

# Gender Justice & the Extractive Industries: Setting the Change Agenda

A Strategic Dialogue hosted by Oxfam America – EVENT REPORT



The Whittemore House, Washington DC

On March 23, 2017, Oxfam America brought together experts from international financial institutions, extractive industries, civil society, donor institutions, and academia to discuss key issues and policy opportunities for addressing gender justice and women’s rights in the context of extractive industries (EI).

The objectives of the event were to raise the profile of gender justice and women’s rights issues in the EI sector, to advance thinking on a gender and EI policy change agenda, and to facilitate networking and exchange between participants.

Throughout the day, the 41-participants debated strategies for empowering women and advancing the rights of women working in and affected by the EI sector. The event included 2-panels, presentations of emerging research, and strategic reflection in small groups (agenda attached). It also served as a forum to launch the [Oxfam International Position Paper on Gender Justice and the Extractive Industries](#).

## Discussion Highlights

Below is a summary of key points and themes that emerged during the discussions.

### **Women and active citizenship: “Are we including women ‘because of’ or ‘in order to?’”**

This provocative inquiry from Sarah Bradshaw (Middlesex University) sparked lively conversations about the need to avoid the feminization of responsibility and to set a feminist agenda, rather than a ‘feminized’ agenda (an agenda to which a feminist perspective is added). We assume that women are or can be civic agents when in reality they are often unable to be. Addressing this means tackling systemic barriers to women’s participation, such as ensuring access to education and supporting women’s economic independence. Strengthening women as ‘full citizens’ (in all their different identities) is a critical first step towards women’s meaningful engagement in EI processes and reform efforts.



Panel 1 – Following the Money: Gender Transparency & Social Accountability

### **Set gender goals, support women’s rights organizations & protect women’s rights defenders**

Rather than tacking gender goals onto existing strategies, gender goals must drive transparency and social accountability efforts. Support to and engagement with women’s rights organizations is essential, as is grassroots mobilization, especially because women often organize in informal spaces. Taking a movement building approach can address power in its various forms, particularly invisible power, which social accountability efforts often fail to challenge. Active citizenship and social accountability are in fact not interchangeable – social accountability is often mistakenly depoliticized. Lastly, the safety of women’s resource rights defenders needs to be protected.

## Addressing systemic gender bias

EI continues to be male-dominated. For women engaged in the EI sector, moving from exclusion to inclusion means moving beyond quotas to fostering changes in EI culture. It also requires changes in corporate and government policy and practice. From uniforms and training, to work hours and health benefits – EI company employee policies are framed under the assumption of a male workforce. The sexual harassment of women in the EI workplace remains a persistent and prevalent issue.

For women in EI-affected communities, the sector's gender blindness undermines the potential benefits of the industry, such as employment and compensation. Gender-equitable consultation processes, made possible through establishing enabling environments, are essential and often missing. Equally important is



*Small group discussion: New research & case studies from the Gender & Development Journal*

community-based impact monitoring that involves both women and men. The prevalence of violence against women and girls in EI project contexts needs to be addressed.

## Closing policy and practice gaps

Only a handful of EI companies mention gender or the inclusion of women in their community engagement policies. Even when gender policies exist, implementation is weak, often translating into box-ticking exercises. Gender Impact Assessments (GIAs) offer one means to understand the gender-differentiated impacts of EI projects. GIAs must be effectively implemented, with accountability for the results.

## Setting the Change Agenda

### Top 10 strategies identified by participants for promoting gender justice and advancing women's rights in EI:

1. Conduct and publish project-level gender analyses, including gender impact assessments
2. Ensure the strong participation of women in Free, Prior and Informed Consent processes
3. Secure the prerequisites for women's active citizenship, including creating enabling environments and addressing systemic barriers to women's participation
4. Support the work of and engage with women's rights organizations and movements
5. Support the use of grievance mechanisms accessible to women
6. Publish and implement stand-alone corporate gender policies
7. Implement participatory processes with women, including monitoring of impacts
8. Conduct research and increase evidence base (examples: intersection between gender, class, and race in terms of citizenship; whether and how social accountability have delivered results for women's rights; and evidence for the value of GIAs)
9. Ensure accountability for benefits sharing agreements
10. Reform EI legislation and regulations to accommodate women workers (labor, health, and safety rules)

### Event Resources

[\*Achieving Natural Resource Justice: Oxfam International Extractive Industries Global Program Strategic Plan 2016-2019\*](#)

[\*Oxfam International Position Paper on Gender Justice & the Extractive Industries\*](#)

[\*Gender & the Extractive Industries: Putting gender on the corporate agenda\*](#)

[\*Gender & Social Accountability: Ensuring women's inclusion in citizen-led accountability programming related to extractive industries\*](#)

### Mark your calendar

The November 2017 issue of the [\*Gender & Development Journal\*](#) will examine natural resource justice through the lens of gender equality and women's rights

## **Gender Justice & the Extractive Industries: Setting the Change**

**Agenda: March 23, 2017**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>
8:30	<b>Coffee</b>
9:00	<b>Welcome:</b> Paul O'Brien, Vice President of Policy & Advocacy, Oxfam America
9:10	<b>Stage Setting &amp; Agenda:</b> Keith Slack, Director, Extractive Industries Global Program, Oxfam America; Maria Ezpeleta, Gender Advisor, Extractive Industries, Oxfam America
9:30	<p><b>Session 1: Panel</b>  <b><i>Following the Money: Gender, transparency, and social accountability</i></b>            Moderator: Keith Slack, Oxfam America            Panelists:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Winfred Ngabiirwe, Global Rights Alert</li> <li>2. Sarah Bradshaw, Middlesex University</li> <li>3. Alfonsina Penaloza, Hewlett Foundation</li> <li>4. Jonathan Fox, American University</li> </ol>
10:45	<b>Break</b>
11:00	<p><b>Session 2: Panel</b>  <b><i>Promoting Women's Rights – Mitigating risks and seizing opportunities</i></b>            Moderator: Maria Ezpeleta, Oxfam America            Panelists:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Elaine Zuckerman, Gender Action</li> <li>2. Christopher Sheldon, World Bank</li> <li>3. Maria Calero, AngloGold Ashanti</li> <li>4. Chris Madden, Oxfam Australia</li> <li>5. Phumeza Mgengo, National Union of Mineworkers</li> </ol>
12:15	<b>Lunch</b>
1:15	<p><b>Session 3: Small-group presentations</b>  <b><i>On the Edge: New research &amp; case studies from Gender &amp; Development Journal</i></b>            Discussant: Sarah Bradshaw, Middlesex University            Introduction: Caroline Sweetman, Gender &amp; Development Journal</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Asanda Benya, University of Cape Town: South Africa, women in mining</li> <li>2. Elana Nightingale, Pauktuutit: Canada, Inuit women's rights</li> <li>3. Kalowatie Deonandan, University of Saskatchewan: Guatemala, women's activism</li> </ol> <p>*Regrets from Anja Tolonen, Barnard College: macro to local boom and bust effects on women</p>
2:30	<b>Break</b>
2:45	<p><b>Session 4: Building the change agenda</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Oxfam's position paper on gender justice &amp; EI (15min)</li> <li>- Small groups (75min)</li> <li>- Report out (30min)</li> </ul>
4:45	<b>Wrap-up/next steps</b>
5:00	<b>End</b>