

PRESS RELEASE

Moyo Gems to expand to Kenya!

Taita Taveta County Government attracts the international responsible sourcing program that is transforming the way gems are bought and sold worldwide

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The international gemstone training and sourcing program [Moyo Gems](#) confirms that it is coming to Kenya. Moyo Gems is a responsible gemstone collaboration that was ‘born’ in Tanzania in 2019. Since then, it has quickly captured the world’s attention with its focus on the artisanal and small-scale gemstone miners of East Africa. Moyo Gems was created in Tanzania by international nonprofit organization [Pact](#), the [Tanzanian Women Miners Association](#) (TAWOMA), technology company [Everledger](#), and international traders [ANZA Gems](#) and [Nineteen48](#). Since then, [Maison Piat](#) and others have joined as regular buyers. The initiative has been profiled in British Vogue Magazine, Forbes, among many other mainstream and gem trade publications.

In Kenya, the Moyo Gems program will commence with an international study tour that will bring selected Kenyan miners and officials to Tanzania to observe the Tanzanian program in action and to identify ways to craft the program to the Kenyan context. Then, key training programs including the Gemstone Value Chain and Mining Health and Safety topics will commence with the pre-selected pilot class of artisanal and small scale (ASM) gemstone miners in Taita Taveta County. The first purchasing event will be a small pilot effort to ensure success, and then will expand based on those first lessons learnt.

A key part of the Moyo Gems program is its emphasis on women miners. “Women form both the beginning and the end of the jewellery supply chain,” says Moyo Gems co-founder Cristina Villegas, who is the director of mining at the nonprofit Pact International. One of the reasons that Moyo has become so beloved around the world so quickly is because we really focus on women miners, elevate them, and bring new resources into an area.” Villegas is quick to add that some men are allowed into the program, but only under parameters set by women miners of the region. This ensures that enlightened male allies are wholly welcomed and encouraged.

This expansion into Kenya is made possible thanks to funding by The Extractives Global Programmatic Support Multi-Donor Trust Fund (EGPS) of the World Bank. The collaborators in Kenya are the following: Pact Kenya, Pact Tanzania, the County Government of Taita Taveta, and the Association of Women in Extractive Industries in Kenya (AWEIK).

Her Excellency the Deputy Governor of Taita Taveta Hon. Majala Mlagui who has been a long-time ASM coloured gemstone advocate remarks that a key focus of the County Government has been implementing programmes to empower women socio-economically across the county. “I am excited that in addition to the farming programmes, for example, we are now able to enter the gemstone mining space with an economically impactful initiative for artisanal miners across the value chain. Moyo Gems has done superbly well in Tanzania and we look forward to replicating that success with

miners, gemstone traders and jewellery artisans uplifting our Taita Taveta hidden treasures such as Tsavorite gemstone and converting the mineral potential into economic wealth for our county utilising the novel Everledger gemstone blockchain technology for increased transparency and traceability.” she says.

“As AWEIK we are delighted to be an implementing partner of the Moyo Gems Program in Kenya. The Mine To Market approach of the program will ensure that low, medium and high value gemstones are traded and that majority of the beneficiaries, who are women, will economically benefit. The program couldn’t have come at a better time, because since the COVID 19 pandemic in early 2020, many gemstones miners have struggled with accessing markets due to impeded travel by buyers and sellers. Further, this is a program that guarantees ethically sourced gemstones from Kenya to the end international buyers.” says Ms. Hannah Wang’ombe, CEO of AWEIK.

To learn more about Moyo Gems, visit www.moyogems.com

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