



WORLD OF DIAMONDS

Diamonds Leading Diamonds: How the Industry Empowers Women

Exploring the role of the natural diamond industry in enabling women to dream big and leave their mark on the world.

By Shikha John | March 21, 2025





Diamonds and jewellery have long been associated with women. Ancient stories are filled with fabulously adorned queens, for whom diamonds were a source of empowerment and prestige. The natural diamond industry continues this tradition in our modern era. Today, women occupy important roles in the industry, not only as major consumers but as leaders, decision-makers, and artisans shaping its future.

Below, we speak to four women who have found their calling in the natural diamond industry. They share insights into its role in their lives, especially its impact on their professional growth and success.

Lesego Matsheka

Director of Venus Jewel Botswana





Why did you choose to be a part of the natural diamond industry?

As a citizen of Botswana, the world's largest producer of natural diamonds by value, I'm keenly aware of the significance of these gems to my country and my fellow citizens. Diamonds contribute nearly 30% of government revenue, a quarter of the country's GDP, and top the list of our exports. Botswana's rags-to-riches story has been very fascinating and natural diamonds have been a catalyst in this transformation. Hence, I have always aspired to be directly involved in this industry.

What excites you about natural diamonds and the industry?

The unique journey of each natural diamond, which starts as a rock deep within the earth before it is transformed into a final, polished object of brilliance, is awe-inspiring. The craftsmanship, the story behind each gem, and the enduring value it holds is fascinating. There's something magical about how a diamond can connect history, nature, and human creativity.

WHEN ASKED TO SHARE
THE INDUSTRY'S
IMPACT ON HER LIFE,
HERE'S WHAT **LESEGO**
TOLD US.

"Infinite
possibilities!"





How do you think the natural diamond industry has contributed to women's empowerment on a larger scale?

The industry has offered education, training, and employment opportunities for women. Many women now hold senior positions in both the public and private sectors. Meanwhile, the government of Botswana continues to utilise natural diamond revenues to improve the lives of all Batswana through education, health, and employment opportunities.

Given a choice, what would you choose – natural diamond or lab-grown diamond jewellery?

Given that my country's past and future are deeply intertwined with natural diamonds, I will always choose jewellery made from them over lab-grown diamonds. I have experienced firsthand the daily impact of natural diamonds, and both my future and that of my fellow citizens are dependent on them. Botswana's story cannot be told without acknowledging the role of natural diamonds. Our diamond industry has ushered in sustainability along with economic and political stability as proved by relevant indices. Our diamonds are for the benefit of all and a catalyst for development.



Ada Thela

Founder and Managing Director,
Zoe Diamonds



What personal strengths have you discovered through your work in the natural diamond industry?

Resilience!

Ours is a tough industry, very cut-throat and traditionally male-dominated. The pressure is high given the thin line between operating profitably or at a loss. It is also a volatile industry, more so after the Covid pandemic. So, one needs to be both resilient and passionate about the product.

In my work, I have also discovered that I am an agile and action-oriented deep thinker. I'm still learning to trust myself, my judgement, intuition, and decision-making abilities better. I am learning the importance of upholding my values and standing by my 'whys'.

How has the natural diamond industry empowered you to take control of your future?

It has allowed me to dream not only for myself but also for my fellow citizens, the Batswana. For instance, my company currently employs seven young Batswana. They are formally employed, make an honest living, and can provide for their families. The industry has encouraged continuous learning and growth opportunities for us, empowering us to take control of our financial future. It has allowed us to put our slogan — "Shape the story of diamonds together" — into action. In this way, as young Batswana, we can contribute meaningfully towards the case for natural diamonds, particularly Botswana's diamonds.

Given a choice, what would you choose – natural diamond or lab-grown diamond jewellery and why?



Natural diamonds.

The rarity, beauty, financial value, sentimental value, uniqueness?, and authenticity of natural diamonds cannot be matched. Their economic impact and importance can never be compared to that of lab-grown diamonds or lab-grown diamond jewellery. They are worlds apart, and that truth needs to be known, emphasised, and marketed aggressively.

What excites you about natural diamonds and the natural diamond industry?

“Other than their sheer beauty and wonder, I love the impact that natural diamonds have on livelihoods. I enjoy working with people who have mastered the art of transforming diamonds from rough to polished. I would advise the different stakeholders of the natural diamond industry to bring back the human touch in diamonds, uphold their integrity, and adopt a humanistic approach to technology.”

HOW DOES
ADA DESCRIBE
THE INDUSTRY'S
IMPACT ON
HER LIFE?

“Transformation!
Transfiguration!
Metamorphosis!”





Annet Coppens

Marketing Manager at Aurostar

What personal strengths have you discovered through your work in the natural diamond industry?

Through my work, I've learned a lot about myself. Empathy and perseverance are two qualities that have grown over time. Additionally, I've come to understand how crucial collaboration and inclusivity are. Working with diverse people and valuing their ideas always leads to better outcomes.

How do you think the natural diamond industry has contributed to women's empowerment on a larger scale?

The natural diamond industry has empowered women by creating economic opportunities, promoting leadership, and supporting their education. In diamond-producing regions, the industry has provided jobs for women, allowing them to achieve financial independence and elevate their communities. More and more companies within the sector are implementing initiatives to promote gender diversity and mentorship, helping women rise into leadership roles. It's inspiring to see women within our company, Aurostar, stepping into positions they are perfectly suited for at every level of the organisation. However, these efforts must continue to reach a fully inclusive industry as we are not there yet.

WE ASKED ANNET HOW
THE INDUSTRY HAD
IMPACTED HER LIFE,
AND HERE'S WHAT SHE
SHARED WITH US.

"It's multifaceted—
it has touched my life
in many different ways."



What excites you about natural diamonds or the
natural diamond industry?

"What makes natural diamonds special to me is that they represent so much at once. On the one hand, they are part of the most significant milestones and celebrations in people's lives, truly capturing deep emotions. On the other hand, diamonds symbolise economic growth, the preservation of nature, and the empowerment of communities and women. The combination of their emotional and social impact makes them truly spectacular."



Madhu Dhabuwala

CEO, Jewellery (India and Middle East),
Jewelex India Pvt. Ltd.

How has the natural diamond industry empowered you to take control of your future?

This industry has helped me to evolve as a human being and leader. It has provided me with opportunities to grow, challenge myself, and shape my future with confidence and purpose.

How do you think the natural diamond industry has contributed to women's empowerment on a larger scale?

The natural diamond industry has contributed to women's empowerment on a larger scale in significant ways. With 90% of the industry's demand driven by women, they also have a steadily increasing presence in the workforce. This not only highlights the crucial role women play in shaping the industry but also creates opportunities for them to lead, innovate, and thrive in various roles, ultimately contributing to broader gender equality and empowerment.

WE ASKED MADHU TO
SHARE THE IMPACT OF
THE INDUSTRY ON HER
LIFE AND WHAT IT HAD
ENABLED HER TO
ACHIEVE.

“Bringing happiness to
people’s lives and ethics.”



The future of women in the Natural Diamond industry

[Lesego](#), Ada, Annet, and Madhu represent the evolving face of the natural diamond industry. As more women join at all levels, they are being entrusted with responsibilities once traditionally held by men. These women have more than proved their mettle, encouraging industry stakeholders to seek out more of them. As they bring fresh ideas and perspectives, moving beyond the role of consumers, they will surely revolutionise the diamond industry and take it to greater heights.