

# GENDER ACTION LINK: Gender, IFIs & Extractive Industries



“After the mining operations started, our village started getting destroyed. Today ground water has dried up, the forests have been cut down and so we are fighting for our lands” (RIMM 2004).

During 2007-2008, the World Bank Group increased spending on coal by 256% and spending on coal, oil and gas collectively by 94%, surpassing US \$3 billion. A substantial portion of this increase came from the World Bank's private lending arm, the International Finance Corporation (IFC), which increased lending to extractive industries by 134%. This trend toward fossil fuel financing has emerged despite recommendations from the World Bank's own 2003 Extractive Industries Review, which advised the Bank to end all financing for coal immediately and phase out of oil investments by 2008 (Redman 2008).

Women and girls living in communities affected by extractive projects bear the brunt of environmental, social and economic impacts, which can include: forced displacement, environmental degradation, disruption of subsistence agriculture and traditional livelihoods, and volatile cash flows into project areas. As described below, women disproportionately face livelihood loss, increased care work, forced prostitution and human trafficking, rape, and sexually transmitted diseases due to the presence of extractive industries in their communities (CEE Bankwatch & Gender Action 2006, 3).

**Labor Discrimination:** Women, who comprise the majority of farmers worldwide, are often the first fired and last rehired when extractive industries appropriate local agricultural lands for mining or oil extraction. Additionally, as extractive projects propel subsistence communities into cash-based economies, women's non-remunerated reproductive labor quickly loses value against men's new cash earnings (WRM 2003). Yet this care work steadily increases as men leave subsistence production to earn cash wages from logging, oil or mining companies; women become solely responsible for providing food, water, fuel and childcare for their families. To help shoulder this burden, girls often leave school to help mothers complete household tasks, further deepening their economic dependence on male family members (Tauli-Corpuz 1998; gendercc 2008, 2007; FOE Europe 2007; Oxfam 2008; WRM 2005 a).

**Unequal Benefits:** Women consistently benefit less than their male counterparts from IFI and commercial bank financed extractive projects. Routinely excluded from community consultations, women's unique concerns and needs remain silent and invisible during project planning stages. As a result, women often receive fewer employment opportunities, fewer royalties, and fewer compensation payments from extractive companies. Women's exclusion from land titles and property rights further limits their ability to claim restitution from extractive industries in many areas (Oxfam 2008; gendercc 2007; FOE Europe 2007; WRM 2005 a).

**Exploitation:** The devaluation of women's work and economic status increases their vulnerability to exploitation. Women who do find jobs with extractive companies often face poor working conditions and sexual harassment in the workplace. Women who resettle must often enter unregulated labor markets where they face dangerous working conditions and exploitative hours. And women without formal education or marketable skills may be trafficked into prostitution and exposed to rape and HIV/AIDS (CEE Bankwatch & Gender Action 2006; Tauli-Corpuz 1998; Oxfam 2005; WRM 2005 b; FOE Europe 2007). This social, economic and physical exploitation undermines gender justice and women's rights in affected communities.

**Disease:** As women face rape, prostitution, environmental pollution, and care work for sick or injured family members, they also face increasing exposure to disease. Recent studies reveal rising rates of HIV/AIDS and other life-threatening illnesses among women in communities impacted by extractive industries (CEE Bankwatch & Gender Action 2006; Oxfam 2005; WRM 2005 c; Tauli-Corpuz 2008).



## Women's Crisis Center on the IFI-Supported BTC Pipeline in Azerbaijan (2004)...

"According to the Center, the fact that the gender factor was not taken into consideration during the construction of the pipeline and related infrastructure development has had quite a negative impact on the prostitution rate. Firstly it was a matter of concern from the beginning that the majority of local people are still unemployed. Due to the increased working emigration of men, most of the families are left to be supported by women. This has not only increased the incidence of women turning to prostitution to support their families, but also the cases of inside trafficking.

According to a journalist's investigations: 'Inside Azerbaijan, trafficking is blossoming in places of intensive economic activities. So-called Mama Rozas hire 15-20 girls and take them to various places where intensive construction work or trade is going on. The Centre has cases when girls were taken to cities where the [BTC] pipeline is being laid. ...This is a well-organized criminal business which is well-aware of the situation in the country and in places where their services are in demand.'"

('Boom Time Blues'; CEE Bankwatch & Gender Action 2006)

### WHAT CAN BE DONE?

- IFIs, commercial banks, and extractive corporations should fully include local women in project consultations and negotiations.
- Local women should participate at every decision-making level: project policies, planning, negotiations and assessments.
- All extractive projects should be gender sensitive. They should incorporate gender analyses in planning, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation stages.
- All extractive projects should ensure local men and women receive equitable employment opportunities, benefits and compensation packages.
- Extractive projects should actively promote women's equitable control over land, natural resources and other property.
- IFIs, commercial banks, and private corporations must uphold international human rights standards like CEDAW that protect women's rights. They should also implement and abide by their own safeguard policies designed to protect women and men against gender discrimination, abuse, sexual harassment and exploitation by the industry, contractors and other workers.

### POSSIBLE PARTNERS!

- Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD) Women and Environment Program: <http://www.apwld.org>
- Asia Pacific Women's Watch <http://apww.isiswomen.org/pages/aboutus/aboutus.html>
- Gender Action: [www.genderaction.org](http://www.genderaction.org)
- International Women and Mining Network Red Internacional "Mujeres y Minería" (RIMM) <http://www.rimmrights.org/>
- Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI) <http://www.rightsandresources.org/blog.php?id=55>

### ACTION RESOURCES:

- World Rainforest Movement: Women, Forests & Plantations  
Extensive compilation of articles, scholarly research, bulletins, and other links related to gender, forests and plantations, mining, gas and oil extraction, dams, and community resettlement.
- E-mine: Gender and Mine Action  
Website dedicated to gender and mining. Provides resources on policy and strategy, key terms and definitions, UN Mine Action Team (UNMAT) initiatives and activities, tools for implementation, and research and media coverage. Links to UN documents, policies and guidelines on gender and mine action programs.
- Oxfam Australia: Women and Mining  
Campaign to empower mine-affected women worldwide. Link to workshops, conferences, campaign statements and reports on women and mining.
- Third International Women and Mining Conference (2004)  
Declaration, statement and report from the Third International Women and Mining Conference in Visakhapatnam, India (October 1-9, 2004). Sponsored by Mines, Minerals and People.
- Iroco Declaration (Oruro, Bolivia, 2000)  
Declaration from the 2nd International Conference: Women and Mining in Oruro, Bolivia from September 16-25, 2000.

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