



## Mining male allies

The role of male allies as a conduit to unlocking women empowerment in the mining industry

December 2020



MAKING AN  
IMPACT THAT  
MATTERS  
*since 1845*

# The increasingly important role of male allies as a conduit to unlocking women empowerment in the mining industry



Amidst the trauma, loss and challenging times ushered in by the COVID-19 pandemic, looms a second, equally distressing and serious pandemic – the pandemic of violence against women and children in South Africa. In June 2020, President Cyril Ramaphosa, made reference to Gender Based Violence (GBV) as the second pandemic that plagues South Africa. According to the Minerals Council of South Africa, South Africa has amongst the highest rates of GBV in the world with a five times higher rate of femicide than the global average.

How gender equality and GBV plays out in the organisational context may differ from industry to industry and while this may be the case, certain industries require greater attention and focus in advancing the spotlight on addressing gender diversity and inclusion systemically and beyond compliance.

The mining industry is one such industry that requires this attention and focus, and while building a gender diverse and inclusive industry may be challenging, there is huge value in doing this. Touted as an industry that still remains male dominated, and where men often play the role of the gate keeper, there is enormous opportunity to reauthor the narrative around the important role that men can play in empowering women in the industry. While the number of women in the mining sector has increased in the past fifteen years, women still only represent 12%

of the mining labour workforce with a key challenge being that of safety – both physical safety where women fear the risk of sexual harassment and sexual violence as well as psychological safety where the conditions set up in the workplace do not encourage women to feel safe and open to speak up should they experience harassment of any kind.

According to the White Paper on Women in Mining, released by the Minerals Council of South Africa, the inclusion of men in gender diversity and inclusion interventions is pivotal in driving real, meaningful and authentic change in the industry. This is true insofar as men who occupy powerful positions at all levels in the organisation are often in prime roles to positively influence the shift in narrative towards a more gender inclusive organisational culture and workplace.

The Deloitte Science of Inclusion framework (Figure 1), is premised on four key principles that when role modelled by leaders and employees, creates the grounds and foundation for a psychologically safe and inclusive workplace. Employees are more likely to experience psychological safety and an inclusive workplace when they feel that they are treated with fairness and respect, when they feel valued and that they belong in the workplace, when they feel safe and open to voice their opinions and are able to speak up without retribution, and finally, when they experience empowerment and growth.

"According to the White Paper on Women in Mining, released by the Minerals Council of South Africa, the inclusion of men in gender diversity and inclusion interventions is pivotal in driving real, meaningful and authentic change in the industry."

Figure 1

**The science of inclusion: Deloitte's inclusion model**



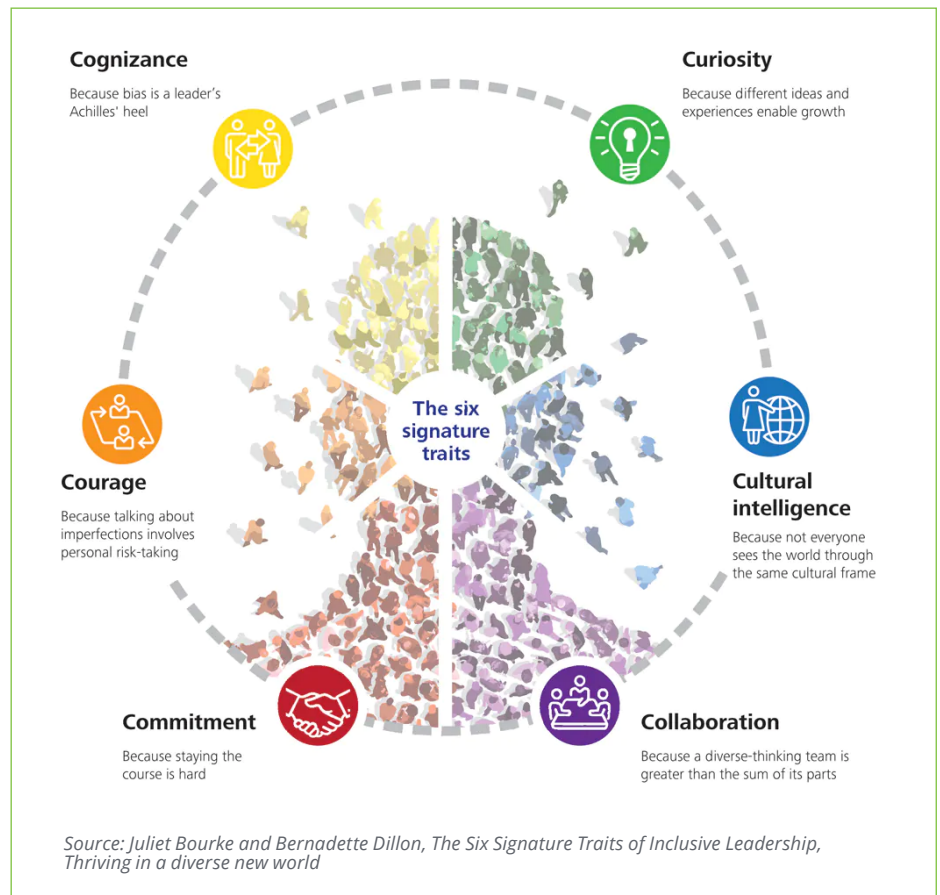
Sources: Bersin by Deloitte, *High-impact diversity and inclusion: The new maturity model*, 2017; Juliet Bourke and Bernadette Dillon, *Waiter, is that inclusion in my soup? A new recipe to improve business performance*, Deloitte Australia and the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission, 2012.

While establishing the conditions for a psychologically safe and inclusive workplace is a necessary foundation for leaders to display, there are six unique signature traits of inclusive leaders which male custodians of diversity and inclusion may consider role modelling in order to support and drive the gender imperative in their organisations with greater impact.

**Six unique signature traits of inclusive leaders**



Firstly, male leaders who take on the role of an ally need to demonstrate their commitment to gender diversity and inclusion because staying the course is hard. Male custodians of gender diversity and inclusion may benefit from introspecting and gaining insights into how their personal values and story is aligned to supporting the gender diversity and inclusion cause and how their personal story drives their commitment in seeing the commercial value and treating gender diversity and inclusion as a business priority. In the mining context, this means realising the powerful role that men can play in championing the female agenda. Secondly, male leaders being cognizant of their biases towards women is a pivotal step in managing the implicit gender stereotypes, prejudices, and microaggressions that play out in the workplace and specifically in the mining context. Such leaders would also need to learn about and challenge their own biases, both conscious and unconscious towards women, self-regulate by suspending any



Source: Juliet Bourke and Bernadette Dillon, *The Six Signature Traits of Inclusive Leadership, Thriving in a diverse new world*

unjust judgement and develop corrective strategies to call out organisational practices and processes that are discriminatory towards women.

An important inclusive leadership trait that male allies would need to develop, is their muscle to demonstrate courage. Displaying courage as a male ally means showing up with humility and acknowledging potential personal limitations and male privileges that they hold as well as learning from

criticism and different points of view. An important aspect of courage means showing up with bravery and constructively challenging the status quo when observing organisational practices, processes and systems that are not gender inclusive. This is especially needed in the mining industry where male allies may be required to stand up to what they believe in with conviction in supporting the gender equality imperative. Embracing and demonstrating the inclusive leadership trait of cultural intelligence is



important because not everyone sees the world through the same cultural frame. Taking an active interest in understanding different cultures and recognizing how one's own culture impacts one's personal worldview, as well as how cultural stereotypes and assumptions can influence one's expectations of others, is a vital trait in building an inclusive organisational culture.

When male sponsors of diversity and inclusion are able to display curiosity in understanding the unique challenges that women in mining experience, and actively seeking to understand the different perspectives and viewpoints that such women hold in the workplace, they are in a better position to drive the inclusive leadership attributes of open-mindedness, inquiry and empathy. Finally, male allies may role model the trait of collaboration by realising that highly inclusive leaders empower individuals as well as create and leverage the thinking of diverse groups. Male allies understand that women will be most collaborative when they feel safe to contribute without fear of embarrassment or retribution. Power dynamics, dominating

styles and low tolerance can prevent women from speaking up. In this regard, ensuring that women feel empowered is critical in preventing some of the challenges of harassment they may experience in the workplace.

In summary, as a first practical step, mining organisations within the local and global context would do well in realising that building a gender diverse and inclusive workforce means establishing an inclusive organisational culture beyond compliance and mere tick-boxing. In this regard, the business case for gender diversity and inclusion, not only supports the moral imperative towards gender equality but also drives innovation, agility and high performance. As a practical second step, mining organisations may consider enrolling and building the capability of male leaders in this context as a vital and powerful catalyst towards making an authentic impact that matters in the establishment of a gender diverse and inclusive mining organisation. Finally, male allies must translate this capability into role modelling and bringing to life their inclusive leadership towards the gender imperative.

"Male allies understand that women will be most collaborative when they feel safe to contribute without fear of embarrassment or retribution."

## Contact



**Sthembiso Phakathi**  
**Africa Consulting Human Capital Energy, Resources & Industrials Leader**  
Deloitte Africa  
sphakathi@deloitte.co.za



**Varsha Morar**  
**Africa Consulting Human Capital Energy, Resources & Industrials Senior Manager**  
Deloitte Africa  
vmorar@deloitte.co.za

### References:

- Deloitte (2020). 2020. *The Right Mind-set: Approaching Diversity and Inclusion in South Africa*. Deloitte value beyond compliance series. Available [Online]: <https://www2.deloitte.com/za/en/services/consulting-deloitte/the-right-mind-set.html>
- Deloitte (2018). 2018. *The Diversity and Inclusion Revolution: Eight Powerful Truths*. Deloitte Review (22). Available [Online]: <https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/deloitte-review/issue-22/diversity-and-inclusion-at-work-eight-powerful-truths.html>
- Deloitte (2016). 2016. *The Six Signature Traits of Inclusive Leadership*. Deloitte University Press. Available [Online]: <https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/topics/talent/six-signature-traits-of-inclusive-leadership.html>
- Mail & Guardian (2020). 2020. *WiMSA Shines a Light on the Future of Women in Mining*. Available [Online]: <https://mg.co.za/special-reports/2020-08-07-wimsa-shines-a-light-on-the-future-of-women-in-mining/>
- Minerals Council of South Africa (2020). 2020. *Stop Abuse of Women*. Available [Online]: <https://www.mineralscouncil.org.za/special-features/1065-stop-abuse-of-women>
- Minerals Council of South Africa (2020). 2020. *Women in Mining White Paper*. Available [Online]: <https://www.mineralscouncil.org.za/...papers/1218-white-paper-women-in-mining>

# Deloitte.

Deloitte refers to one or more of Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited (“DTTL”), its global network of member firms, and their related entities (collectively, the “Deloitte organization”). DTTL (also referred to as “Deloitte Global”) and each of its member firms and related entities are legally separate and independent entities, which cannot obligate or bind each other in respect of third parties. DTTL and each DTTL member firm and related entity is liable only for its own acts and omissions, and not those of each other. DTTL does not provide services to clients. Please see [www.deloitte.com/about](http://www.deloitte.com/about) to learn more.

Deloitte is a leading global provider of audit and assurance, consulting, financial advisory, risk advisory, tax and related services. Our global network of member firms and related entities in more than 150 countries and territories (collectively, the “Deloitte organization”) serves four out of five Fortune Global 500® companies. Learn how Deloitte’s approximately 312,000 people make an impact that matters at [www.deloitte.com](http://www.deloitte.com).

This communication contains general information only, and none of Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited (“DTTL”), its global network of member firms or their related entities (collectively, the “Deloitte organization”) is, by means of this communication, rendering professional advice or services. Before making any decision or taking any action that may affect your finances or your business, you should consult a qualified professional adviser.

No representations, warranties or undertakings (express or implied) are given as to the accuracy or completeness of the information in this communication, and none of DTTL, its member firms, related entities, employees or agents shall be liable or responsible for any loss or damage whatsoever arising directly or indirectly in connection with any person relying on this communication. DTTL and each of its member firms, and their related entities, are legally separate and independent entities.