes and biases hinder women's advancement into leadership roles and technically demanding positions, limiting career opportunities (Mavuso, 2015). Despite being 12% of the workforce, women occupy only 16% of top management positions in the mining sector (Minerals Council South Africa, 2020). The lack of women in senior positions often means a lack of mentors and role models for career development (Matshingane, 2017). A survey by Kansake et al. (2021) found that 78% of women mining professionals cited a lack of mentorship as a significant barrier to career advancement. These challenges underscore the need for targeted interventions to improve working conditions and job opportunities for women in mining. Odhiambo (2023, p. 9) suggests a multi-stakeholder approach involving government, industry, and civil society organisations is crucial for addressing these systemic issues and promoting gender equality in the South African mining industry.

5. Intersections of African Feminist Philanthropy and Women in Mining

Limited literature addresses African feminist philanthropic interventions in mining, but broader initiatives offer insights. Some organisations fund skills development programmes to equip women with technical mining skills, addressing gender disparity in the traditionally male-dominated sector (Oxfam International Pan Africa, 2021). Feminist groups support advocacy campaigns for gender-responsive policies in the extractive industry, focusing on equal pay, workplace safety, and representation in decision-making (World Bank, 2020). Philanthropic funding provides legal assistance and counselling for women facing workplace discrimination or harassment (ActionAid, 2022), which is crucial for those in male-dominated environments. Research supported by some organisations aims to understand women's experiences in mining and identify intervention areas (Jenkins, 2014), which is essential for evidence-based strategy development.

African feminist philanthropy also targets community-level interventions, recognising mining's broader impact. Initiatives support women-led community organisations in mining areas to address environmental and social issues (Mugo & Midzi, 2023), empowering women as change agents. However, gaps remain in developing sector-specific strategies, intersectional approaches, collaborations with industry stakeholders, policy influence, technology use, and long-term impact evaluation (Botha,

2017). Addressing these could enhance African feminist philanthropy's effectiveness in improving women's working conditions in South African mining. Targeted strategies are needed for women's challenges in various mining roles (Mashaba, 2022). Intersectional approaches considering race, class, ethnicity, and gender are crucial due to complex social dynamics in mining communities (Mahomed, 2022).

Underdeveloped collaboration with industry stakeholders, including mining companies and labour unions, could be strengthened for more effective interventions (Kansake et al., 2021). African feminist philanthropy could also significantly influence mining policies at national and local levels (Odhiambo, 2023). Technology use in philanthropic interventions, such as digital platforms for education and support, has growth potential (Moyo & Sall, 2024). Robust evaluation mechanisms are needed to assess long-term impacts on women's working conditions and well-being in mining (Read, 2022). These initiatives illustrate how feminist philanthropy, policy reform, and grassroots organising contribute to safer, more equitable, and inclusive workplaces for women in mining. The following section describes several notable examples.

- ActionAid's "Making Natural Resources Work for Women" Program (Ghana and Zambia)
The ActionAid program, supported by feminist philanthropy and gender equity principles, empowers women in mining-affected communities by raising awareness of their rights, addressing sexual harassment, and advocating for their inclusion in mining decisions. It organises women into community groups to push for better labour rights and environmental protection. By working with local governments and mining companies, ActionAid initiated policy dialogues on workplace safety and fair compensation for women (ActionAid, 2019).
- Oxfam's Gender Justice and Extractive Industries Program Global (with projects in Papua New Guinea, Peru, and South Africa)
Oxfam's gender justice programs in mining regions focus on community engagement, workplace equity, and women's safety. They promote gender-sensitive corporate social responsibility (CSR) and aim to provide women with fair employment opportunities in mining. These programs have significantly promoted gender equality, including commitments to equal pay and anti-harassment policies. In Papua New Guinea, Oxfam's efforts have improved the protection of women in mining communities, reducing violence and economic exclusion (Oxfam International, 2017).
- Women in Mining South Africa (WiMSA) (South Africa)
WiMSA, a non-profit organisation, empowers women in South African mining through mentorship, advocacy, and networking. Collaborating with mining companies promotes gender-sensitive workplace policies and safety measures, particularly in high-risk underground operations. The WiMSA has significantly advanced safe and equitable working conditions, increasing gender diversity in mining management roles. Its mentorship programs help women advance their careers, and advocacy efforts highlight their unique health and safety needs in mining (WiMSA, 2024).

These case studies demonstrate the potential of feminist philanthropy and advocacy to bring about systemic changes in the mining sector, from grassroots mobilisation to corporate reform. Through these interventions, gender equity has become an actionable goal, fostering safer, more inclusive workplaces that recognise and address women's unique challenges in the mining industry. These programs provide a model for other regions that seek to implement similar feminist interventions.

6. Theoretical Frameworks for Understanding Feminist Philanthropy in Mining

Integrating feminist frameworks like feminist political economy, intersectionality, and transformative justice into feminist philanthropy in the mining sector provides a robust foundation for addressing gender inequities. These frameworks offer unique insights for designing philanthropic interventions that go beyond alleviating symptoms of gender inequality. They aim to restructure power relations,

transform societal norms, and ensure sustainable support for women in mining. This discussion explains how these frameworks inform strategies that facilitate transformative and structural changes beyond mere representation or inclusion.

6.1 Feminist Political Economy

The feminist political economy framework is valuable for analysing African feminist philanthropy and women's labour in the mining sector. It highlights the embedding of gender relations in economic structures and processes, including extractive industries (Koomson-Yalley & Kyei, 2022). This framework involves understanding the gendered division of labour, recognising women's unpaid care work, and examining gendered access to resources and power dynamics within mining organisations. It shows how gender norms allocate roles in mining, often placing women in lower-paying or informal jobs (Perks & Schulz, 2020). It acknowledges how unpaid care work limits women's participation in the formal mining economy (Luxton, 1980). Structural inequalities often restrict women's access to necessary resources for advancement.

Applying this framework to philanthropic interventions in mining can enhance efforts to address fundamental gender inequalities, potentially supporting initiatives that challenge gender norms, provide childcare, improve women's access to training and leadership roles, and promote gender-responsive policies within mining companies and governments (Conde, 2017). It stresses examining power dynamics at various levels—household, corporate, and national—and understanding how gender intersects with class, race, and geography for nuanced, context-specific strategies (Ferguson, 2008).

Adopting a feminist political economy approach, philanthropic efforts can foster more equitable and inclusive African mining sectors. This includes supporting women's collective organisations, advocating for policy reforms, and investing in programs to remove structural barriers to women's advancement. This framework offers a comprehensive path for addressing deep-rooted gender inequalities in the industry through targeted philanthropic intervention.

6.2 Intersectionality

Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) introduced intersectionality to analyse women's experiences in South Africa's mining industry, emphasising how multiple oppressions intersect to shape working conditions and opportunities. This framework examines social categorisations like race, class, and gender, illustrating how these oppressions converge to influence women's distinct experiences (Crenshaw, 1991). Intersectionality is vital for addressing the compounded discrimination faced by female miners, showing how race, class, and geographic location intersect with gender to create unique challenges. For Black female miners from rural areas, it reveals how structural and social inequalities shape their professional experiences, economic opportunities, and well-being differently from their urban or privileged peers.

In South Africa's mining industry, race, class, and gender intersections are deeply tied to the apartheid history of racial and economic segregation. Black female miners face overlapping oppressions from both gender and race, resulting in compounded marginalisation. Moraka (2015) notes that the apartheid legacy still restricts black women's access to higher-paying positions and better working conditions in the sector. This systemic inequality is more severe for rural women, who face educational and economic barriers, hindering their professional mobility and skills compared to urban or wealthier women.

Benya (2017) discusses black women's struggles in South Africa's underground mining sector, where they face multifaceted discrimination. These women are often assigned strenuous, dangerous jobs with limited advancement opportunities. Rural women, lacking education or technical training, occupy low-wage, precarious positions due to systemic barriers and cultural biases within mining corporations. The gendered division of labour places Black women at the bottom of occupational

hierarchies, reinforcing their secondary status compared to male or white colleagues. In contrast, urban or middle-class women with higher education, technical training, or industry connections have relatively better opportunities but still face gendered discrimination like leadership obstacles, wage gaps, and social biases. This disparity underscores how race, class, and geographic location shape varied experiences of oppression and access within the mining industry.

Integrating an intersectional perspective into feminist philanthropic strategies is crucial for creating effective interventions that address the compounded discrimination faced by black women and those from rural areas in the South African mining industry. Targeted scholarships, technical training opportunities, and programs that promote inclusive hiring practices and leadership pathways for black women can mitigate socioeconomic, educational, and racial barriers (Mashaba & Botha, 2023). Recent scholarship emphasises the necessity of intersectionality in retaining women in technical and leadership roles, acknowledging that historical racial segregation still impacts Black women's opportunities (Botha, 2016). Moraka (2015) noted that black women's experiences in South African mining are influenced by both gender and racial dynamics from apartheid history, highlighting the importance of considering both race and gender in addressing the challenges faced. Benya (2017) illustrated how gender, race, and class shape the experiences of women underground miners in South Africa, affecting their job access, working conditions, and career progression. Adopting an intersectional approach in philanthropic efforts can address women's multifaceted challenges by supporting initiatives that promote gender equality while simultaneously tackling racial disparities, socioeconomic barriers, and cultural challenges (Kansake et al., 2021).

6.3 Transformative Justice

Transformative justice offers a framework for understanding feminist philanthropy's role in systemic change within the mining industry, focusing on addressing structural inequalities (Oxfam, 2017). It prioritises community-led solutions and elevates the experiences of affected women miners and mining community members. Instead of top-down interventions, it values local women's knowledge and leadership to create sustainable solutions, aligning with feminist principles of centring marginalised voices and shifting power dynamics (IISD, 2023). Moyo and Sall (2024) argue this approach recognises women in mining communities as active change agents, not passive aid recipients.

Transformative justice also acknowledges the interconnected social, economic, and environmental factors affecting women's working conditions, advocating for holistic strategies to address multiple forms of oppression. Interventions might simultaneously tackle occupational health and safety, sexual harassment, unequal pay, lack of childcare, and environmental degradation (Action Aid, 2019). Kansake et al. (2021) emphasise the importance of this intersectional approach in addressing women's complex challenges in mining.

This perspective directs philanthropic efforts towards sustainable impacts on women in the mining sector, focusing on long-term movement building, institutional change, and shifts in social norms and power structures. This could include supporting women-led labour organisations, policy reform advocacy, or community-owned enterprises providing economic alternatives (Odhiambo, 2023). This approach aligns with gender-just climate finance principles, allocating resources to women and minority communities and leading climate solutions that integrate rights and justice with environmental integrity (Lopez et al., 2024). In mining, this could mean funding women-led sustainable resource management initiatives. Mashaba and Botha (2023) note successful examples in South Africa, where women-led cooperatives have converted abandoned mining sites into sustainable agricultural projects.

Overall, a transformative justice framework encourages feminist philanthropy to focus on systemic change, highlighting the agency and leadership of women miners and communities in creating equitable and sustainable systems. By addressing root causes and shifting power dynamics, philanthropy can contribute to lasting transformations in the mining industry (Mugo & Midzi, 2023).

6.4 Practical Implications for Philanthropic Strategies

Integrating these frameworks enables feminist philanthropy in the mining sector to achieve systemic change. The feminist political economy approach addresses structural economic barriers; intersectionality ensures inclusivity of diverse women's experiences; transformative justice advocates for community-driven solutions. These frameworks guide philanthropies in fostering gender equity, addressing immediate challenges, and investing in long-term transformations.

A feminist philanthropic agenda could support women-led advocacy groups in mining communities, providing resources and platforms to demand better working conditions and equitable resource distribution. This may include facilitating access to training programs tailored to marginalised groups and offering financial support for projects promoting alternative livelihoods for women impacted by mining's environmental effects (Mashaba & Botha, 2023). Furthermore, these frameworks stress the importance of collaborating with local organisations and government agencies to institutionalise reforms and enforce gender-sensitive policies across the mining sector.

Applying feminist political economy, intersectionality, and transformative justice to philanthropic efforts in the mining sector fosters a holistic approach to gender equality. These frameworks identify the root causes of women's marginalisation and offer actionable pathways for philanthropic organisations to support interventions empowering women and creating more inclusive, sustainable mining industries in Africa. Strategies informed by these frameworks enable feminist philanthropy to reshape the sector, contributing to a mining industry that upholds gender justice.

7. Findings: Potential Strategies for Feminist Philanthropic Interventions

Historically, the South African mining industry has been a male-dominated sector, with significant gender disparities and challenges for female workers. While some progress has been made in recent years to increase women's participation, substantial barriers and inequalities persist (Botha, 2016). Feminist philanthropy has the potential to play a crucial role in driving positive changes and ameliorating conditions for women in this industry through targeted, strategic interventions. This section presents the findings and discussions from the systematic literature review, which presented several vital strategies through which feminist philanthropic organisations can exert a meaningful impact.

7.1 Targeted Grant-making

Feminist philanthropic organisations can intervene effectively through targeted grant-making programs addressing women's specific challenges in the mining sector. This strategy allows funders to allocate resources to critical issues and support innovative solutions. A key focus is supporting women-led organisations working on mining labour rights and gender equality. These grassroots groups, with extensive local knowledge and connections to women workers, often lack financial resources. Flexible, multi-year funding can enhance their capacity and impact (Moyo, 2011). Grants could support advocacy campaigns, worker education programs, or initiatives addressing gender-based discrimination and violence in mining workplaces.

Another promising area is funding innovative projects that use technology to improve female miners' safety and working conditions. The challenging mining environment poses specific risks for women, but technological solutions can mitigate these challenges. Grants could support the development of personal protective equipment for women, remote monitoring systems for security, and mobile applications for reporting safety violations (Minerals Council South Africa, 2020). Funding such innovations can make mining workplaces safer for women.

Seed funding for women-owned enterprises in the mining supply chain is another strategic grant-making opportunity. Women entrepreneurs often face capital access barriers, especially in male-dominated industries. Targeted grants or low-interest loans can help women establish businesses

supplying goods and services to mining operations, creating economic opportunities and increasing women's representation in the industry (Eftimie et al., 2009).

7.2 Capacity Building and Leadership Development

Investing in skill-building and leadership programs for women in mining has strong empirical support. In sectors like technology and engineering, targeted mentorship initiatives have effectively advanced women into leadership roles. Data shows that mentorship boosts confidence and provides essential support for navigating male-dominated cultures, leading to higher retention and promotion rates for women (Botha & Cronje, 2015). Establishing mentorship programs within mining can encourage women to pursue leadership roles equipped with the necessary tools.

Technical training for women also shows proven results. Programs in oil and gas have increased women's representation in technical and operational roles, demonstrating that targeted training in equipment operations and engineering can open new career pathways (Minerals Council South Africa, 2020). Women in these programs report greater career satisfaction and are likelier to move into higher-paying, skilled positions. Partnerships with educational institutions to develop curricula and provide scholarships can improve women's representation in core mining roles and break gendered occupational segregation.

Women in mining are often concentrated in support functions rather than operational roles. Providing opportunities to acquire technical skills in geology, engineering, and heavy equipment operation can facilitate new career pathways (Minerals Council South Africa, 2020). Funding bodies could collaborate with educational institutions or industry groups to develop tailored training curricula and provide scholarships.

Despite progress in entry-level hiring, women remain underrepresented in technical roles and leadership positions in South African mining (Minerals Council South Africa, 2020). Targeted capacity-building initiatives can address this issue. Mentorship programs pairing experienced female leaders with emerging talent can be effective, offering role models, professional guidance, and insight into navigating male-dominated cultures (Botha & Cronje, 2015). Funding bodies can support formal mentorship initiatives within mining companies or industry associations.

Leadership development workshops addressing specific challenges women encounter in mining environments are valuable. These could cover assertiveness, work-life balance strategies, and techniques for mitigating gender bias (Botha, 2016). Equipping women with practical leadership skills can facilitate their advancement into decision-making roles.

7.3 Policy Advocacy and Research

Research and advocacy for gender-responsive policies have historically driven significant reforms across industries. Evidence-based advocacy in sectors like transport and manufacturing has shown that data-driven policy recommendations can enhance workplace equity and safety. For instance, studies have linked gender-diverse teams to increased productivity and innovation, bolstering the case for gender diversity (Eftimie et al., 2009). Mining sector funders could commission similar research to generate empirical data to support gender diversity, influencing companies and policymakers to adopt inclusive practices.

Collaborative policy advocacy, especially with feminist organisations, has resulted in legislative changes and improved workplace discrimination protections in finance and law. These successes highlight the effectiveness of funding feminist organisations to engage in policy dialogue, informing comprehensive gender-focused policies. By supporting advocacy for gender quotas in leadership or better protections for women miners, funders can drive policy changes for a more inclusive mining environment.

Promoting research and advocacy to make mining policies more gender-responsive is crucial. Despite existing legal frameworks for gender equality in South Africa, their implementation in the

mining sector is often inadequate (Minerals Council South Africa, 2020). Evidence-based advocacy can facilitate policy reforms and industry-wide transformation. Rigorous studies on the long-term impacts of gender diversity in mining operations can provide compelling data for inclusion. Research on productivity, safety, innovation, and other performance indicators in gender-diverse versus homogeneous mining teams could yield valuable insights (Eftimie et al., 2009). Funding bodies could support academic partnerships or commission studies to create this evidence base.

Supporting feminist organisations in mining policy dialogue is another potential impact avenue. These groups can offer critical gender perspectives in policy discussions that may overlook women's viewpoints. Financial support could fund policy analysis, stakeholder consultations, or advocacy campaigns addressing issues like parental leave, sexual harassment protections, or gender quotas in mining leadership (Minerals Council South Africa, 2020).

Facilitating collaborations between researchers, activists, and policymakers to develop evidence-based policy recommendations can also be effective. Funding bodies could convene multi-stakeholder working groups or support policy briefs that synthesise academic research into actionable recommendations for government and industry decision-makers (Botha & Cronje, 2015).

7.4 Holistic Support Services

Holistic support services' effectiveness is well-documented in healthcare and education, where comprehensive interventions address women's diverse needs. A multifaceted support system in mining could include legal aid clinics and health services tailored to women miners' specific physical and mental health needs. Legal aid clinics for female manufacturing workers have effectively reduced gender-based discrimination by aiding claims, raising awareness, and setting legal precedents (Minerals Council South Africa, 2020). Similar clinics in mining could protect women's rights and foster accountability.

Health services, such as mobile clinics, have proven benefits. Research from construction and agriculture shows mobile health services offering reproductive healthcare, ergonomic assessments, and mental health resources improve women's well-being and job satisfaction (Eftimie et al., 2009). Tailored health services for women miners would address their specific needs, aiding them in physically demanding environments.

Comprehensive support systems addressing women's challenges in mining are crucial. Women in the industry often face workplace discrimination, safety concerns, familial responsibilities, and limited service access (Botha, 2016). Holistic interventions can help women navigate these challenges.

Establishing legal aid clinics specialising in labour rights and gender discrimination within mining could support women facing workplace issues. Many women miners may lack awareness of their legal entitlements or resources to pursue claims. Dedicated legal services can assist women in seeking redress and establishing significant precedents (Minerals Council South Africa, 2020).

Creating secure environments and support networks for women miners to share experiences and access resources is another valuable intervention. Women in male-dominated mining environments often experience isolation and lack peers to discuss challenges. Whether in-person or virtual, women-only forums can provide emotional support, practical advice, and a sense of community (Botha & Cronje, 2015). Providing health services tailored to women in mining is essential. The physical demands and environmental hazards of mining can present unique health risks for women workers. Mobile clinics offering reproductive health services, ergonomic assessments, or mental health support could address these needs (Eftimie et al., 2009).

7.5 Industry Partnerships

Collaborative partnerships with mining companies to promote gender-sensitive practices have shown potential, as evidenced by similar successes in the oil and gas industry, which implemented gender sensitivity training and inclusive policies like parental leave and anti-harassment protocols (Botha,

2016). Funders could assist mining firms by providing gender specialists to develop workplace policies or pilot programmes for inclusive practices. Industry-wide standards for gender-sensitive infrastructure, such as gender-specific PPE and secure changing areas that are successful in industrial manufacturing, could be extended to mining through collaboration.

Engaging with progressive mining companies to adopt gender-responsive practices is a promising strategy. Despite some companies' commitment to gender diversity, practical implementation remains challenging. Philanthropic partnerships can offer the necessary expertise and resources to accelerate this transformation. Collaborative efforts in developing workplace policies for gender equality and inclusion could include guidelines for flexible work arrangements, parental leave, and harassment prevention. Funding bodies could provide gender specialists for organisational consultations or support pilot programmes to test new policies (Minerals Council South Africa, 2020).

Establishing industry-wide standards for gender-sensitive infrastructure and equipment is another opportunity. Many mine sites lack adequate facilities for women, such as properly fitting protective gear and secure changing areas. Funders could support initiatives to promote best practices for gender-inclusive mine design (Botha, 2016). Implementing collaborative training programmes to address gender biases and foster inclusive work environments is crucial. Unconscious bias among male colleagues and supervisors is a significant barrier for women in mining. Sector-wide training initiatives, potentially using technology for scalability, could help transform attitudes and behaviours (Eftimie et al., 2009).

7.6 Community Engagement

Community-level interventions have shown their efficacy in creating long-term cultural change. Educational programmes that engage men and boys in gender equality have led to more inclusive attitudes and behaviours in industries such as agriculture and fishing, where traditional gender roles are also strongly enforced (Botha & Cronje, 2015). Funding bodies could support similar initiatives within mining communities, challenging gender stereotypes and promoting supportive environments for women miners.

Investment in community-based childcare has enabled women in industries like garment manufacturing to better balance work and family responsibilities, presenting a practical approach for mining communities (Eftimie et al., 2009). Such programs would alleviate the burden of unpaid care work for women miners, allowing them to pursue career opportunities. Addressing the broader social context affecting women's participation in mining is a significant strategy. Challenges faced by women in the industry often stem from societal gender norms and structural inequalities (Botha & Cronje, 2015). Comprehensive community-level interventions can foster a more supportive environment.

Supporting programs that engage men and boys in promoting gender equality within mining communities is crucial. Changing male perceptions of women's roles and capabilities fosters more inclusive work environments. Funding bodies can support educational initiatives in schools or community organisations to challenge gender stereotypes and promote equitable relationships (Minerals Council South Africa, 2020).

Funding initiatives that address women's care responsibilities, such as community childcare centres, can significantly impact the situation. The burden of unpaid care work often limits women's ability to pursue mining careers. Affordable, high-quality childcare can expand women's economic opportunities (Eftimie et al., 2009).

Promoting economic diversification in mining-dependent communities to create alternative opportunities for women is valuable. Over-reliance on mining reinforces gender segregation in local labour markets. Developing other industries or entrepreneurship programs for women can provide diverse economic pathways (Botha, 2016).

Improving conditions for women in the South African mining industry requires a multifaceted

approach addressing individual, organisational, and societal challenges. Feminist philanthropic interventions can induce positive change through strategic investments. By combining grant-making, capacity building, policy advocacy, support services, industry partnerships, and community engagement, funders can create more equitable and empowering work environments for women in mining. Effective interventions should be based on a thorough understanding of local contexts, centred on women's perspectives and experiences, and designed for sustainable impact. Collaboration among funding entities and partnerships with government, industry stakeholders, and civil society organisations is crucial for achieving transformative change. Integrating women into all levels of mining operations is essential for social justice, equality, and economic growth. Diverse teams enhance innovation, decision-making, and productivity (Eftimie et al., 2009). Investing in women's professional advancement in mining can lead to a more sustainable, equitable, and prosperous future for South Africa's mining industry and its communities.

7.7 Viability of Interventions

This section delineates potential strategies aimed at long-term viability to strengthen financial sustainability analysis for resource-intensive interventions in promoting gender equity within the mining sector. Leadership development workshops and community childcare initiatives are essential for advancing gender equality; however, their high resource demands necessitate sustainable funding sources to ensure their enduring impact. Several financing strategies, including corporate social responsibility (CSR) programmes and public-private partnerships, are crucial for providing a stable financial foundation (Carroll & Shabana, 2010).

7.8 Role of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in Funding Gender Equity Interventions

Mining companies are well-positioned to fund gender equity initiatives through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes, aligning social and economic responsibilities. By incorporating gender equity into their CSR strategies, these organisations can allocate resources to support initiatives that directly benefit women miners, which not only improves working conditions but also enhances corporate reputation and aligns with environmental, social, and governance (ESG) standards. Successful CSR examples demonstrate the potential impact; for instance, some mining companies have invested in facilities for childcare or leadership programmes for women, increasing employee satisfaction and productivity (Grosser, 2009). By disseminating these successful CSR models, more companies can be encouraged to adopt similar initiatives that support women in mining (Brammer et al., 2012).

7.9 Leveraging Public-Private Partnerships

Public-private partnerships (PPPs) constitute a productive mechanism for supporting gender equity initiatives. Collaboration among governmental entities, non-governmental organisations, and mining corporations facilitates the pooling of resources and expertise, enhancing the feasibility of large-scale, gender-sensitive projects. Extant partnerships between mining companies and development organisations focused on community development could be expanded to support gender-specific initiatives. These established networks enhance the impact and sustainability of gender equity programmes by integrating them into broader community-focused initiatives (Skelcher & Sullivan, 2008).

7.10 Sustainable Funding Models

Establishing dedicated funds for gender equity, such as gender equity funds within the mining sector, can provide a sustainable financial foundation. Contributions to these funds from mining corporations, government grants, and international donors can be managed independently to enhance transparency

and accountability, ensuring that the resources are effectively allocated to support these initiatives. An alternative model is performance-based funding, which disburses funds based on quantifiable achievements in gender equity goals. This model emphasises outcomes, fostering continuous progress and accountability for fund utilisation (Milward et al., 2010).

7.11 Long-Term Impact and Cost-Benefit Analysis

Conducting cost-benefit analyses to elucidate the long-term economic advantages of gender equity interventions is essential. For instance, investing in leadership programmes can lead to productivity gains and innovation, whilst childcare facilities can decrease absenteeism and turnover, which translates into economic benefits. Additionally, establishing robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems to track the outcomes of gender equity initiatives can provide data to substantiate the case for continuous funding. Regular outcome reports are instrumental in maintaining stakeholder support by demonstrating tangible benefits and illustrating the value of sustained investment (Epstein & Buhovac, 2014).

In conclusion, addressing the financial sustainability of gender equity interventions in mining necessitates a multifaceted approach that combines CSR programmes, PPPs, and sustainable funding models. Such strategies ensure these interventions are implemented and maintained effectively over time. By incorporating these considerations into discussions on feminist philanthropic interventions, the paper can delineate comprehensive, sustainable funding strategies that promote enduring change in gender equity in the mining sector.

8. Conclusion

This literature review has examined the potential role of African feminist philanthropy in effecting change in the working conditions of women in the South African mining industry. Through the synthesis of research on feminist philanthropic approaches, the challenges women face in mining, and relevant theoretical frameworks, several key insights and opportunities for future research and action have emerged. The review elucidates the substantial challenges for women in the mining sector, encompassing discrimination, inadequate infrastructure, health and safety risks, and limited career advancement opportunities. While progress has been achieved in increasing women's participation in the industry, significant barriers remain to attaining genuine equality and inclusion. African feminist philanthropy, emphasising addressing systemic inequalities and empowering women, presents a potentially efficacious mechanism for effecting change in this context. However, the specific application of feminist philanthropic approaches to the mining sector remains insufficiently explored, revealing a significant lacuna in the extant literature.

Potential strategies for feminist philanthropic interventions in the mining sector encompass targeted grant-making, capacity-building and leadership development programmes, policy advocacy and research, comprehensive support services, industry partnerships, and community engagement initiatives. These approaches, informed by feminist principles and tailored to the specific context of South African mining, possess the potential to address both immediate needs and long-term structural barriers confronting women in the industry. Future research endeavours should focus on developing and evaluating sector-specific strategies for feminist philanthropic interventions in mining, exploring intersectional approaches that account for women's diverse experiences in the industry, and assessing the long-term impacts of such interventions on women's empowerment and working conditions.

By bridging the gap between African feminist philanthropy and the mining sector's specific challenges, there is significant potential to establish more equitable, safe, and empowering work environments for women in South African mining. This approach benefits individual women and can potentially transform the industry, contributing to broader objectives of gender equality and social justice.

Biography notes

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