



ZIMCODD

WEEKEND READER

26 SEPT 2025

"Your Weekly Read on Debt, Development & Socio-Economic Justice"

Gender, Tax and the Mining Paradox in Zimbabwe

The cost of extraction: How Zimbabwe's Mining Economy Marginalises Women



At the 2025 Zimbabwe Alternative Mining Indaba (ZAMI), ZIMCODD in collaboration with the Fight Inequality Alliance Zimbabwe led a timely conversation on feminist fiscal futures, interrogating the deep and often invisible injustices embedded in Zimbabwe's mining economy. Centred on the theme, "Mainstreaming Gender in Public Finance: Exploring the Gendered Dimensions of Tax Injustice in Zimbabwe's Mining Economy", the dialogue sought to expose how Zimbabwe's mineral taxation regime and public finance systems perpetuate gender inequality and to chart actionable pathways for change.

Unlocking the conversation was Professor F. Sebele-Mpofu from the National University of Science and Technology, whose thought-provoking analysis laid bare the disproportionate impact of extractivism and fiscal injustice on women in mining-affected communities. Her contributions highlighted how the intersection of resource exploitation, fiscal mismanagement and gender-blind budgeting systematically excludes women from the benefits of national wealth, while entrenching their vulnerability. The session aimed to not only diagnose the problem but to connect extractive revenue flows to gender-responsive budgeting, identifying strategic entry points within the 2026 national budget cycle and the National Development Strategy 2 (NDS2) framework to advance a feminist fiscal agenda.

The conversation by the professor unpacked the deeper injustices that intertwines gender, tax injustice and extractives. In her opening, she made a powerful quotation, 'In the depths of the earth, where wealth is unearthed, the voices of women remain buried beneath the layers of inequality.' Professor Sebele-Mpofu's words reminded delegates that behind every statistic is a lived experience. Women bear the brunt of environmental degradation, economic exclusion and social breakdown, yet have the least say in how mining revenues are collected or spent. The session unpacked the complex and opaque web of Zimbabwe's mining taxation regime, revealing how the current public finance system disproportionately disadvantages women and girls.

The Double-Barrelled Loss

Zimbabwe's extractive sector operates under a complex fiscal framework designed to mobilise domestic revenue. However, this system is riddled with loopholes, weak enforcement, and political patronage, leading to what participants called a "double-barrelled loss," not only does the state lose revenue, but the law itself loses legitimacy. Intended as a cornerstone of national development, the country's mineral wealth instead bleeds billions through illicit financial flows (IFFs), tax evasion, regressive tax incentives and institutionalised corruption. These losses, conservatively pegged at US\$32 billion in the last decade, are not just statistics. They represent stolen schools, dried-up clinics, collapsed safety nets and missed opportunities for women who already shoulder the greatest burdens in both the formal and informal economies.

As tax holidays, low royalties and corporate giveaways persist, the burden is shifted to citizens, especially women. To plug fiscal holes caused by elite tax dodging and smuggling scandals, the state leans heavily on consumption taxes like VAT, which are regressive and disproportionately affect low-income earners. Women, often informal traders and primary caregivers, pay for the state's failure with both their time and their meagre incomes.

How Fiscal Injustice Undermines Women's Rights

The gendered impacts of extractivism were placed under sharp focus. Environmental degradation, livelihood displacement and resource-based conflicts have compounded the vulnerability of women in mining-affected communities. Meanwhile, gender-blind public finance systems continue to deny women access to adequate healthcare, clean water, education and social protection.

A particularly disturbing facet of fiscal injustice raised was sextortion, the coercion of sexual favours in exchange for access to mining permits, employment or public services such as water. This form of corruption thrives in opaque systems where gatekeepers wield unchecked power and women lack legal protection or formal reporting channels. The fear of retaliation silences many victims, reinforcing gendered power imbalances.

The Feminisation of the Public Service Burden

As state capacity erodes, the burden of care shifts onto the shoulders of women, fetching water, nursing the sick, teaching children. This **“feminisation of unpaid labour”** is a direct consequence of mismanaged public funds and lost revenue. What's worse, women are excluded from decision-making spaces where these fiscal priorities are set. Zimbabwe's 2026 National Budget and NDS2 offer a critical window of opportunity to change this.

Reimagining Public Finance Through a Feminist Lens

The question that ZIMCODD sought to debate is, **‘How do we make taxes work for women?’** The answer lies in rethinking Zimbabwe's public finance system, shifting away from a narrow, revenue-maximisation mindset towards one centred on redistribution, repair and rights realisation. For too long, taxes have been treated merely as mechanisms for state revenue: yet, in a just society, they must serve as powerful instruments for social equity and economic inclusion, especially for those most marginalised by extractivism and fiscal Injustice.

To achieve this, several strategic entry points were identified:

1. Gender impact assessments must be made mandatory for all mining operations to ensure that policies and practices do not exacerbate existing inequalities.
2. Gender-responsive budgeting should be institutionalised, with targeted allocations to critical sectors such as health, education, water and women's economic empowerment.
3. The state must actively invest in women-led grassroots movements, particularly in mining-affected communities, to amplify the voices of those often excluded from decision-making spaces.
4. Public disclosure of mining revenues and contracts must be enforced to enhance transparency and empower citizens to follow the money.
5. The capacity of oversight institutions such as the Office of the Auditor General, Zimbabwe Gender Commission, the ZACC, NPA, JSC and Parliament of Zimbabwe must be strengthened to investigate and expose financial mismanagement and gendered corruption.

To Civil Society, ZIMCODD made the call to advocate for gender-sensitive fiscal reforms and push for the increased participation of women in budget planning and tax policy design. There is an urgent need to build women's capacity to understand and influence public finance decisions, while also promoting simplified, inclusive tax systems that accommodate the realities of the informal sector. Media and Investigative Journalists need support to expose financial mismanagement and gendered corruption through investigative reporting.

To Government, ZIMCODD calls for the enactment of gender-responsive mining codes that recognise and protect women's rights to land, resources and meaningful participation in decision-making processes.

To close, the riches in mining are abundant however, without justice the true wealth of our communities remain out of reach. The ZAMI 2025 convening reminded us that gender justice and tax justice are inseparable. As minerals flow, accountability must be at the core and as budgets are crafted, women's voices must be counted.

Religion, as the Missing Link in building the Debt Justice Movement

A huge chunk of Zimbabwe's debt some \$21.1 billion has crushed the country's economy, leaving the majority of its citizens to pay for the lavish lifestyles of a select few. The statistics are frightening only 4% of the population controls close to 80% of the nation's wealth, while the country's debt has ballooned to almost 97% of its GDP, far exceeding the legal limit of 70% far surpasses SADC's recommended benchmark of 60%.¹ But these figures, as huge as they are, don't tell the full story. They don't show the collapsed clinics, demoralized teachers, and crippling taxes that are the daily realities for most Zimbabweans.

While politicians and civic activists struggle to mobilize the masses, there's one institution with unparalleled reach: religion. Over 80% of Zimbabweans identify as Christian, and religious networks, especially churches, reach millions more reliably and consistently than any political party. They gather and shape public opinion on a scale the many players can't match.

So why is the church, a very powerful institution silent on the debt crisis?

The answer isn't that churches are the enemy; it's that they are a strategic battleground. If they can mobilize millions to give tithes and offerings despite economic hardship, they have the power to connect those daily sacrifices to systemic injustice. This isn't about blaming the church; it's about activating its immense potential.

The language for this fight already exists within the scriptures. The concept of the Year of Jubilee (Leviticus 25) demands the release of debts, and Proverbs 22:7 warns that **"the borrower is servant to the lender."** These aren't just spiritual metaphors; they're powerful tools for awakening a consciousness that links personal struggle to a larger fight for justice.

1. Business Weekly, (2023). "Debt worries continue as it creeps to 97 percent of GDP" Retrieved from businessweekly.co.zw

The debt justice movement needs a spiritual backbone, and churches are uniquely positioned to provide it. This means more than just prayer. It requires courage and action.

- Preach Economic Justice: Sermons should connect spiritual salvation to economic liberation.
- Host Community Dialogues: Church halls can become spaces for open conversations about debt and its impact.
- Issue Pastoral Letters: Religious leaders can demand accountability and transparency from the government.
- Mobilize Congregations: Churches can organize peaceful campaigns to highlight how debt burdens the poor.

The time for silence is over. Debt is a crisis of power and consciousness. Until Zimbabweans, organized through their most consistent social institutions like churches, connect the dots between foreign creditors, domestic elites, and their daily hardships, the cycle of debt and despair will continue. The debt movement must be spiritual, cultural, and political because that's where the people are.

Putting Citizens at the Centre of the 2026 National Budget: #People's Budget Campaign

As Parliament's Portfolio Committee on Budget, Finance and Investment Promotion embarks on nationwide consultations for the 2026 National Budget, the Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCODD) is intensifying its #People'sBudget campaign.

The campaign seeks to ensure that the budget-making process is people-driven, inclusive, and responsive to the lived realities of citizens—particularly women, youth, and marginalized communities. A truly democratic budget must reflect the voices of ordinary Zimbabweans, prioritising access to essential services, social protection, climate justice, equitable taxation, and fair distribution of resources.

ZIMCODD is mobilising communities across the country to actively participate in the consultations, equipping them with information and platforms to speak out on debt justice, mining governance, inequality, and public resource management. Through the #People'sBudget campaign, citizens are encouraged to claim their rightful space in shaping how national resources are allocated and utilised. A budget that excludes the people is not a people's budget. This is the moment to reclaim the budget as a tool for equity, development, and accountability.

The Dates, Places, Venues and Times for the consultations are as follows:



TEAM A

DATE	PLACE	VENUE	TIME
6/10/2025	Bindura	Tatenda Hall	1000-1200hrs
6/10/2025	Shamva	Shamva Sports Club	1000-1200hrs
7/10/2025	Mbire	Mushumbi Shops	1000-1200hrs
8/10/2025	Mazowe	Nzvimbo Business Centre	1000-1200hrs
9/10/2025	Mahusekwa	Mahusekwa Council Boardroom	1000-1200hrs
9/10/2025	Seke	Golf Course at Mahusekwa turn off	1000-1200hrs
10/10/2025	Mudzi	Kaitano Primary School	1000-1200hrs

TEAM B

DATE	PLACE	VENUE	TIME
6/10/2025	Epworth	Epworth Local Board Hall	1000-1200hrs
6/10/2025	Seke	Unit L. Community Hall	1400-1600hrs
7/10/2025	Murombedzi	Gonzoguzha Hall	1000-1200hrs
8/10/2025	Sanyathi	Patch way Community Hall	1000-1200hrs
9/10/2025	Chiwundura	Muchakata Business Center	1000-1200hrs
10/10/2025	Mberengwa	Masase High School Hall	1000-1200hrs

TEAM C

DATE	PLACE	VENUE	TIME
6/10/2025	Fairbridge	Fairbridge Primary School	1000-1200hrs
6/10/2025	Bulawayo	Bulawayo Selbourne Hotel	1400-1600hrs
7/10/2025	Tsholotsho	Tsholotsho Board Room	1100-1300hrs
8/10/2025	Ndabazinduna	Ndabazinduna Hall	1000-1200hrs
9/10/2025	Bulilima	Bulilima Community Centre	1000-1200hrs
10/10/2025	West Nicolson	West Nicolson Factory	1000-1200hrs
10/10/2025	Esigodini	Ncema Valley Club	1400-1600hrs

TEAM D

DATE	PLACE	VENUE	TIME
Oct 6, 2025	Buhera	Murambinda BSPZ Hall	1000-1200hrs
Oct 7, 2025	Nyanga	Nyanga-Nyamhuka Hall	1000-1200hrs
Oct 7, 2025	Mutasa	Hauna Growth Point	1400-1600hrs
Oct 8, 2025	Mutare	Chiyadzwa	1000-1200hrs
Oct 9, 2025	Zaka	Zaka RDC Hall	1000-1200hrs
Oct 10, 2025	Chiredzi	Tshovani Hall	1000-1200hrs
Oct 10, 2025	Ngundu	Ngundu Growth Point	1400-1600hrs

A Theological Reflection on Justice and Sovereignty in Southern Africa



The Antsirabe SADC People's Summit, a powerful summit for social movements and civil society, is not just as a political statement, but as a theological one. The developed communique's themes of justice, sovereignty and liberation resonate deeply with a faith-based perspective that challenges oppressive systems and advocates for the marginalized. Its core message is a rejection of a **"false solution"** and a call for a radical transformation based on a **"feminist, ecological and redistributive justice approach"**. From a theological standpoint, this is a prophetic call to action against injustice.

The communique acts as a prophetic voice, like those found in biblical traditions, that condemns the dominant extractivist and neoliberal systems that perpetuate poverty and inequality in Southern Africa. The system serves the elite, corporate interests and displaces communities, can be seen as a sinful structure that prioritizes profit over people, contradicting the divine command to care for the poor and the vulnerable.

The assertion that the ecological crisis is **"not natural"** but the result of **"centuries of colonial plunder and present-day capitalist greed"** echoes a theological understanding of sin not merely as individual actions, but as systemic forces that cause widespread harm. **"Green colonialism"**, where the Global North's rush for decarbonization fuels a new scramble for critical minerals, is a modern form of this systemic sin, exploiting the land and people of Southern Africa.



Theological justice often finds its foundation in the biblical concept of Jubilee, a time of debt cancellation and the return of land to its rightful owners. The communique's demand for the "immediate and unconditional cancellation of all illegitimate and odious external debts" aligns perfectly with this principle. It challenges the "false narrative that SADC countries are simply debtors" and instead asserts that the Global North owes a "historical, ecological and structural debt" to the people of Southern Africa due to colonial exploitation.

This is a call for reparative justice, not just aid. The demand for grants-based climate finance "not loans" is a theological rejection of a system that burdens the innocent with debt for a crisis they did not create. It recognizes a moral obligation to repair the historical harm caused by colonial and neocolonial plunder.

This vision also addresses the systemic oppression of women, who are marginalized by "**patriarchal, capitalist, and colonial structures**". The demand for feminist economic justice, including the recognition of unpaid care work and the institutionalization of women's leadership, is a theological affirmation of the inherent dignity and worth of all people. It is a commitment to ensuring that the poor and the marginalized are not only included, but that their leadership and wisdom are central to building a new and just future.

The SADC People's Summit Communique is a faith-filled declaration that "true resilience cannot be built on debt dependency, elite accumulation or false solutions but on solidarity, equity, participation and reparative justice". It is a powerful call to organize, mobilize, and act until a "**just, decolonised and feminist future becomes not just possible, but inevitable**".

[Link for the communique](#)

2025 Fiscal Transparency Report is out!

While the government has improved publication of budgets, audits, and end-of-year reports, serious weaknesses persist. Incomplete disclosure of revenues and expenditures, off-budget accounts beyond audit, and opaque management of natural resources are longstanding problems consistently flagged by civil society organisations. The Auditor-General's reports and parliamentary hearings corroborate the report's findings of mismatches between enacted and actual budgets, and fiscal leakages that drain resources from service delivery. The 2025 FTR captures Zimbabwe's dual reality: progress in transparency architecture, but persistent opacity in practice. Its recommendations are sound and feasible but require genuine political will and citizen-driven oversight to translate into justice. Internationally, the report cements Zimbabwe's image as a state with economic potential constrained by governance fragility, an image that will only shift through structural reforms that restore resources to people and communities.

Check it the full report here:

<https://www.state.gov/reports/2025-fiscal-transparency-report/zimbabwe/>

Mutare Residents Unite to Protect the City's Major Water Sources

In a proactive move to safeguard its primary water sources, Mutare City Council and various stakeholders, including the Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCODD), have initiated a collaborative effort to address the threat posed by small-scale gold panning. This initiative underscores a collective commitment to protecting the city's water supply and promoting sustainable development.

On Wednesday, September 24, a group of stakeholders, including representatives from civil society organizations, toured the Odzani water works in Penhalonga. The tour served as a direct response to the increasing concern over unregulated alluvial gold mining along the Odzani River, which is a critical source of water for Mutare residents. The presence of miners in this sensitive area has led to severe siltation and increased water purification costs, threatening the long-term viability of the city's water supply.



ZIMCODD, a prominent social and economic justice movement, has long championed the ban on alluvial mining, a policy that the government has since implemented. Their advocacy has been a key factor in raising awareness and fostering active citizen participation in service delivery. This dedication has earned ZIMCODD recognition as a crucial partner by the Mutare City Council, highlighting the council's open-door policy in tackling critical community challenges.

During the tour, stakeholders stressed the importance of continuous civic education for both residents and miners. They emphasized that a lack of awareness about the environmental impact of unregulated mining activities is a major problem. By educating the community, the initiative aims to foster a culture of sustainable resource use, which is particularly vital given the added pressure of climate change on water scarcity.

The joint effort to tour the Odzani water works is a powerful example of community action in promoting and defending sustainable development. It shows the Mutare City Council's willingness to engage with key stakeholders and demonstrates the value of collective action in addressing environmental challenges. By working together, the city is taking proactive steps to ensure the continued provision of clean water to its residents. The initiative serves as a model for how a collaborative; multi-stakeholder approach can effectively address complex environmental and service delivery issues.



SEJA Spotlight for the week:

**Kudzwai Gokova
(2020 Cohort)**



Before she joined the SEJA Academy, Kudzwai (Dzwai) was still finding her voice in the world of social and economic justice. Having recently completed her master's in women's law, with a focus on economic empowerment, her passion was clear. However, her contributions were largely academic, and she had yet to find her footing in the practical world of community work and direct advocacy. At that stage in her career, she was an intern, full of theoretical knowledge but seeking a way to apply it on the ground.

The SEJA Academy proved to be a pivotal experience for Dzwai. It provided a platform for her to grow both as a person and as a professional. Through its practical training, she learned how to communicate more effectively, not only with her peers but also with key political figures and "duty bearers" like Members of Parliament (MPs) and various policy-making institutions. The academy's curriculum transformed her understanding of social and economic justice and human rights advocacy, moving it from a theoretical concept to a practical skill set. Perhaps most importantly, the academy helped her build a lasting network with other young leaders. This connection helped her see herself as part of a collective, a group that could influence change together rather than alone.

The most significant impact of the academy on Dzwai's life has been this network. The relationships she forged with other youth leaders have endured far beyond the program's conclusion. Today, these connections remain a powerful force, as they continue to share ideas and support one another's initiatives from their different roles across the sector. This sense of community has kept the work of advancing social and economic justice alive and thriving.

Dzwai's role has since evolved, allowing her to put her skills into practice every day. She now works to bridge policy spaces with the lived realities of communities. This means she takes the complex language of legislation and makes it understandable for the people it affects most. Simultaneously, she takes the stories and struggles from the grassroots and ensures they are heard in the halls of power. She also focuses on strengthening collective action among women and young people who share her passion for justice, creating a more unified and powerful movement for lasting change. Post the SEJA academy training, Dzwai joined ZIMCODD as a graduate intern, and grew through the ranks to hold the position of Program Officer – Social and Climate Justice before she transitioned to Southern Africa Resource Watch (SARW) as a Programme Officer and remains an active SEJA.

Opportunities



Thousand Currents is looking for a Regional Director for Africa..

https://www.linkedin.com/redir/redirecturl=https%3A%2F%2Fthousandcurrents%2Ebamboohr%2Ecom%2Fcareers%2F49&urlhash=d8Vf&trk=public_post_feed-article-content

Resource Mobilization Specialist! (consultancy, remote; full-time).

Apply by 6 October 2025 through here: https://lnkd.in/dK_8vEhr

Climate Analytics is seeking a dynamic Communications and Climate Advisor.

Apply: <https://lnkd.in/gwSrFjyk>

Consultant to design, implement, and support a feminist Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (fMEL) .
For full details and to submit your proposal, visit: <https://lnkd.in/eViztXiw>

Fòs Feminista is inviting proposals from consultancy firms to carry out a **Research and Case Study** on its Innovation and Social Enterprise Lab and the Feminist Impact Fund. Apply here : <https://lnkd.in/djSRDK7f>

Throwback Picture of the week AFCODD-IV



**ZIMBABWE
ANNUAL
DEBT
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IN LOVING MEMORY OF Mr Godfrey Dzveta

The Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development is deeply saddened by the passing of our dear comrade, Godfrey Dzveta.

From 2020 to 2024, Godfrey served with distinction on the ZIMCODD Eastern Region Committee. He was a passionate advocate for social and economic justice and a fearless voice for the rights of people with disabilities.

His dedication, kindness, and unwavering belief in a more just society will forever inspire us.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to his family, friends, and all who were touched by his life.

Rest in power, Comrade Godfrey. Your legacy lives on.