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SmartLessons

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Striking Gold: Women in Mining Initiative in Papua New Guinea

The rapid development of the mining sector in Papua New Guinea (PNG) has illuminated the hardships faced by women in society—and in some cases, exacerbated them. The World Bank's Women in Mining Initiative (WIM) was the first systematic attempt to give these women a voice. The initiative helped to build strong women's communities at the local level, linked them to women's groups at the national level, and strengthened their agency with local governments and mining companies. The result? Stronger representation, improved community development programs, and greater economic and social opportunities for women in mining areas. This SmartLesson provides an overview of how these outcomes were accomplished, the challenges faced in the process, and what we can learn from the ongoing experiences of the WIM in Papua New Guinea.

Background

PNG is a culturally diverse, environmentally rich country with over five million inhabitants. The majority of its population lives on the eastern half of the rugged and mountainous island of New Guinea, with the remainder scattered among tropical archipelagos in the Bismark and Solomon seas. Unfortunately, Papua New Guinea's natural beauty hides a less attractive human reality: widespread poverty, underdevelopment, and deep dependence on natural resources, especially mining operations.

Global experience shows that the impact of the mining sector is gender-biased¹. Whereas mining-related benefits such as employment and income tend to be captured by men, the brunt of the negative impacts—social and environmental risks—largely falls upon women. Papua New Guinea, where mining is a strategic priority sector and a key foreign exchange earner, is no exception.

Gender relations within Papua New Guinean communities are largely based on tribal cultures and traditions; hundreds of distinct

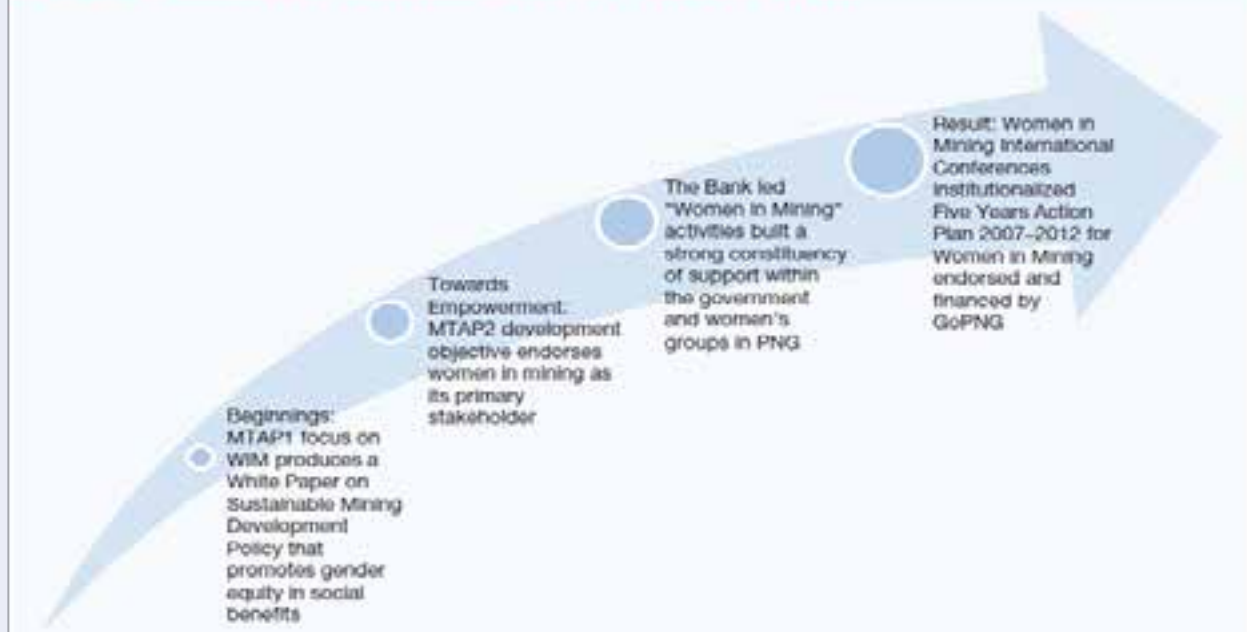
ethno-linguistic communities are woven into the fabric of Papua New Guinean society. As these societies are heavily patriarchal, women's traditional subservience has been well established through their social roles. However the arrival of mining operations can upend or erode set gender relations. Starting from a position of disadvantage, women often face discrimination, economic deprivation, and a downward spiral of domestic violence. Today, women's socio-economic roles are at a juncture; tradition can be a source of opportunity, prestige and status or can restrict opportunities for self-empowerment.

The Women in Mining Initiative

The Women in Mining (WIM) initiative was developed during the implementation of the World Bank's first Mining Sector Technical Assistance Project. This project already had a Sustainable Mining Development component. However during project consultations, it became obvious that without the development of women in these communities, sustainable development was not achievable. A "Women in Mining" sub-component was therefore

¹ "Gender Dimensions of the Extractive Industries – Mining for Equity", Eftimie, A, Keller, H, Strongman, J - 2009

FIGURE 1 Accelerating Towards Gender Equality in PNG Mining Areas



added to support the development of women's activities, capacities, and voice in mining-impacted communities. As a result of a dialogue on women and women's issues related to mining that started at the 2001 Sustainability conference, the project supported the organization of the first Women and Mining Conference (2003), which resulted in the identification of actions to reduce and mitigate the negative environmental and social impacts of mining on women, and improve and enhance the positive impacts of mining for women. The WIM Initiative was developed in a:

- complex governance environment in which mining companies provide many social services since in some cases government is absent
- transitional environment in which mines will close and must eventually transfer provision of services to government



Cross-section of women attend the Women in Mining Conference.

- gender-biased environment in which women are marginalized

The WIM Initiative in PNG resulted in two main outcomes:

1) Increasing voice

The WIM Initiative was developed based on the recognition of the lack of voice of women in mining areas. It sought to directly address both the lack of voice and the challenges faced by women. Three international WIM conferences (organized in Madang in 2003, 2005 and 2010) focused on empowering Papua New Guinean women to participate more equitably in sharing mining benefits, to assume enhanced roles in planning, and to be included in all decision-making processes. The 2005 WIM conference led to the establishment of a government WIM Steering Committee² which, together with local women's associations, developed local WIM Action Plans, which were then integrated into a WIM 5 Year National Action Plan (the Action Plan). This Action Plan, endorsed by the Government of PNG in December 2009, provides a strong basis for mobilizing additional public, donor, and private sector resources to improve economic and social outcomes for women and families in mining areas.

The 2005 conference was also the first international event in Papua New Guinea to include women from areas affected by petroleum, in recognition of the fact that many of the problems arising in mining areas were also shared by oil and gas-affected communities and the initiative was renamed Women in Mining and Petroleum (WIMAP).

² The Steering Committee was established by women in strategic positions from the PNG Departments of Mining, Planning, Agriculture, Community Development, Environment and the Attorney General's office.

Whereas the 2003 conference was held because women were uncomfortable speaking in public setting with men, in follow-up (mixed sex) conferences in 2005 and 2010, women were active participants, presenting in front of male community members, government, and industry representatives. The women discussed how their increased social empowerment was also now enabling them to become partners to their male counterparts in mining benefits discussions and led in some cases to economic empowerment.

Overall, through increasing the voices of women, the program created a platform for dialogue and action for all relevant stakeholders—the government, the private sector, and women's groups and association, in which women were now able to more fully participate.

2) Building capacities

In 2008, a project funded by the Japan Social Development Fund (JSDF), Self-Reliance Programs for Women in Mining and Petroleum Areas, was launched as part of continual support for the WIM Initiative. The project aimed to increase the positive impacts of the extractive industries on women from remote areas of Papua New Guinea. It aimed to build the capacity of women's groups and associations to better manage their community programs and provide them with the necessary skills and tools to become reliable partners in the decision-making processes that affect their lives.

More than 1,100 women and men benefited from the training and capacity building efforts carried out under the

program, which was implemented in six mining areas and eight petroleum areas. In subsequent women and mining conferences, women beneficiaries have reported how skills gained from these trainings contributed to their ability to open small business, and to play a more active role in the development of their communities and households.

The WIMAP is in the process of mobilizing additional resources to expand training and capacity building programs to more areas affected by mining and petroleum in Papua New Guinea, as well as to build on past efforts in the original WIM Initiative.

Key accomplishments so far

WIMAP activities have helped:

- build linkages between networks of key women at the national level, and women's groups at local level
- build the capacity of local women's associations, and have given them greater voice with male community leaders and local governments
- mining companies to target their community programs more effectively, with improved outcomes for both women and men

The program demonstrates how activities within a particular sector can have impact on women's social and economic empowerment more broadly, helping to secure them a vocal role in the nation's development agenda. The WIMAP initiative continues to raise awareness on gender issues across sectors—gender being one of the two cross-cutting themes of the Papua New Guinea Country Assistance Strategy.

The WIMAP initiative proved to be:

- **Good for development:** by promoting inclusive participation in planning and improving local governance. This creates a strong basis for post-mine sustainable development, and for broader and more equitable long-term sharing of local and national revenues from mineral resources
- **Good for women:** by catalyzing their participation in decision-making, so that their needs and priorities can be identified and addressed
- **Good for business:** by increasing the effectiveness and equitability of investments in compensation and community development activities, helping to mitigate negative impacts, and improving sustainability of positive impacts. The program has also increased household and community income from women's business activities that grew out of the training projects.

Women in Mining Action Plan 2007–2012

VISION

"A future of peace and prosperity resulting from improved quality of life and level of living where the quality of life is reflected in the extent to which women are able to make choices on issues affecting their lives and having the means to put these choices into actions."

GOALS

1. To raise the level of general education and literacy to improve the status of women
2. To ensure reproductive health care services, including family planning are accessible, affordable and consistent with community values and norms.
3. To prevent or control the incidents of tuberculosis (TB)/sexually transmitted infections (STIs), particularly HIV/AIDS and to minimize their social and economic effects on families and communities
4. To increase the opportunities for women and girls to participate and benefit from the economic, political, cultural and social lives of their communities
5. To strengthen women's associations capacity to operate beyond mine closure
6. To ensure that communities are able to sustain their livelihoods
7. To mitigate and avoid environmental degradation that reduced the quality of life.
8. To promote and maintain safety, security and peace in their communities.

Lessons Learned

1) Look at benefits and risks through a gender lens

By looking at our mining projects through the gender lens of benefits and risks, we were able to identify actions that helped improve overall development outcomes. The WIM Initiative not only contributed to a more inclusive approach to community development in our mining technical assistance projects, but also resulted in increased government support for gender programs through the adoption of the Action Plan.

2) Remain driven by demand

By responding to women's needs and requests, rather than lecturing to them, we built strong local ownership in the WIM activities. The WIM Initiative facilitated the creation of a strong platform of dialogue for women leaders from communities, government, and industry representatives to plan and work together in the preparation and implementation of the Action Plan, showing strong ownership of the proposed activities through commitments and responsibilities established for each group.

3) Always explore opportunities to build confidence

By initially listening to women's voices in a women-only setting (during the 2003 WIM conference), we empowered women to take a more proactive role in community affairs. Being encouraged to speak built women's confidence, which enabled them to have a greater impact within their communities and also nationally.

4) Build leadership

By supporting the women community leaders, we enabled them to help others in their communities and began to create a wider range of role models for younger women and girls. Women's associations and groups actively engaged in income generating activities that gave them the leverage to assert a stronger role in community decision making processes. Their participation in training activities allowed them to share their knowledge with younger women and girls.

5) Improve channels of communication

By informing community women about the risks and benefits of mining and encouraging them to take part in that discussion, we enabled them to become engaged in planning for the impacts of mine development. Women used the local Action Plans for engaging in the negotiations of the benefits packages with the mining companies. Results of this process varied from direct industry contributions to specific women's initiatives, to the earmarking of 10% dedicated funding from royalties to be spent on women's activities.

6) Companies can be key agents of gender improvement in the community

The mining companies found that development outcomes from community investment programs could be improved



The leaders of the Lihir Mining Women Association at the Women Resource Center

through consulting women and supporting women's activities. As recommended during the 2003 WIM conference, many companies set up gender desks. Over the years, the Women's Mining Associations have engaged with these gender desks to develop activities that resulted in economic and social empowerment of women. While the well-being of women has improved, the mining industry has also been able to make an increasingly effective and efficient contribution to community development.

Future Challenges

Gender mainstreaming in the mining sector of Papua New Guinea is undergoing some giant strides as women are increasingly making an impact; however, there are still some challenges to overcome.

- Focus on self-reliance. Women have identified their training needs, corresponding to a range of small-scale livelihood opportunities: for example baking, sewing, and improved agriculture techniques to boost crop yield. The next step will be to link up trained women with access to credit and markets in order to enable their small enterprises to start functioning. The planned WIMAP Small Grants program - providing seed money and mentoring for micro enterprises and community projects run by women's associations - is designed to meet this need.
- Sustainability matters. WIM Initiative sustainability can be strengthened in three ways: 1) ensuring that the program continues to provide direct information, mentoring and follow-up support to WIMAP participants; 2) building adequate capacity in the Government to support and champion the program on an on-going basis and 3) raising greater awareness of the program and securing resources to continue it.
- Issues of Gender Based Violence (GBV) in mining communities need to be addressed. The issue of GBV continues to be one of the most serious public policy challenges facing Papua New Guinea today, from not only a human rights perspective but also from a development effectiveness perspective. Qualitative evidence suggests that GBV may be particularly serious in Extractive Industries (EI) communities due to the extra influx of disposable income, the arrival of migrant labor and the social disruption

caused by the industry. The WIMAP program plans to add a GBV awareness and advocacy module to future training activities, to work with both men and women, in mining, oil and gas affected communities.

- Incorporate a more systematic monitoring and evaluation (M&E) strategy. The WIMAP will incorporate a monitoring and evaluation framework in the next stage of program activities. This will include a participatory mechanism, to enable direct feedback and accountability to the program beneficiaries.
- Continue to engage men. The WIM/WIMAP process so far demonstrates that in order to effectively address the social and economic marginalization of women, men have to also be involved. The WIMAP will continue to work with men in the community, especially those in positions of leadership, to develop strong male advocates for program activities. Future trainings will also have a portion of spaces reserved for men, where there is demand to do so.

Conclusion

Industrial development through mining has brought rapid change to Papua New Guinea, and is bringing major changes in other countries with a rapidly developing mining sector (such as Mongolia). Many of the social effects remain under-evaluated. Examining how women's roles have changed because of mining—as well as how they will change through the future life of the mine—must be an integral component of an effective development approach in the country.

All mining operations have a limited operating life, and thus future prospects for people living in their midst seem tenuous and uncertain. Long-term strategic planning for community development is critical to sustaining local livelihoods, opportunity and equity throughout and beyond the mining project cycle. Attending to local needs also includes a careful consideration of both women and men's roles in society.

In Papua New Guinea, the WIMAP demonstrates that an improved understanding of women's roles and the empowerment of women at the community and national levels should be a key objective in any country with a strong EI sectors.

While developed in Papua New Guinea, the WIM approach was replicated in other countries (Poland, Romania, Uganda, Tanzania) and it contributed to the development of the Gender and Extractive Industries Guidance Note for Task Team Leaders that provides information and practical steps on how to incorporate gender into the project cycle .

More details on the program can be found on <http://www.worldbank.org/eigender>.



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