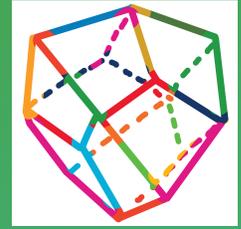


# THE RESPONSIBLE JEWELRY TRANSFORMATIVE 2020



# FOUNDER/CEO STATEMENT



In 2017, I held the first annual Chicago Responsible Jewelry Conference. It was the first step along a path that has brought me to know people globally who are passionate, not just passionate about responsible jewelry and sourcing, but about making the world a better place. People who see the impacts of mining and the jewelry industry, both good and bad. People who seek to change what is bad to be good and change what is good to be the model for the future. It is these people who have enabled the launch of The Responsible Jewelry Transformative (RJT) and I am grateful for every person along this path.

March 2020 RJT officially achieved 501C status and hit the ground running propelled by the onset of the pandemic. The work of this particular type of non profit was sorely needed. What were safety equipment drives became PPE and sanitation drives, a collaboration with the African Gemstone Exhibition and Conference (AGEC) to have summer conference in Zambia, became and a full blown mine to market project, the Chicago Responsible Jewelry Conference went virtual, we added new symposiums, and small projects came up quickly, while others were put on hold or moved slowly.

Rachel Black, joined me as an assistant for the 2019 conference and in 2020 has grown into the role of administrator for the non profit. I am grateful to have her assistance and without it the Transformative would not be as effective and fast paced as it has needed to be this year. Andrea Hill continues to support both the conference, symposium and RJT with pro bono marketing, the website, technology and of course advice. She is a valued partner of the RJT and brings wisdom and structure to many of the RJT endeavors.

The Responsible Jewelry Transformative, made strides in its mission to align the jewelry industry to help achieve the 17 Sustainability Development Goals outlined by the United Nations, through action, education and initiatives, in 2020. The projects which began in 2020 have been successful through the year and have laid a strong foundation for 2021.

*Susan Wheeler*

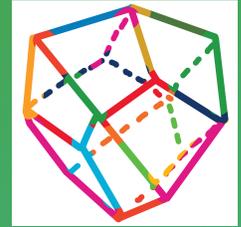
**SUSAN WHEELER**

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# CONTENTS

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Virtu Gem.....	4.
Changing a Word.....	6.
Chicago Responsible Jewelry Conference.....	7.
Journey of a Diamond.....	10.
Covid Symposium.....	11.
Diamond Symposium.....	12.
Safety Equipment Drive.....	13.
Pilot Mining Camp.....	14.



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# VIRTU GEM

Virtu Gem was formed to bring immediate economic and health support to gemstone mining communities in Zambia through virtual gemstone sales. Virtu Gem is a virtual market for gemstones mined by ASM to be sold to jewelers globally. Food and personal protective equipment (PPE) drives are funded via a premium put on the sale of the gemstones. The project partners with the Federation of Artisanal and Small-Scale Miners in Zambia (FESSMAZ) and is directed by the Association of Zambian Women in Mining (AZWIM). Virtu Gem is a new supply chain model bringing material from ASM communities to the international market.



# VIRTU GEM



So far Virtu Gem has sold over 60 gems with almost \$10,000 in total sales which provided funds for 3 food drives. Virtu Gem brought Malawi on board in September adding the Malawi Women in Mining Association (MAWIMA), the Gemstones Association of Malawi, and Nyasa Mining Cooperative as project partners. Kenya is in the process of onboarding to the project as of December 2020.

Virtu Gem works with miners, dealers and gem cutters in the source countries to bring further economic benefits to the gemstone sector. The new virtual mine to market structure of Virtu Gem allows transparency and traceability. Gemstones that are purchased are entered into the Provenance Proof Blockchain. Determination power, control and responsibility of in-country Covid-19 relief efforts drives true cooperation and equal valued partnerships. The connection of the gemstone sales to the relief efforts ensures sustainable development growth. The multi dimensional connection of the private sector and the ASM miners is an intrinsic component to the Virtu Gem structure. The direct mine to market, person to person connection that Virtu Gem brings is a driver for equity and a vertical supply chain.



"It's the small things, the size of a mustard seed, that ultimately moves mountains."

Corry Booker

# Changing a word,

The jewelry industry uses the term "native cut" without considering the word's real meaning or impact, and it is time for a change. The term refers to gems which are cut in their source country and is usually used in reference to African gems. But the word native by itself is considered derogatory and racist in many countries, and historically it is associated with colonialist attitudes.

The jewelry industry's use of the term "native cut" contributes to systemic racism. When the term "native cut" is used to describe a gem, it implies that a gem is substandard and stigmatizes gems cut in their source country as being less valuable. This deprives the source country of the economic benefit of cutting their gems in the country of origin.

RJT wrote a formal appeal to the Gemological Institute of America, who agreed to assist in the elimination of the term. Together the jewelry industry needs to move forward on the journey of continuous improvement, seeking accurate descriptions and open dialogue that includes all people and communities on equal footing.

In conclusion, this small program can have great effects and builds on SDG 1.



# THE CHICAGO RESPONSIBLE JEWELRY CONFERENCE



**Mission: "To engage everyone in the jewelry industry; miners, makers, professionals, educators, and students. To address all the ways that individuals and companies can be involved in the responsible jewelry movement. To make a difference by making things happen."**

**-Susan Wheeler**



# The Chicago Responsible Jewelry Conference presentation's coded in the colors of the SDGs

Deforestation & Animal Extinction: How and Where Mining Contributes to Forest Loss and a Model on Forest Secure Mining Communities Jewelry Designer Panel The Move Towards Responsible Cutting in Gemstones A discussion of worldwide mining practices, initiatives, and progress How the World's Largest Retailer of Diamond Jewelry Tackles Responsible Sourcing Responsible Sourcing in the Diamond Pipeline: What does that look like? Just Gold: How conflict free gold, exported from the Democratic Republic of Congo, addresses UN Sustainable Development Goals Power Panel on Jewelry Industry Building a NGO in Liberia where diamonds are mined, cut and processes with humanitarian and environmental considerations Initiatives for Responsible Practices Who Cares? Adventures in Responsible Sourcing & Retailing There's Always a Way: Stories to Inspire Screening of "Sharing the Rough" Fairmined Supply Chains & Markets The Gem Cutting Panel Trust Chain for All The Bahia Brazil Golden Initiative and Nature's Geometry US Premier: River of Gold Jewelry Designer Panel Gender Equity in Congo Sourced Gold The Colourful Life Foundation Gemstone Mining Panel, Educating ASM Miners to for value Addition, Tackling Corrupt Collaborations Between Corporations and Governments The Sustainability Challenges Facing Businesses and Jewelry Companies Global Mining The Leading Authority in Silicosis and Tuberculosis Across the Mining and Cutting Sectors Talks About Public Health Impacts of the Jewelry Supply Chain Power Panel on Jewelry Industry Initiatives for Responsible Practices Better Without Mercury. Why even small companies can both contribute and benefit from custom projects. A case study exploring the environmental clean up of a small gold mine in Colombia, owned by Roberto Alvarez. Do you know your Legal Obligations in the Jewelry Industry? Reporting Suspicious Activity, Know your Refinery, Anti Money Laundering. The US Government wants you to be a partner in having a clean global supply chain Responsible Sourced Artisanal Gold: A Tour of Two Peruvian Mining Communities SCREENING | US PREMIERE Shadow of Gold: A Global Investigation of the Ultimate Talisman of Wealth, Beauty, and Power Risks in the Gold Supply Chain Including Illicit Gold: What and Where are the Issues, How Can We Stop its Flow, and How to Source Responsible Gold An introduction of the So Fresh + So Clean competition by Ethical Metalsmiths students How Responsibility Became a Passion What Makes a Sustainable Pearl Farm? One of the founding partners of Perlas del Mar de Cortez shares their philosophy and core sustainability practices Human Responsibilities in the Jewelry Industry with gem cutters in Khambhat Jewelry Glossary Project Workshop to Design an Online Marketplace for Rough Stones Building Mine to Market Strategies that Work An essential part of bringing fair trade opportunity to ASMs is creating economic models Mining co-ops, and how single source models are furthering transparency and responsibility in gems and gold Building a NGO in Liberia where diamonds are mined, cut and processes with humanitarian and environmental considerations Why do two chiefs from the Brazilian Amazon want to speak to the jewelry industry? Why do their land rights matter for the preservation of the Amazon forest? Hear what they have to say in this session.



# Virtual CRJC

"The mission of the conference is to engage everyone in the jewelry industry; miners, makers, professionals, educators, and students. To address all the ways that individuals and companies can be involved in the responsible jewelry movement. To make a difference by making things happen." - Susan Wheeler, Founder.

The pandemic changed the world and we needed to respond in kind. CRJC moved the event online and became Pay What You Can, drawing a record number of attendees with over 500 people tuning in globally, when usually the event brings in around 200 in-person attendees. Speakers represented 21 countries from around the world. CRJC shines a light on human rights, environmental, and sustainability issues in jewelry supply chains, without the CRJC there would be a void in communication and awareness within the jewelry industry.

The goal of the conference is two-fold, it exists to create honest dialog among all participants in the supply chain, even when this truth is unpleasant, because understanding and knowledge are the first requirements for change. And second, is to initiate action. It's not enough to talk about problems - we must solve them. To date, the Chicago Responsible Jewelry Conference has motivated the launch of over a dozen worldwide initiatives.

By coming together to learn, we inevitably are motivated to act. We have an opportunity to make meaningful change, and in the process, to make jewelry beautiful both inside and out. You can be part of the change. Start by listening and learning, and see where it takes you.

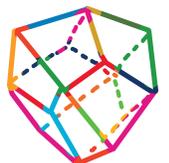


# Journey of a Diamond Podcast



The podcast chronicles the challenges and diverse perspectives around building a legal diamond supply chain from Brazil to the global jewelry market in order to economically empower the Paiter Surui tribe. Through this type of radical journalism, we accomplish our mission exploring multiple Sustainable Development Goals as they relate to the future of all of the Amazon's indigenous people and forest.

The podcast begins deep in Rondonia, Brazil where Chief Miguel tells us about his people, their history, and gives a glimpse into their current culture. He discusses the benefit he believes would be derived if the Paiter Surui were allowed to mine and sell their diamonds. Future episodes delve into interviews and perspectives with both pro and anti extractives experts on the Amazon rainforest, the executives at global diamond associations, academics who specialize in indigenous rights, the US State Department on illicit diamonds (including knowledge on Venezuela's use of diamonds to prop up it's government), a representative from the UN SDGs, and NGO's who are running SDG driven ASM projects in African countries. All the while checking in with Chief Miguel, Chief Henrique (the head chief of the Paiter Surui) and other tribal representatives. The podcast focused on the journey to legalization of indigenous mining in Brazil, exploring the question, is it right to support mining in the Amazon by this tribe? How do you formalize and legalize the path to market and will a niche diamond supply be a success? And are the Sustainable Development Goals for everyone everywhere?



# Covid Gemstone Relief Symposium

The symposium spoke to how the jewelry industry could contribute and participate in helping the artisanal and small sale miners during the pandemic. Covid-19 had catastrophic effects on the people who mine the gemstones essential to jewelry industry supply chains. These communities have almost no reserves during good times, and they were facing severe food insecurity, limited access to health care, and limited protection against coronavirus infection.

RJT took the initiative and called on gem professionals who show at the Responsible Gem Boutique (an event held by the RJT in conjunction with the Chicago Responsible Jewelry Conference) and are active allies in the responsible sourcing movement. The RJT used their website to feature these gems dealers, who agreed to give a percentage of their sales back to the gem communities for food drives and PPE. Many of these trusted allies had already begun supporting their colleagues at the mine sites through initiatives they had developed. The participants were Monica Gichuhi of AGECE, Jessica Hudson of The Nomad Jeweler, Monica Stephenson of ANZA Gems, Brian Cook of Nature's Geometry, Eric Braunwart of Columbia Gem House, and Stuart Pool of Nineteen48. Their insights and aide covered the following countries; Zambia, Tanzania, Sri Lanka, Kenya, Brazil, and the First Nations people of America.

In Day 2 of the Symposium participants brought the perspective of the large organizations. The Benjamin Katz of OECD, Dr. Rachel Bernice Perks of the World Bank, and Cristina Villegas of PACT Worldwide spoke to what they saw happening around the world, initiatives that are live and in development, and how large aid and development organizations are coming together to assist ASM communities around the world.



# Diamond Symposium

## **Human Rights in the Diamond Supply Chain: Beyond the Kimberley Process Definition of Conflict**

The Diamond Symposium addressed Human rights violations occurring in diamond mining communities producing Kimberley Process certified diamonds. The revelation that the state of certification makes it impossible to distinguish diamonds tainted with human rights abuses from responsibly sourced diamonds, (unless they are recycled or certified as sourced from very specific mines) was impactful and imperative. The Symposium provided first person narrative of abuses on day one and the second day brought "best way forward" recommendations for the jewelry industry from leading NGOs.

In cooperation with Human Rights Watch, The International Peace Information Service (IPIS) and the Kimberley Process Civil Society Coalition, the RJT shined a light on these human rights violations. In two pre-recorded interviews, members of the communities near the Letseng Diamond Mine in Lesotho and the communities surrounding the Zimbabwe Consolidated Diamond Company in Marange shared their current realities of human suffering caused by those mining operations.

Day Two featured experts addressing the reasons that human rights problems continue to exist in the diamond supply chain, how we can have more transparency in our communication regarding problems in diamond mining communities, and the responsibility for the jewelry industry to work together to improve the diamond sector. The panelists discussed the changes they recommend to improve human rights in the diamond industry.



# Safety Equipment Drive



Mining can be dangerous work and many miners cannot afford the necessary equipment to do their jobs safely. They are in need of helmets, headlamps, boots, respirators. Leaders of women's mining associations from the Association for Women in Extractives and Energy in Kenya (AWEIK) and the Tanzania Women Miners Association (TAWOMA), who work closely with the conference and the NGO, PACT, requested equipment to distribute to their members. At the 2019 conference, we were able to raise over \$2000 in donations of safety equipment to the women miners of AWEIK and TAWOMA. With PACT's help, funds were distributed to TAWOMA and association leaders were able to buy exactly what they needed. In lieu of the global pandemic, the funds for AWEIK will be repurposed as relief aid.

We cannot thank everyone enough who donated to this project. Without your generosity we would not have been able to help as many miners as we did.



# Pilot Mining Camp in Taita, Kenya

## In Partnership with Rotary International

The Pilot Mining Camp is a project where the RJT has joined forces with Rotary International. The project will help elevate the working and living conditions for miners in Kenya.



This project will offer business training to artisanal miners so they can make financial decisions with confidence, safety mining gear and related training, proper bathrooms, and a pilot shelter development to reduce exposure to wildlife, reduce environmental destruction, and improve the lives of the miners. The Rotary Club of El Cajon Sunset will process this project as grant with a match of each donation up to our goal by 250%, meaning that every \$1 donated up to our goal of \$10,700 will have another \$2.50 donated on top of it. The RJT has successfully met over half of the fundraising goal to date.



# Thank you for your support of the Responsible Jewellery Transformative 2020

