



2025 DARE Fellow Presents Research On The African Mining Vision



In October 2025, York University Dean's Award for Research Excellence (DARE) recipient **Munzungu Nzeyedio** presented her research titled, "Negotiating a Just Energy Transition: Futureproofing the African Mining Vision for Continental Transformation." The study examined the multilayered impact of resource extractive industries on local communities in four country case studies: the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Tanzania, Zambia and

Zimbabwe. In an era of increasing global demand for critical minerals that are fuelling the global green transition, Munzungu's investigation focused on the opportunities and challenges for the African Mining Vision policy framework to accelerate continental sustainable development and help states negotiate better deals for their resources. AEGT Project Director Dr. Richard Saunders supervised Munzungu's study through DARE, which gives undergraduate students at York's Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies the opportunity to fully engage in research projects with faculty members.

Health Impact Assessment Briefs Reveal The True Cost of Mining

In 2025, AEGT collaborators in the DRC, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe completed Health Impact Assessment (HIA) briefs for case studies of critical mineral extraction in their countries. The HIAs were supported, in part, by the AEGT project and Training and Research Support Centre (TARSC) in the Regional Network for Equity in Health in East and Southern Africa (EQUINET). In an AEGT interview, TARSC director and Zimbabwean epidemiologist **Dr. Rene Loewenson** discussed the new evidence provided by the briefs, which demonstrate how Africa's mineral wealth concerns not just economic opportunities, but also public health and social equity at the local level. From sulphur emissions that cause chronic respiratory problems in children and the elderly, to miners experiencing long-term illnesses linked to sustained exposure to dust, chemicals and unsafe working conditions, mining communities across the four countries clearly recognize the links between environmental harm and declining well-being, even when laws and policies do not. HIAs help bridge the gap between high-level policy decisions and everyday experiences, ensuring that community realities are visible in conversations about the green transition. In the global rush for critical minerals, governments have a narrow window to use HIAs to integrate health safeguards into new mining laws and strategies, and ensure protections for the people living closest to extraction sites.

Undergraduate Research Assistants Join AEGT Team

We are excited to welcome **Shehara Gammanpila** and **Victoria Ogunyebi**, two undergraduate students at York University, as research assistants in the AEGT team.



Shehara is a student in the Global Political Studies program at the Department of Politics. A

member of the social media team, her role consists of collecting articles and data, and handling the project's social media accounts, including creating posts, taking photos at events, and posting updates for the larger audience. Hoping to go to law school in the future, Shehara is interested in analyzing colonialism's lasting impact on the Global South.



Victoria is a student in the departments of History and Sociology, and aids in the online presence of

the project. Victoria is passionate about how economic and political climates of nation-states push citizens to migrate and settle in international spaces. She aspires to further her studies in history, concentrating her research interests on emigration, immigration, and global politics within the Atlantic world, with a focus on African and Caribbean migration to the global north in the context of nation-state economic and political instability in the post-World War II era.



Ongoing AEGT Research

In late 2024, we launched an inaugural call for research proposals. Of the proposals submitted, the Partnership's Steering Committee approved eight research studies spread across all four countries and our project's four research clusters. Please find the details of our ongoing research on the Partnership's [website](#). In this newsletter issue, we feature two of those studies.



Dr. Chris Huggins



Dr. Abel Kinyondo



Racheal Chagonja



Mwalusamba Samson

Project title: **Benchmarking ASM Operations in the CM Subsector: The Case of Tanzania**

Project leaders: Chris Huggins, Abel Alfred Kinyondo, Mwalusamba Samson, Racheal Chagonja

Research cluster: Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining (ASM)

Country focus: Tanzania

This project focuses on artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) of nickel in Tanzania, considered critical to the "green transition." While ASM operations within the critical minerals subsector in Tanzania are nascent, their potential is significant, as demonstrated by ASM contributing 40% of Tanzania's gold production. This project, therefore, aims to map ASM value chains by investigating the extent to which nickel ore is already being mined, where, who participates, and how operations function, while identifying key operational challenges such as knowledge, skills, capital, and technological gaps. Using qualitative methods

including interviews, field observations, and official documents, the study hypothesizes that ASM nickel extraction marks the beginning of broader ASM expansion into critical minerals. The findings are intended to provide practical guidance for policymakers on how to support and govern ASM's role in meeting the growing global demand for these essential resources.

Project title: **State-Subsidized Battery Plants in the Copperbelt and Canada: A Step Toward Integrated Critical Minerals Value Chains?**

Project leader: Jesse Ovadia

Research cluster: Productive Linkages and the "infrastructures" of Extraction

Country focus: Zambia

This project compares electric vehicle battery plants in Canada and Zambia to examine how industrial policy can enable green transitions and integration between critical minerals extraction and battery production for EVs. The project analyzes each plant's origins, key details, government support and expected benefits. In Canada, the NextStar battery plant in Windsor reflects a public-private partnership model that works with major car manufacturers currently engaged in a transition to electric vehicle production and locates battery plants in major hubs for the North American auto industry. In Zambia, the battery plant initiative is a partnership with the Democratic Republic of Congo, though it faces uncertainty regarding location, private sector participation, and geopolitical engagement. The working hypothesis is that although these two projects exist in vastly different political and economic contexts, there are numerous lessons to be learned from Canada's support for the NextStar plant. Additionally, comparison can help better understand the limits of the possible for productive linkages from critical minerals in southern Africa.



Dr. Jesse Ovadia

Critical Minerals Podcast Series

In **episode five**, undergraduate research assistant Nicole Asimwe speaks with David Szablowski about his study of the EU Battery Regulation and its implications for mining governance and supply-chain due diligence. In **episode six**, Nicole interviews Araceli Clavijo, Craig Johnson, and Richard Saunders on comparative research on lithium extraction in Argentina and Zimbabwe and its socio-environmental impacts. In **episode seven**, PhD research assistant Ashwin Shantha interviews Sara Geenen on bottom-up formalization of artisanal cobalt mining in the DRC through insurance and financial inclusion. In **episode eight**, Ashwin interviews Jesse Ovadia on EV battery plants in Zambia and Canada, focusing on industrial policy, tariffs, and green value-chain prospects.



AEGT Critical Mineral Seminar Series

In January 2025, the AEGT launched a monthly Critical Mineral Seminar Series to help communicate project findings and foster wider dialogue and knowledge-sharing among researchers, policymakers and stakeholders working on critical minerals. Please visit our website to find a schedule of upcoming events and a record of past seminars.

On October 23, AEGT organized a timely roundtable titled **“The Bill 5s and Critical Minerals: The Implications for Indigenous Sovereignty,”** with three panelists: Drs. Gabrielle Slowey and Dayna Scott of York University; and Ryan Fleming, a PhD candidate at the University of Toronto and a member of Moose Cree First Nation and Attawapiskat First Nation. In early June, the Ontario government passed Bill 5, which enables the creation of “special economic zones” where infrastructure and resource projects can be exempted from provincial laws and regulations. Later that month, the federal government passed the similar Bill C5, allowing Ottawa to bypass existing federal laws for projects it deems to be in the national interest. Both governments say their bills are necessary to accelerate development, such as the extraction of critical minerals in Northern Ontario’s Ring of Fire region, and bolster Canada’s economic resilience – especially in the face of U.S. tariffs from the Trump administration. But the new federal and provincial powers have triggered protests and a constitutional challenge by First Nations groups, who argue the bills undermine the Crown’s duty to consult and accommodate communities for activities that affect their traditional territories. This roundtable discussed the socio-legal implications of the bills for the extraction of critical minerals on or near treaty lands.

SPEAKERS:



Dayna Nadine Scott
Professor
Osgoode Hall Law School
Faculty of Environmental
& Urban Change
York University



Gabrielle A. Slowey
Associate Professor
Department of Politics
York University



Ryan Fleming
PhD Candidate
Political Science
University of Toronto

SPEAKER:



Michael Smith
School of Economics
University of Cape Town

On November 25, York University PhD candidate Michael Smith delivered a presentation titled, **“Critical Minerals and Developmentalism in Southern Africa: South Africa, Zambia and the Problems of 'Developmental Regionalism.'”** Michael discussed how the present integration of Southern Africa’s mineral resources into broader processes of global capitalist restructuring and geopolitical conflict is reconfiguring the terrain of developmentalism in South Africa and Zambia. He argues that these reconfigurations should temper optimism for a green “developmental regionalism” agenda. Whilst the Zambian state is enjoying historically novel degrees of agency in the present, that agency is unlikely to be exercised in a manner conducive to regional developmentalism. On the other hand, the South African state suffers from limited coherence and capacity to engage in a regional green minerals industrial strategy. These case studies highlight the importance of anchoring regional industrialization proposals in a concrete analysis of comparative political economy realities. Michael is also a Lecturer in Economic Development at the School of Economics at the University of Cape Town in South Africa.

