**Interview transcript - Businesswoman, gender activist, female, Nairobi**

Respondent: I think generally in Kenya in my view, we are still a patriarchal society where men are still seen as the leaders, decision makers, do not know whether that perception is a man`s role and as a woman it is almost like we are still trying to find out our space and trying to preach on about gender mainstreaming and inclusivity at all levels like in decision making, society, what is the place of that woman changing the narrative. Unfortunately, I think Kenyans are very traditional. They may be urbanized because of where they work, a bit of exposure and some have traveled, some have become a bit urbanized but at the end of the day I think our socialization is very traditional and a very patriarchal society so breaking that belief in which people have been brought up where the boy child has always been seen as the leader, the roles and how he socializes and he is taught to play being a leader and the girl child has always been brought up to be a girl and woman is a softer role, this is her place in society and what is acceptable from her. I think the place of women in society is still patriarchal and there is still change to be done to that narrative, preach more about gender inclusivity and gender main streaming issues in the country.

Interviewer: So how is this playing out in extractives?

Respondent: In Kenya, extractives has never been the main thing in our economy. Kenya`s development has always been based on other sectors like agricultural and finance sector and tourism. The last 5 to 10 years ago is when the topic of extractives has intensified about extractives in the country so it will ride on the wave on already other engendering activities that have happened in other sectors. Introducing the topic of women in the extractives sector is not anything new because it is conversations that have been heard in the agricultural sector about gender empowerment so it is nothing new if in the extractives sector you talk about empowering women or the role of women. It is a conversation already that has been in other sectors. It is just for the country to understand is there any uniqueness about the sector and are there any new ways gender empowerment that has not been done in other industries before.

interviewer: do you think there is any change with the coming of extractives in your opinion?

Respondent: Predominantly I think extractives in its own nature and activities are attractive towards that kind of risk and environment where it happens and gambling. Women are risk if you are doing exploration for oil, gold and gas. It happens in very remote areas, terrain is not conducive for women. It is a high risk and high return kind of business. Women are generally known to be risk takers. There is a lot of gambling and a lot of uncertainty which already neglects the characteristics of what a woman is in entering the extractives place. But with the improvement in technology and a lot more information available, it is not a jungle anymore to enter the extractives business. Much has been done in a manner such that it has been made what could have otherwise been a harsh environment become more neutral that anybody can be like female geologists because technology allows them to go to these terrains. A lot more geologic information means they are not risking themselves going to some wild world west. They know exactly where they are going and what resources they need and what needs to be done. I think that change in technology, technology, perception and even industry has become that it can be endangered and now women could be considered at per to enter at the same level as men.

**Interviewer: you mentioned about the narrative, how do u feel about the gender expressions and languages in extractives?**

Respondent: Are there any? Unless you put efforts to bring that conversation or remind people when talking about engendering the sector that has been experienced in the country. If you do not remind people that you need to talk about gender mainstreaming, it is still a conversation that can be lost because unfortunately the policy makers and the players are still men making decisions in the extractives space so it is still at the point where cautiously and deliberately talk about it in mind the decision makers and lobbying for engendering the policies, the legislative framework, the opportunities and the chances. Otherwise we are not at a point where we can take it back and say enough has been done and when decisions have been made we are sure the space is for women.

Interviewer: if you look at that in relation to work, do you think that right now the extractives are more accommodative to women trying to get into work around extractives spaces?

Respondent: I think yes because of conversations and efforts by various players. I think now slowly it is becoming more accommodative to women. There is more acceptance and not wrong to say like a woman will be the one to work at the oil head. I think it has reached a point where it is not being formed .if a woman is qualified, I think the conversation is now going be like you have told us to include the women and we have no problem with giving them the job. I think the conversation is now changing slowly from put women, are these women qualified to do the job because if these women, it is no longer about man or woman but who can do the job, who has the competence.

Interviewer: Are women increasingly taking up these spaces?

Respondent: I think they are and now not strange to find a woman an engineer. I am doing . You know before it used to be a fascination and we were so few or even unheard of. I think now it stopped being anything so miraculous. We are still few but I can see women really trying to and I can see a lot being done in terms of nurturing young talent even creative awareness because I think women not taking up these opportunities is because of lack of knowledge of knowing that opportunity is there like who goes to that girl child, high school girl and tell her there is a job called petroleum engineering. That girl still knows there is a lawyer, doctor but who has told her there is this opportunity and if you are good in your stem studies so don’t think main engineering but think petroleum engineering so think majoring engineering going there and creating that interest and have more girl children who study the right subject to take up these opportunities that have been created.

interviewer: if you look at men and women in extractives, who do you think holds the power?

Respondent: men still hold a lot of power in the extractive space and are still the decision makers. We have started the conversations of creating the opportunities. If I was to rate how far we have gone with the conversations, I think we are still at 30% or 40%. More needs to be done and especially telling the men fine it is equal opportunities let all come in but then let us all give equal chances to rise so that with time those people who are making decisions and conversations let us have few women in those board rooms but if you go into the decision making spaces, there are still very male dominated. The men are still very dominant in the sector and there still much to be done and until we get to a space called a comfortable wish. We are not saying it has to be 50/50 but a comfortable wish where you can call a meeting on an extractive sector issue and you find you have almost many women as there are men in this conversation.

Interviewer: how is this power relationship impacting women engagement and growth as well?

Respondent: by the nature of women in the industry itself, if a woman decides to enter this space you cannot, I do not want to use up this word but unfortunately it is used a lot in this space but they need to man up a bit. It is not a soft industry. It is not sitting behind a desk and writing policy conversations but wearing boots and getting into a very hard so if you want to engage in the way the industry knows how to engage, toughen up. I will give you an example, I was working on a policy issue on artisanal mining where it happens in very risky areas where mines are collapsing but for me to reach to these challenges, i have to go to where they are. There they told me if I want to see if where they work is an environmental hazard, come into the tunnel. If I am a woman and I am saying fine I am not a geologist but I am working to lobby for them and need to understand them, I have to toughen up because there are people I am talking about that’s is where they are operating. They do not operate in a fancy office somewhere in a 7th floor with a escalator. So you want to engage in the industry, appreciate the nature of the industry you are entering into, appreciate its challenges and what it is and be ready to then engage. I do not think you can soften it and that oil is in Turkana and not in Nairobi Westlands. You want to do oil, work in that, you go to work in Turkana. Can you make that better for you to engage? Can you say you have never been to a desert before where what do people drink? That is where the oil is and if you want to be a petroleum engineer, that is where you will have to work.

Interviewer: what do you think the industry can do to make the extractors more gender sensitive more acceptable for women?

Respondent: I think equal policies in the sector is very important so that anybody is willing to enter and you know the nature of the industry, there is no entry barrier, make the playing field equal and opportunities for all genders. The other place is where technology can assist to make this less difficult, let us use technology because even it can be used to make things very easy and a bit more even and neutral. It does not need too much effort. We are not talking about too much physical work or saying a woman cannot lift a heavy thing 3cause when technology is there no one is lifting anything so either you or me can press a button cause no one is lifting anything so advancements in technology, creating equal opportunities for entry, a lot of sensitization where for traditional people who have been in this sector to have more acceptance to the fact that now women can actually do this job. Go out there and create that awareness that it is not just a male thing, create opportunities and accept these women and the facilities you give them. That’s where in some sites you find no toilets for women because at the back of their heads the people who are building camps sites have never thought that a woman would be at the camp site. But when you are creating awareness that this thing is for everyone, a woman could come here when putting these facilities be sensitive to men and women. I think that would be important. Also concerning the gender of the sector whereby I still believe if you are willing to engender it do something about it. Put something like engendering laws so that even if you are prompt to say you only want men, there is also a law that says no and that you have to show minimum requirement like two thirds have been given to women so that we do not leave it to be if I don’t like or like.

Interviewer: in your experience, working with women in extractives, what are some of the challenges that they face?

Respondent: acceptance.

Interviewer: in what ways?

Respondent: like you are in the extractives sector, how did you get into it? There are those who already know women are in this phase and there are those who are still catching up. Acceptance that women can do this job and they are as good as you are and you know what we are talking about and we are brave enough if given the opportunity. I will give you an example one of the largest gold extractives in Australia. They used to have a lot of monster trucks that are used to move materials. They used to have a lot of incidents and accidents because the nature of trucks so it was an ego booster for men to drive those trucks men so the speeds they want to drive at and the way they want to maneuver. Then they realized the maintenance ratios were very expensive so they decided to give women to drive those monster trucks because the size of that truck was so big no one ever though that a woman would enter that truck. Then one woman said she wanted to drive that truck and they gave her a chance. That’s why I said technology is a good thing because it was a huge truck but it is really automated. That woman started driving the truck and guess what every day as we were going for maintenance had to go to 3 segments without .then they were like huh! She is gentle and more careful and trucks do not have incidents. They changed all the truck drivers to women. All of those who were entering were being given the big trucks and were giving even young girls who were between 25 and 30 years. This changed the accident rations so give them the chance. Do not frown on men and discriminate because of the nature of work they deserve. It is not just acceptance, you accept they are here and also give them the chance. You see we can you to become a petroleum engineer and then call you by name and when we are going to the oil heads nobody gives you a chance to drill but you are just rubber stamping. Accept them and give them the chance. And then they want to rise, to prove they are good and a chance to rise and prove you are good but we never move, we are never the decision makers. We just remain perpetually like a mainstreaming agenda, si we gave you a chance so what else do you want. Give them the opportunity to rise up to the best of abilities and talents would take them to.

Interviewer: so what is your take on what is happening to Turkana?

Respondent: I think it is a necessary evil. It is actually necessary because it gives us a chance to learn about the importance of social life in the extractives sector and how destructive it can get if you ignore the local community. Every time the conversation on extractives has always been we must have a win-win situation and between the government, the investor, the community nobody is a lesser stake. They are all equal and at per so when you are making conversations and decisions, these 3 stakeholders must be involved along the journey from the beginning. The problem people normally make is government and investor must converse and talk. Then when they have made their decisions is when they include the community as if there are a lesser stakeholder in the conversation. I think it is an important what you are telling them when all conversations and decisions were being made you should have put them on the table where all decisions were being made, our needs and issues should have been factored in then this could not have happened. The rate it is hurting us, a lot of mining is being lost and the company is hurting and the government is reducing its revenues it is a good learning point of what we must do and I think when it is unlocked and the oil flows are open we will have a very good module to engage communities more.

Interviewer: then there is issue of gender pay gap, I know it has been a very big conversation globally. Do you think it is an issue in Kenya?

Respondent: I am not sure it is only in the extractives sector but I think it depends on the industry generally. I think it is in our nature where we understand ourselves so where we feel more qualified and we can ask for much more like if it is in the extractives space there are not even enough women in the sector and I do not want to ask for too much because they will say now we have given you a chance and you are still asking for more. I think it is not only the extractives space but everywhere we are, we do not ask or what is ours. At times I think there are situations you are asked for more money and the person you are negotiating with. It is almost like I am a dude and you are a chick , what business do you have earning so much money so there is the issue of we not asking for the much we are worth but there is also the issue of the people who are supposed to pay us our worth thinking the patriarchal issue comes up again and you are not the one who is the bread winner where they feel even if I give you less it is not unfair and some of your needs are somebody else’s.

Interviewer: and is this a conversation that people are having?

Respondent: I think so. Women are slowly coming up and being able to challenge that narrative and how the existence is none of your business. You pay me what I am worth not by qualification but pay me by what the job is deserving. My gender is not the topic for what I earn. I think there is more conversation that is empowering women towards a new gender front. I have seen very empowered women and even earning more than some of their male counterparts which I think whatever lobby initiatives have been set have started to work but I think so much more can be done and should be done.

Interviewer: if you look at different extractives around the world, there is always this issue of discrimination, exploitation particularly sexual exploitation, is it an issue in Kenya in the extractives in the long run?

Respondent: for that I could actually site more than mining areas and the reason why there is sexual exploitation you will find extractives sectors happening in very remote areas. And then as we said before the industry tends to attract more men as the first guys who go to find the opportunity so as the opportunities are growing and services need to come there with like they need to be feed, their clothes washed, their food cooked and slowly the women start being looked into what we see as their role in that environment. Unfortunately also, part of their role is relaxing these men who have spent a whole hard day trying to look for these fines that they cannot find so they are viewed as part of the value chain normally because when there is a room for find it is a whole opportunity may be as it also attracts vices until you find a lot of prostitution that happens in those camps or where there are finds and unfortunately from it is not forced. We have realized there is an opportunity or services are needed and they migrate into the area to offer a needed service which is very lucrative because it is in the middle of nowhere. But the conversation is always told women in that area, we talk about protection, responsible sexual behavior and HIV/AIDS, know your status because some of them you cannot tell them no and tell them protect yourself. For those who are there unfortunately because there was no other opportunity, we tell them why don’t you try alternative means. If these people are burning gold, why don’t you offer some services like washing something that will pay you better and something that will have dignity than what you are doing. And some of them take it up and say when I came to this area I come for the wrong reasons but I realized there is opportunities in something else so if I can skill up and learn other alternative skills, I am not avase to leaving this end and do something else. Show them their capacity, teach them the right skill and take advantage of the opportunities in the extractives.

Interviewer: What about the women working in the extractives formal extractives is that an issue as well?

Respondent: I think it depends where you, what are the gender policies. I have gone to some sites where the company itself is very strict and potential harassment issues because understanding the terrain which they are so you find the company itself is very strict and they take measures to protect the women as they already know the exposure, the terrain they are in something happens like liability. Then you have smaller companies where funny things happen again the nature of work you are so we have a few cases. What I cannot tell you about statistics where there are isolated cases. I do not know if they are so many actually when you talk about colleagues where I am an employee we are both engineers and geologists and we are at camp site what is the probability of sexual harassment because of the nature of where we are. I do not accept it but honestly I have not heard a lot of professional to professional conversations about sexual harassment. But I would want to know what of the professional to the less subordinates the ladies who are cleaners, do these men at sites harass them, do they see them as entertainment as well. I am not so familiar maybe it is the nature or level I interact with people and how does it play out, are they harassed, are the men treating them differently but at the professional level they would come out.

Interviewer: So if we come back to policies, the petroleum laws that are taking forever to be passed do you think they encourage spaces for women to engage in any way?

Respondent: what we do is engender it to regulations and truth is the policy has not been passed because the policy women talk about is inclusivity and gender mainstreaming then it is upon the industry to find what translates to that policy. The law will create the framework but implementation and operationalization of that will prove efficiency so how will this play out and you will want this to play out you will need to put regulations and spaces so that when it is creating institutions and positions, it should specifically state that there shall be gender inclusivity and representation up to a given stage of the number of women who should sit in various committees.

Interviewer: but from experience, there has always been this issue of women being added to the table and production.

Respondent: that is why the issue is regulation, I will give you an example maybe the petroleum regulation commission must be created by law. The petroleum act will say there shall be a petroleum regulation commission. Operationalization of this commission shall be through regulations so there has to be subsidiary regulations that talk about its roles, its functions the board, who shall sit on the board. In the board, you shall say there shall be qualified professionals and the chair in the board. This is to ensure in choosing the board not a thirds shall be of the same gender so that way we are legislating and putting it necessary to have an inclusive board. Otherwise, if you leave it sidelined, what normally happens you will sit and find more men and no women. And they will just tell you we need qualification, these ones are qualified and nobody will do anything that you are all men. If they just want to feel good they will be like put one. If you put it by law this will mean that advertising for the jobs and applying jobs and when receiving the like 20 CVs you will only 2 are women then this will not have proper gender representation and you call for another advertisement position till you find. Instead of just being added to conversations we are included but if it is inclusive in its very nature, we are ensuring you are in the conversation.

Interviewer: great, that was my final question. Thank you