



## GENDER DIVERSITY AT THE MINE

### WOMEN AT FEKOLA LEADING THE WAY

“One day, while I was still a translator on the construction team, I was with an electrician in the lab. While he was working, I kept asking questions to better understand the operation of the electrical devices he installed. The head of the lab overheard this and admired my desire to learn and offered me a permanent job. I thought he was joking, but two days later HR called me and said he wanted me as part of his team.”

After 13 months of fixed-term work on the construction team, Salamata Niang had become a permanent operations employee. She is part of a growing sisterhood of Malians who are paving the way for other women to follow their career dreams – in a society where it is often challenging for women to develop beyond traditional gender roles.

For large companies like B2Gold, nurturing the development of women is but one aspect of our pursuit for gender diversity in the workplace. A will to succeed and commitment to your dream are crucial in a tough working environment with cultural constraints – not to mention the challenges that a male-dominated industry like mining can present.

“Different people have viewed my choice in different ways: some encouraged me, while others felt that this was a man’s job. I forged my destiny. My job truly fulfils me. My advice to my sisters is that the most important thing in life is to choose what you sincerely love to do – something that makes you smile while practising it. All jobs are noble. It is true that sometimes there are many challenges and pitfalls along the way, but with courage, determination, perseverance and patience, one can achieve.”

This is the advice of Kadiatou Traoré, a light vehicle mechanic and assistant planner at the Fekola Mine’s Heavy Mining Equipment department, who diligently pursued her dream. She is 33 years old, a mother of two, and she always wanted to be an auto mechanic. With support from her parents she chose the road less traveled, obtaining a professional aptitude certification in auto mechanics and accruing experience from various mining companies within the Malian gold belt, before securing a job at the Fekola Mine. Her steady progress is also a testament to the opportunities for women provided by the mining industry at large.

Coumba Dieng, the first female CAT 777 truck operator at Fekola, has always been drawn to the mining industry: “Since I was little, I wanted to work at a mine. After studying law, I came back to Kéniéba and applied for this job; I did not hesitate for a single moment. The managers at the Mine trusted me, and I am very grateful.”

Coumba is now a minor celebrity at site, and other women working at the mine are clearly proud. Apart from driving a 777, she is also a safety representative and spokesperson for her shift.

Despite these inspirational success stories, B2Gold recognizes that it takes a long-term commitment to reach our objectives for improved gender diversity. Diversity initiatives and programming can be implemented, but attitudes both internally and externally can be slow in changing. However, the Company is committed to its journey towards inclusivity, diversity and a healthy workplace culture. There is no better impetus for change than for female role models like Kadiatou to simply continue to succeed:

“Frankly, I was first perceived as a curiosity by both men and women. However, in the workshop, my colleagues admired me for being able to perform the same job as them. My advice – and my motto – is that if you live your passion fully, it will suit you.”

