



BRIEF

Extractive Industries and Women

WHY ARE GENDER EQUALITY ISSUES IMPORTANT IN EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES?

The benefits and risks of extractive industries are often measured broadly at the community level, but fail to distinguish the impact on men and women. Evidence suggests that a gender bias exists in the distribution of risks and benefits in EI projects. The risks fall more heavily on women, while men tend to accrue more of the benefits. The development effectiveness and sustainability of EI projects could increase significantly by taking into account how gender bias issues affect the sector and how EI activities can benefit men and women more equally. There are several common gender bias issues in EI projects:

- **Poor distribution of benefits:** Benefits from EI projects are mostly captured by men in the form of employment, income and compensation.
- **Social and Family Disruption:** Risks from EI projects, such as increased prostitution, domestic violence, alcoholism, HIV/AIDS, and environmental damage, especially to gardens tended by women and waterways used by women to collect clean water, fall most heavily on women.
- **Limited voice in decision-making:** Women tend to have limited voice in decision-making at the household and community levels, and limited control over productive resources.

What can be done?

Through engagement with women-stakeholders in EI communities, actions to address gender bias issues in the sector have been identified. They include:

- **Economic empowerment of women:** Improve access to employment opportunities and micro-credit, and skills training and business development program.
- **Social empowerment of women:** Equal representation of men and women among community leaders and committees that negotiate on EI activities and community concerns. The appointment of a gender desk in oil, gas, and mining companies to address the concerns of women in the community and in the labor force.
- **Health and education:** Information campaigns to raise awareness on HIV/AIDS and other high risk disease, improve health care services, adult literacy programs, and equal access to education for boys and girls.
- **Safety and security:** Community initiatives to address violence against women and promote women's safety.

What is the World Bank doing in gender and EI?

The World Bank has reached out to women in EI communities, and is using innovative approaches to mainstream gender issues into the EI sector.

Papua New Guinea: A series of Bank sponsored conferences with women in mining communities has led to the identification of actions to enhance the benefits of mining projects on women. These actions have formed the basis of a Five Year Women and Mining Action Plan and a draft National Plan. Progress includes: the World Bank funded micro-finance training programs and micro-credit scheme, literacy and skills training program, improved benefits distribution and the establishment of a gender desk, HIV/AIDS awareness campaign, and counseling for victims of abuse.

Poland: The Women in Mining Project has helped train 24 women leaders from local communities impacted by mining contraction who now provide support to women in mining communities on issues such as: Small Business Development, Employment Counseling, Public Relations, Legislation, Psychology, Public Speaking, and Entrepreneurship Basics.

Gender Guidelines for TTLs: Provides guidelines to task managers on how to mainstream gender issues into EI projects.