



gender

EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES

INEQUALITY

VULNERABILITY

GENDER ISSUES

GLOBAL

RIGHTS

WOMEN

extractive industries: blessing or curse?

The impacts of extractive industries on gender issues

70 percent of the world's poor are women, yet there are no special provisions to ensure that they benefit from extractive industries projects- those in the oil, gas and mining sectors.



Machiguenga girl in Timpia, one of the communities directly affected by the Camisea gas pipeline in Peru.

© antoine bonsorte, amazon watch



Local family near the Yanacocha gold mine in Peru. © sjoerd panhuysen



Donkey cart near Qarabork, Azerbaijan close to the Baku-Ceyhan oil pipeline in the Caspian region. © willemijn nagel



People of the Shivankoreni indigenous community, Peru, affected by the Camisea gas project. © aaron goldzimer, environmental defense

In fact, women are most vulnerable to the negative impacts of these types of projects, because women typically are responsible for activities related to the natural resources that might be affected. Yet women are often marginalised in decision-making processes regarding large-scale development projects or natural resource management and are excluded from the benefits of such development.

Many women are involved in informal, unpaid economic activities, such as subsistence agriculture, fetching water and collecting firewood. Discrimination against women and a lack of respect for their non-paid labour is particularly acute in societies where male-dominated activities such as mining are at the centre of economic development schemes.

Even when engaged in the formal labour force, women tend to work longer hours for less pay in comparison with men in similar jobs. Serious gender imbalances exist in private sector management and governmental positions, particularly in relation to the extractive industries.

examples

While the impacts of extractive industry projects are often severe for entire communities, mining and oil extraction tend to negatively impact women disproportionately more.

Well-documented gender aspects of extractive industries projects include:

- Exclusion or marginalisation of women from negotiations with mining companies regarding project design, mining royalties, and compensation systems.
- Limited access to the benefits of mining developments, especially money and employment, which often leads to increased economic dependency on men (who are the recipients of jobs and cash payment in such projects). This leads to the marginalisation of the traditional roles and responsibilities of women. For example in Indonesia, large-scale industrial mining has deprived women of their traditional occupation recovering gold from unused tailings, while the depletion of mineral resources and pollution of land and water has hindered the productive role of women in local communities.¹
- Increased work loads for women to care for children and provide food and water in the absence of men who take jobs with mining projects. The contamination of surrounding land or water makes these tasks more difficult. For instance in the town of Korsakov on Sakhalin Island, the construction of a liquid natural gas plant by Shell has increased the traffic of heavy vehicles through the town, which has destroyed the town's water supply infrastructure and raised concerns among local women for the safety of their children and households.²
- When women do get jobs at a mine or oil project, there are many instances of discrimination in the work place, such as longer working hours for less pay than men in similar positions, or intolerance to hygiene, pregnancy and maternity needs.

SCALE

IMPACTS

EXAMPLE

	EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES	INEQUALITY	VULNERABILITY
GENDER ISSUES		GLOBAL	RIGHTS
			WOMEN

- Intolerance for the religious and spiritual connections of indigenous women to their environments and land, especially when displaced by mining activities.
- Higher risks of economic impoverishment for households led by women or women abandoned by their husbands, especially in cases of displacement.
- Increased levels of domestic violence against women due in part to the decreased social and economic status of women in local communities.
- Increased risk and vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and other sexually-transmitted diseases, sexual abuse, and trafficking of women as a result of both an influx of a transient male workforce or the need to find money to feed families. Meanwhile, these job seekers often leave behind large families with no source of income. An example of this trend comes from the construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline, which has seen an increase in human trafficking and prostitution along the pipeline route in Azerbaijan.³

SCALE

EXAMPLE

recommendations

A prerequisite to properly address the adverse gender impacts of extractive industries development is the recognition that women do not automatically benefit from mining activities and in fact bear the brunt of most negative impacts. It is even more important to recognize women as key stakeholders in the management and development of natural resources and economic actors in their own right. This importance is then multiplied when acknowledging that women are often also responsible for the well-being of children. Women's active, free and informed participation in decision-making processes regarding extractive industries projects is fundamental to securing long-term social and economic benefits for local communities.

our demands:

- Promoters of extractive industries projects should mainstream gender considerations into all stages of the project cycle. They should carry out gender analyses and gender impact assessments as part of project planning and design processes. These assessments should consider the practical needs of women, such as the provision of food and security for children, and the equal control of and access to the resources and benefits from extractive industries projects.
- Governments should increase and improve efforts to protect and promote respect for human rights related to women and gender equality, in accordance with international law.
- International financial institutions like the World Bank, the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development should recognise their obligations under international human rights law and proactively protect and promote the rights of women in their projects and policies.
- Mining companies and governments should develop appropriate internal capacity and allocate adequate resources to successfully develop, implement and enforce gender policies in their operations. Furthermore they should provide adequate safeguards and mechanisms of enforcement, such as gender audits, internal monitoring, and systems for evaluation and verification.
- These gender policies should promote gender equality, women's rights and female empowerment.

DEMANDS

information resources: EarthRights International, Mining, Gender, and the Environment in Burma - Mining:

http://www.earthrights.org/burmareports/mining_gender_and_the_environment_in_burma_8.html | Communities and Small-Scale Mining, Summary of Lessons from the Asia-Pacific Learning Event: Women Miners in the Asia-Pacific Region:

http://www.casmsite.org/Documents/PSDN_Outcomes.pdf | Third World Network, Asia-Pacific women grapple with financial crisis and globalisation: <http://www.twinside.org.sg/title/grapple-cn.htm> | World Rainforest Movement, India: Women's response to devastating mining: <http://www.wrm.org.uy/bulletin/80/India.html> | III International Women and Mining Conference, India, 2004: <http://www.mmpindia.org/womenmining.htm> | Gender and mining in Kenya: the case of Mukibira mines in Vihiga district: <http://www.eldis.org/go/display/?id=12112&type=Document> | Mines and Communities: <http://www.minesandcommunities.org/woman/woman.htm> | Women Miners in Developing Countries: Pit Women and Others, Ashgate, 2006: <http://astore.amazon.com/oneworld.net03-20/detail/0754646505>

RESOURCES

¹ Oxfam Australia, Tunnel Vision. Women, Mining and Communities, 2002 <http://www.oxfam.org.au/campaigns/mining/news/index.html>

^{2,3} CEE Bankwatch Network and Gender Action, Boom Times Blues: Big oil's gender impacts in Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Sakhalin, 2006



This Fact Sheet has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The contents of this Fact Sheet are the sole responsibility of Friends of the Earth Europe, Friends of the Earth Netherlands, Friends of the Earth France, CEE Bankwatch and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union.

CONTACT