



## Original article

# Ensuring women follow the money: Gender barriers in extractive industry revenue accountability: The Dominican Republic and Zambia

Namalie Jayasinghe\*, Maria Ezpeleta

*Oxfam America, United States*

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## ABSTRACT

Social accountability initiatives (SAIs) can be important to help push for oil, gas, and mining revenues to go to communities impacted by extractive industries (EI). Local investments in targeted services and programs can improve development outcomes and address negative impacts caused by EI. Ensuring that women and women's rights organizations (WROs) are part of SAIs is likewise crucial, without which investments financed by EI revenues may not reflect the needs and interests of women, missing an opportunity to advance women's rights and gender equality. This article shares preliminary results from a project that involves: (1) research exploring a women's rights approach to SAIs on EI revenue transparency; and (2) program activities intended to foster joint agenda-setting between WROs and EI revenue transparency civil society organizations (EITCSOs) that distinctly focus on advancing women's rights. Initial findings suggest that addressing structural barriers to women's participation, such as socio-cultural norms, women's lack of ownership of land and resources, gender-insensitive consultation processes, inaccessibility of information, and women's lack of awareness of their rights, in SAIs related to EI revenue transparency could improve women's agency. Through this project, WROs and EITCSOs are building advocacy agendas that respond to these barriers to promote women's rights.

## 1. Introduction

Research demonstrates that women and men in communities impacted by extractive industries (EI) have differential access to the resources and opportunities generated along the EI value chain (Eftimie et al., 2009). The benefits associated with EI – such as employment and compensation – tend to go to men, while women often bear the brunt of any negative impacts, including environmental degradation and disruptions in social and family life. When resources like water and wood become scarcer or polluted, for example, women and girls' unpaid care work can increase dramatically (Oxfam International, 2017). With the coming of oil, gas, and industrial mining projects, increases in health and safety risks for women can also occur. Risks of sexually transmitted diseases and violence against women and girls can escalate with the influx of transient workers, the transition to a cash economy, and the emergence of new socioeconomic stresses (Oxfam International, 2017).

While recognition of gender barriers in the distribution of risks and benefits of EI within local communities is growing, much less is known about the potentially gendered nature of EI revenue transparency reform efforts. Such efforts seek good governance of the EI sector by ensuring the disclosure of data related to EI revenues and payments to governments, and by promoting greater transparency around the fiscal

management of EI revenues. Transparency around EI revenue flows can equip citizens with critical information as they seek government accountability for the use of revenues from oil, gas, and mining to go towards sustainable development projects.

Social accountability is envisioned as a process that amplifies the voices of citizens and lessens inequalities in power, so that governments and service providers are more responsive to peoples' needs. Numerous definitions of social accountability exist, ranging from those that are broad in scope, seeing social accountability as a wide range of actions coming from the government, civil society, and other actors (McNeil and Malena, 2010), to narrower ones that see civil society as the main initiators of social accountability activities (Joshi and Houtzager, 2012: 150). This article adopts the latter approach, and uses a World Bank definition: "Social accountability is defined as an approach towards building accountability that relies on civil engagement, i.e., in which it is ordinary citizens and/or CSOs [civil society] that participate directly or indirectly in exacting accountability" (Malena et al., 2004: 3).

Social accountability initiatives (SAIs) function as a mechanism for citizens to demand transparency about EI revenues and expenditure decisions, equipping citizens with the knowledge necessary to assess whether they are receiving their fair share, and to influence how the revenues are spent. SAIs related to EI revenue transparency encompass

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: [namalie.jayasinghe@oxfam.org](mailto:namalie.jayasinghe@oxfam.org) (N. Jayasinghe), [maria.ezpeleta@oxfam.org](mailto:maria.ezpeleta@oxfam.org) (M. Ezpeleta).

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a range of strategies, from public awareness campaigns to participatory budgeting at the local and national levels (Birchall and Fontana, 2015: 24). These ‘follow the money’ initiatives seek to increase government accountability for the management and use of revenues from oil, gas, and mining.

SAIs are oftentimes used tactically by civil society to level power differentials between government and citizens, and to foster citizen participation in decision-making around the use of resources. SAIs can also serve to amplify women’s voices, and hold decision-makers to account for women’s interests, especially when SAIs are premised on inclusivity, and engage directly with those affected (Malena et al., 2004: 6). Yet the design and implementation of SAIs can be gender-blind, hampering the participation of women and women’s rights organizations (WROs). From making assumptions about women’s comfort level in participating in community discussions, to failing to schedule meetings at times and places convenient to women, or sharing information in ways inaccessible to women, SAIs can disregard structural barriers to women’s engagement, potentially exacerbating gender inequality. Furthermore, little is known about how SAIs related to EI revenue transparency can support women’s rights and gender equality.

Oxfam is implementing *Promoting Women’s Rights through EI Revenue Accountability*, a project that seeks to address gender barriers to women’s participation in SAIs, and to strengthen a women’s rights focus of SAIs related to EI revenue transparency in the Dominican Republic (DR) and Zambia.<sup>1</sup> This project defines women’s rights outcomes broadly: when women have equal access to and control over resources and opportunities; are equally participating in decision-making processes; and define their own interests, demands, and needs, which are addressed by stakeholders and decision-makers. The project is providing learning about the ways in which women engage (or not) in social accountability around EI revenue transparency, and how EI transparency agendas can advance women’s rights.

## 2. Promoting women’s rights through EI revenue accountability: Connecting research and practice

The project aims to advance women’s rights through SAIs around EI revenue transparency that promote gender equality both in process (whether and how women engage) and in advocacy objectives (demands for government to invest EI revenues in programs and services that support women’s rights). Using a two-pronged approach that couples research with programmatic activities, the project tests a central hypothesis that increasing the engagement of WROs in EI revenue transparency and accountability reform efforts will lead to positive outcomes for women’s rights.<sup>2</sup>

Core to the project is a question around what it means for SAIs to incorporate women’s rights. The research is demonstrating that the implications of social accountability on women’s rights are primarily two-fold: (1) SAIs as driving *processes*, where women’s participation in SAIs is inherently valuable as an expression of their rights; and (2) SAIs as driving *outcomes*, where women’s participation in SAIs may help drive government resources towards goods and services that are valued by women, advance women’s rights, and improve overall development outcomes. For social accountability to be used as a tool to advance gender equality, “[SAIs] must go hand in hand with efforts to affirm women’s rights and empower women to seek accountability and justice” (McNeil and Malena, 2010: 193). The literature also recommends that SAIs be designed in ways that promote women’s meaningful agency and participation (Bradshaw et al., 2016). This approach can be a way to ensure that the concerns of all citizens, particularly the most

vulnerable and marginalized (often women, girls, youth, and indigenous people), are included in EI decision-making.

Understanding the gender dimensions of SAIs – how the design, goals, and implementation of initiatives, can address gender inequality and women’s rights – is further enhanced when considering feminist approaches. Among other aims, a feminist approach intends to address the root causes of structural and systemic inequalities and discrimination, using an intersectional lens to transform systems of power and agency.<sup>3</sup> A feminist approach also encourages inclusivity, honors local ownership of knowledge, and highlights consciousness-raising about rights at the individual level. In the context of EI revenue social accountability, this points towards a rights-based approach that prioritizes inclusive citizen participation, individual agency and empowerment, and aims to address underlying gender norms, values, and behaviors. A feminist lens also recognizes that, historically, advancing women’s rights has relied heavily on the engagement of WROs. Therefore, critical to a women’s rights approach to SAIs related to EI revenue transparency is building cross-sector movements between WROs and CSOs working on EI transparency (EITCSOs).

### 2.1. Research

The research addresses the gap in the literature on the women’s rights dimensions of SAIs related to EI revenue transparency, through a literature review and country case studies from the DR and Zambia. The research seeks to identify barriers to the participation of women in SAIs broadly, and in EI revenue transparency and accountability efforts more specifically. In addition to contributing to the relative dearth of literature on this topic, the purpose of the research is to provide evidence to inform the concurrent program activities. The research findings are generating potential strategies for better supporting women’s inclusion in social accountability related to EI revenue transparency. The DR and Zambia provide compelling country case examples because of the relative vibrancy of their EI sectors, the prevalence of strong WRO networks, and Oxfam country presence.

The research is being conducted in partnership with the Instituto de Investigación y Estudios de Género y Familia and the Observatorio Dominicano de Políticas Públicas in the DR, and by the Zambia Institute for Policy Analysis and Research. Key informant interviews with members of CSOs, WROs, Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI)<sup>4</sup> multi-stakeholder groups (MSGs),<sup>5</sup> and mining-impacted communities have been held in both countries (21 interviews in the DR and 19 in Zambia). Interviews in the DR have been conducted in the ‘mining triangle’ with members of communities and CSOs in the provinces of Monseñor Nouel and Sánchez Ramírez.<sup>6</sup> In Zambia, community interviews have been held in Solwezi, one of the country’s fastest growing mining districts.

The research is generating several key findings. First, there is a lack of literature on the gender dimensions of and women’s inclusion in

<sup>3</sup> By intersectional lens, we are referring to the following definition: “Identity-based disadvantages interacting with other dimensions of exclusion, such as income or location.” Source: Paz Arauco et al., 2014: 11.

<sup>4</sup> The EITI is an international standard that seeks transparency in oil, gas, and mining operations occurring in 52 implementing countries across the world. Participating countries are led by national multi-stakeholder groups, which bring together officials from the government, companies, and civil society to ensure that the country is complying with the EITI Standard. Source: EITI, The Power of Three. <https://eiti.org/oversight>.

<sup>5</sup> The MSG “develops the country work plan, oversees the production of the EITI Report and ensures that the EITI contributes to public debate.” Source: EITI, Glossary. <https://eiti.org/glossary>.

<sup>6</sup> The mining triangle refers to three provinces in Dominican Republic where EI activity takes place: Monseñor Nouel, Sánchez Ramírez, and La Vega. One of the points of the triangle – La Vega province – is not included in the analysis here as mining activities have yet to occur though plans are underway.

<sup>1</sup> This project is funded by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and is nearing the end of its two-year implementation period.

<sup>2</sup> At the time of writing this article, the project’s research is in its final stages of editing before publication. Program activities are ongoing.

social accountability programming, and virtually none on the gender dimensions of social accountability programming relating specifically to EI revenue transparency. Second, SAIs can have inherent gender biases, in that they do not take into account structural gender inequalities that affect participation. Third, it is important to support WROs and women's movements as a vital means to address systemic discrimination against women in society, because doing so is a prerequisite for women to be able to participate in programming designed to be more inclusive. If women are not acknowledged as 'citizens', they are not able to enjoy citizens' rights to participation. Given the importance of the larger context for social accountability, supporting women's organizations and movements – actors with crucial expertise that is currently missing from broader conversations on EI revenue transparency – is oftentimes thought to be crucial to support women's participation in formal political processes (Bradshaw et al., 2016).

Finally, the research finds that conceptions of 'good governance' often disregard structural gender inequalities within governance processes themselves. Initiatives such as the EITI, for example, which promote good governance of natural resources, tend to profile as 'gender neutral,' but in fact have gendered outcomes in practice. Yet the EITI does not operate in a socio-political vacuum. There are deeply rooted politics of power in information disclosure at play – who decides which data should be disclosed, how it is disclosed and with which audiences in mind. If women are not able to access and understand information produced by the EITI, one of the EITI's key implementation steps of widely disseminating information to influence public debate is not being achieved. Another example of gender 'blindness' manifests in that the EITI Standard does not require gender-disaggregated EI employment data (EITI, 2019).<sup>7</sup> One outcome of this is an inability to understand if EI is benefiting women in terms of employment – vital information that can inform gender-responsive policy.

## 2.2. Program activities

The project's program activities take a first step towards the goal of putting EI revenues to work for women's rights by facilitating collaboration between WROs and EITCSOs. The program also responds to a gap the research is uncovering regarding the need to support WROs in promoting EI revenue transparency. Using a tailored, gender-action peer learning methodology (described in section 5, "Gender action learning"), the process fosters the development of joint-advocacy agendas around EI revenue transparency to promote women's rights outcomes. The process also seeks to foster sustainable partnerships between the participating WROs and EITCSOs. Oxfam offices in the DR and Zambia are engaging a total of eight organizations, all of which have demonstrated a clear commitment to strengthening the gender focus of their work. They also overlap relevantly in terms of geographic and thematic focus, and represent a strategic cross-section of local and national constituencies. In the DR, Oxfam is one of the organizations participating in the gender action learning process alongside partner organizations.

In the past, Oxfam's efforts to encourage the sustained participation of WROs in EI revenue transparency and accountability initiatives had been unsuccessful. Previous initiatives, for example in Zambia, to build the capacities of WROs on EI, helped foster initial alliances between EITCSOs and WROs. This in turn helped raise the profile of the gendered impacts of extractives, particularly on women. Yet, despite these distinct opportunities, EITCSOs did not demonstrate interest in sustained engagement with WROs in ways that resulted in longer-term, collaborative engagement on EI revenue transparency advocacy, such as joint project development and fundraising. 'Buy-in' to a strong gender approach or gender agenda by EITCSOs was not automatic, and

a holistic understanding of the specific barriers to women's participation in social accountability mechanisms was absent. Gender trainings or other types of one-off capacity building approaches fell short of supporting EITCSOs in integrating a sustained gender equality component into their work.

For WROs, uptake of an EI revenue transparency agenda also proved challenging, whether because of the technical nature of understanding and analyzing EI revenue data, or because of the seeming irrelevance of the EI revenue transparency agenda to the agendas of WROs. WRO agendas tended to prioritize the social and environmental impacts of oil, gas, and mining operations on their communities, with less focus on promoting good governance of the management and use of EI revenues. WROs may even outright oppose EI projects, seeing mining, oil, and gas projects as purely destructive, where the negatives outweigh any benefits. One of the central aims of the current project is therefore to better connect the concerns of WROs regarding this sector with EITCSOs, and to undertake the challenges of cross-fertilizing the advocacy agendas of WROs and EITCSOs. A full description of project partner organizations can be found in the Tables 1 and 2 below.

## 3. The DR and Zambia as EI social accountability sites

The mining sector expanded considerably in the DR over the last ten years. From 2010–2011, mining represented almost 50% of GDP per capita growth. In 2015, however, growth appeared to slow, as the extractive sector contributed just 1.5% of total GDP (World Bank, 2017: 4). Mining exports are an important source of economic growth in the country, totaling USD 6.5 billion between 2010 and 2016 (World Bank, 2017: 5). In this same period, mining also represented 17.6% of all foreign direct investment flows (World Bank, 2017: 5). In 2016 the DR entered the EITI as a candidate country, and will undergo its first validation process in early 2019.<sup>8</sup>

There have been some efforts by civil society to engage WROs in EI transparency and accountability agendas. For example, in 2016, a coalition of CSOs in the DR, including women's organizations, launched a campaign called *Nos Toca el 5%* (the 5% is ours)<sup>9</sup> to pressure the government to fulfill its legal requirement to transfer 5% of net profits of mining projects to local municipalities surrounding mines.<sup>10</sup> Seeking to boost citizen efforts to demand improved fiscal governance of EI revenues, the campaign succeeded in persuading legislators, particularly the Ministry of Energy and Mines, to support the implementation of the 5% Law. However, the campaign does not appear to have resulted in substantial gains for women's rights in terms of agency in setting campaign targets or having achieved government investment of EI revenues in programs and services that support women's rights.

Zambia is one of the world's top copper producers, the second largest producer in Africa, and the eighth in the world (Zambia EITI, 2015: 32). Its positive economic growth over the past few years is highly attributable to copper earnings (World Bank, 2018: 6). Mining and quarrying is the second largest contributor to Zambia's GDP and contributes substantially to government revenue through mineral royalty taxes and pay as you earn.<sup>11</sup> In 2016 the extractive sector accounted for 12% of Zambia's GDP, and for 70% of total export value (World Bank,

<sup>8</sup> Validation is part of the EITI process, and "serves to assess performance and promote dialogue and learning at the country level, and safeguards the integrity of the EITI by holding implementing countries to the same global standard." Source: EITI, Validation. <https://eiti.org/validation>

<sup>9</sup> *Nos Toca el 5%* has now morphed into a regional-specific campaign called *Cotui Existe!*, focusing its advocacy on the municipality of Cotui.

<sup>10</sup> Environmental Law 64-00 of the Dominican Republic stipulates that 5% of all net benefits paid by extractive companies must be transferred to the local municipalities in which mines are located.

<sup>11</sup> Pay as You Earn is defined by the Zambia Revenue Authority as the method of deducting tax from employees' total earnings in proportion to what they earn.

<sup>7</sup> As the article goes to press, the EITI Standard is undergoing revisions that may require gender-disaggregated employment data. Source: EITI, 2019.

**Table 1**  
DR Gender Action Learning Organizations.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	
NAME	SCOPE
<i>Extractive revenue transparency organizations</i> Observatorio de Políticas Públicas (ODPP)	<b>National</b> Research organization focusing on issues of transparency on extractive and energy issues; one of the main conveners of a network of CSOs working on EI transparency.
Oxfam in Dominican Republic	<b>International NGO</b> Organization working in three main areas: humanitarian action, democracy and citizenship, and women’s rights.
<i>Women’s organizations</i> Confederación Nacional de Mujeres del Campo (CONAMUCA)	<b>National</b> WRO with over 200 grassroots associations. Concentrating primarily on rural women, focusing on land rights, food rights, and natural resource management.
Centro de Formación para Mujeres Organizadas María Liberadora (CEFORMOMALI)	<b>Regional – Sánchez Ramírez Province</b> Women’s organization functioning as an umbrella to over 80 grassroots organizations; focusing mainly on educational and entrepreneurial activities.
Junta de Desarrollo de Los Arroces	<b>Regional – Monseñor Nouel Province</b> A women’s organization involved in community development issues such as violence against women, youth development, and resource management.

**Table 2**  
Zambia Gender Action Learning Organizations.

ZAMBIA	
NAME	MISSION AND SCOPE
<i>Extractive revenue transparency organizations</i> Centre for Trade Policy and Development (CTPD)	<b>National</b> Aims to promote equitable pro-poor trade policies and practices in Zambia through trade reform at national, regional and international levels.
Save Environment and People Agency (SEPA)	<b>Regional - Zambezi</b> Promotes environmental awareness and management among the people, increased access to education in order to improve the standard of living, gender equity and health in rural and poor communities.
<i>Women’s organizations</i> Non-governmental Gender Organizations’ Coordinating Council (NGOCC)	<b>National</b> Umbrella network for CSOs focusing on women’s empowerment and gender equality.
Zambia Alliance of Women (ZAW)	<b>National</b> Empowers women to take charge of their lives through promotion of gender equity and equality, environmental sustainability and social justice so that the right to a healthy life is enjoyed by now and the future generation

2016). Mining accounted for 62% of all foreign direct investment in 2016 (World Bank, 2016). While Zambia has been a member of the EITI since 2009, lack of transparency around EI revenues is still a problem. Despite the high proportion of extractives in its exports, Zambia “still has very low revenue take from copper relative to total public revenues” due to corrupt financial practices and transfer pricing (Simpasa et al., 2013). A number of Zambian CSOs are currently pressuring the government to re-introduce a legal provision for a Mineral Revenue Sharing Mechanism<sup>12</sup> that would transfer mining revenues to local government, which was eliminated when the 2008 Mines and Minerals Development Act was repealed and replaced in 2015. Such a mechanism would help to ensure that mining revenues are available to local municipalities for development and poverty reduction efforts.

**4. Barriers to women’s participation: Lessons from the DR and Zambia**

The research identifies five main factors inhibiting women’s participation in SAIs on EI revenue transparency: (1) socio-cultural norms; (2) lack of ownership of land and resources; (3) gender insensitive consultation processes; (4) inaccessibility of information; and (5) lack of women’s awareness of their rights. These five barriers are not mutually exclusive and in fact interrelate; for example, socio-cultural

norms underpin women’s poor access to education in many communities around the globe, which obstructs their ability to access and understand information.

First, socio-cultural norms play a powerful role in preventing women from engaging in EI issues. In Zambia, women from Solwezi tend to view any mining-related matter as a “man’s issue” (Billima-Mulenga and Cheelo, 2019). They describe rarely seeking employment for themselves in the mining industry, but rather see the opportunity as exclusive to their sons and husbands. In the DR, women report challenges in taking time away from childcare and other unpaid care work to attend meetings of the national coordinating body of CSO representatives on the EITI MSG, saying, “Women are assigned more duties than rights. Women have the right to be here, but we always have things to do that prevent us from attending.”<sup>13</sup> Challenges to WRO members’ participation in these types of forums significantly impact the ability of WROs to influence EI revenue management and investment priorities. Participation in EITI MSGs, for example, could afford WROs important opportunities to build much-needed political and technical credibility with key actors. Engagement in the EITI MSG can support WRO efforts to influence how EI revenues are spent by facilitating knowledge of, and access to, the political actors, institutions, and processes that govern the revenues. Social accountability approaches can inadvertently reinforce gender inequality if they do not take into account how gendered power relations marginalize women’s agency, if they fear ‘disrupting’ traditional gender norms, or assume that men will

<sup>12</sup> Mineral Revenue Sharing Mechanisms is a means by which a government redistributes EI revenue, typically involving transfers of revenues from the central government to local governments.

<sup>13</sup> Personal communication.



represent women's interests.

Second, the research demonstrates that women can be excluded from EI decision-making and consultation processes because of women's lack of land ownership and control of resources. In areas where men typically hold land title, "women's right to participate in [EI] decision-making processes becomes more limited" (Keenan and Kemp, 2014: 8). This is often because EI negotiations commonly revolve around access to land and compensation. Promoting women's control of resources so they can influence decision-making is paramount if women are to benefit from the EI sector (Kachika, 2014: 30). Access to resources is likewise a critical factor inhibiting the participation of women in SAIs on EI revenue transparency. In both the DR and in Zambia, women in rural areas impacted by mining are often unable to pay travel costs to attend important consultations about EI revenue management held in urban centers. Structural gender inequality preventing women from owning and controlling resources, such as land and money, results in the exclusion of women from SAI on EI revenue transparency.

Third, women's participation can be constrained because consultation processes conducted by EI companies and governments are not always gender-sensitive – that is, consultation processes are not specifically designed to be inclusive and support women's participation. Many of the aforementioned challenges could be averted by simply redesigning the time, location, and accessibility of meetings and consultations, such as making provisions for childcare. In some cases, governments and EI companies enter into negotiations singularly with men. As a result, women's concerns and interests may not be adequately considered, and women may have little influence over decision-making about benefit sharing and the use of EI revenues, and in negotiations around compensation and employment. All of this can result in exacerbating the disproportionate negative impacts of mining, oil, and gas projects on women's rights.

Actors involved in SAIs on EI revenue transparency may also fail to specifically target women's participation. Initiatives may focus on heads of households (most often men), view the community as a homogenous unit, or assume that women are able to freely engage in public arenas (Hill and Newell, 2009: 7). This can reinforce the tendency for EI issues to be considered a 'man's issue,' ignoring the impact, often negative, of EI on women in local communities. While women's participation and inclusion is important and necessary to ensuring that women's interests factor into decision-making around the management and use of EI revenues, research reminds us that participation alone cannot guarantee the prioritization of women's rights agendas (Womankind, n.d.) In the DR, members of a WRO have reported that they did not feel comfortable voicing opinions in meetings of the local council responsible for deciding which development projects will be funded by mining revenue, since decisions about mining revenue spending seemed predetermined by council elites.<sup>14</sup> Having WROs in the room does not mean they feel empowered to effect change, nor are the spaces conducive for their meaningful participation. Advancing women's rights cannot be the sole onus of women and WROs. It must be a collective endeavor that hinges on an understanding that gender equality benefits everyone.

Fourth, EI information is often inaccessible to women. Structural barriers – such as language, literacy, and access (e.g. online or in public arenas less accessible to women) – are inhibiting factors. Zambian women in Solwezi have confirmed the difficulties of accessing mining revenue information. Such information is often available only in English (a language many women did not speak or read), or is only accessible via the internet, which they cannot access (Billima-Mulenga and Cheelo, 2019). Prior to this project, several of the participating WROs had not heard about the 5% law in the DR, or the proposed revenue sharing mechanism in Zambia – both of which are potential

ways to ensure the channeling of much-needed funds to communities impacted by mining.

Lastly, in both the DR and Zambia, women living in mining-affected communities demonstrate little knowledge of their rights in relation to EI revenue transparency and accountability. A member of a Dominican WRO states: "I think that we need to stay involved and keep working with women, raising women's awareness, and demonstrating to the government that we are part of the people too; we are part of the group that should be making the decisions [about how to manage and use EI revenues]; we need to participate."<sup>15</sup> Accessing and understanding information, as well as acknowledging one's own rights, is itself a source of power, and is one of the cornerstones of transparency and accountability (Neuman, 2016).

At distinct moments in the project, the ongoing research findings have been shared with participating organizations in both countries. This validation exercise is both to gather feedback from the participants on the findings – as many of them have been interviewed by the researchers – and for project participants to reflect on what the findings mean for the program activities. The findings around women's lack of rights in the EI sector, for example, have been confirmed by many of the participants. One member of a Dominican EITCSO noted "It's [women's] right to participation. Although women do not participate as much as men in the EI, if we put on the lens of gender perspective we could understand that some women suffer domestic violence, have health difficulties, or have to assume the allocation of care – and all of this inhibits their participation [in EI consultation processes]."<sup>16</sup> A Zambian WRO also connected the research findings to the need to be explicit about women's rights in EI, noting need for "women standing up to be considered as equals to men in what are perceived to be men-dominated industries."<sup>17</sup> In addition to the validation process, the published research will be socialized with a range of government, civil society, and other stakeholders in both the DR and Zambia, as well as with communities in mining-impacted areas. The goal will be to share the findings in simple and highly visual forms, in order to ensure its accessibility by women and others with potential access challenges.

While the broader literature on gender and EI to-date has largely focused on describing the gendered impacts of EI, this research is connecting a women's rights approach to studies of social accountability and EI revenue transparency. The research's novel women's rights approach takes the next step by focusing specifically on women's meaningful participation and agency in social accountability around EI revenue transparency. It identifies barriers to women's agency, seeks to illuminate opportunities for women to effect change, and asks what needs to happen in order for women to contribute to agenda-setting, exert influence, represent women's interest, and make decisions related to EI revenue transparency and social accountability that can respond to negative impacts of EI (UN Women, 2018). The research findings bring a much needed women's rights focus, supported with feminist principles, to the current body of research on EI revenue transparency and accountability efforts.

## 5. Gender action learning

To foster collaboration and joint-agenda setting between WROs and EITCSOs, the project uses a Gender Action Learning (GAL) process, developed by Gender at Work.<sup>18</sup> GAL is a means to interrogate gendered power and privilege.<sup>19</sup> It is primarily rooted in an action-

<sup>15</sup> Personal communication.

<sup>16</sup> Personal communication.

<sup>17</sup> Personal communication.

<sup>18</sup> Gender at Work offers consulting services to "strengthen contributions to gender equality and advance feminist leadership." Source: <https://genderatwork.org/our-work/>

<sup>19</sup> A GAL process typically involves about four organizations, with about four

<sup>14</sup> Personal communication.

learning/peer-learning process through which participating organizations implement “change projects” that focus on changes they would like to make in their organizations and programs to make them more gender equitable. Through a process of continuous reflection underpinned by feminist principles, participants strengthen their understanding of gender power relations, making conscious their biases, assumptions, and beliefs, and learning about what it takes to create new cultural norms around gender. To do this, the process focuses on creating safe spaces for collective learning and experimentation. The only criterion for GAL change projects is that they must somehow focus on achieving greater gender equality. Otherwise, change projects can entail a wide range of activities, from creating an internal gender policy, to enacting hiring protocols that promote greater diversity or integrating a gender goal into an externally-focused program.

GAL processes are premised on emergent learning through self-exploration and discovery, rather than a ‘capacity building’ approach. This responds well to the challenges that one-off gender training approaches often face in terms of achieving the sustained integration of a gender component into an organization’s work. Additionally, in order to foster cross-fertilization between the agendas of WROs and EITCSOs, the project innovates on the typical GAL process in two ways: First, by deliberately bringing together WROs and EITCSOs in the GAL processes in each country; and second, by layering knowledge and training opportunities into the GAL process so that WROs can learn about the processes, institutions, and laws that govern EI revenues and what transparency means in relation to these. The project also integrates an explicit skill-building component to support leadership development. In this way, the project is introducing WROs to the EI revenue transparency and accountability agenda, and demonstrating the relevance of this agenda to their own agendas around women’s rights and gender equality, as well as exposing the gender dynamics of EI revenue transparency to EITCSOs.

## 6. Ensuring women follow the money: Preliminary results

*“The [Zambian] government should prioritize women’s participation in the extractive industries...Host communities and women at the local level are disadvantaged in that there are no mineral revenue sharing mechanisms in place... We, Zambia Alliance of Women, call on government to develop policy measures that are gender-inclusive and responsive.”*

Zambia Alliance of Women, public radio announcement, December 2018

This public declaration and call for government action by one of the WROs participating in the project is testament to an important result to-date: the organizations in both countries are adopting EI advocacy agendas that distinctly focus on women’s rights. In Zambia, the Centre for Trade Policy and Development (CTPD) has, for the first time, elaborated a position on gender and extractives, issuing a press statement supporting women in mining. A component of CTPD’s gender change project is to promote a gender focus in the Zambian Mineral Resource Sharing Mechanism legislation that clearly stipulates women in communities benefit from EI revenues. Likewise, the organization Save Environment and Peoples Agency launched an initiative to promote the land rights of women in mining-affected areas. In the DR, two of the participating WROs<sup>20</sup> are determined to secure the transfer of the 5%

(footnote continued)

people each. Each organization forms a “change team” that implements a project focused on strengthening the gender equality focus of their work. The process involves four workshops occurring over a period of 18–24 months. During the first workshop organizations reflect on their own organizational history, culture, programs, and gender focus. This is followed by three peer learning workshops where organizations gather to reflect on and share what they are learning from their change projects. Between workshops organizations are mentored by GAL facilitators to support the change projects. Source: <https://genderatwork.org/gender-action-learning/>

net profits of mining projects legally owed to local municipalities surrounding mines. Both are vying to have greater voice in decision-making over EI revenue spending and in EI transparency initiatives, by leveraging and securing seats on local mining fund councils and on the national EITI’s MSG.

Where there was formerly little interest in ‘follow the money’ efforts by WROs, and minimal integration of a women’s rights focus into the agendas of EITCSOs, the project is supporting transformational change<sup>21</sup> around gender norms and power relations at the individual and institutional levels, changing both the *what* and the *how* of their work. It is also enabling joint-advocacy and collaboration between the organizations around common, gender-focused agendas, planting seeds for sustainable partnership and engagement.<sup>22</sup> Co-created common agendas around gender equality and women’s rights signal new prospects for promoting more gender-responsive EI revenue transparency governance channels.

Promising results in joint agenda-setting, however, are hampered when considering that GAL processes are resource intensive and relatively slow processes. Fostering transformational change requires longer term commitment to accompaniment and support to GAL partners. There is also no guarantee with this approach that cross-fertilization will occur. In the DR, for example, one of the WROs has not taken up the EI revenue transparency agenda to any significant degree, mainly due to lack of support from their community members to focus on EI issues. Likewise, an EITCSO is demonstrating minimal actions in their change project despite having developed a gender-focused agenda on paper. In some instances the women’s rights and EI revenue transparency agendas simply do not meet. Ultimately this intersection relies on the extent to which transformation about gender norms, values, and behaviors occurs on the individual level, and whether this translates into collective, organizational action.

## 7. Conclusion

In a landscape where EI revenue transparency initiatives have been largely silent on gender, this project attempts to forge new territory, building an evidence base around the nexus of gender, social accountability, and EI revenue transparency, and exploring the ways in which SAIs on EI revenue transparency can support women’s rights and gender equality. A women’s rights approach to social accountability – grounded in feminist principles of inclusivity, consciousness-raising, and building cross-sectoral movements between WROs and civil society – can promote positive results for women’s rights in terms of processes (increased women’s participation) and outcomes, where women’s participation drives government resources towards goods and services that advance women’s rights and improve overall development outcomes. The design and implementation of SAIs must address structural barriers to women’s participation. Using gender action approaches present encouraging opportunities for spurring interest from WROs and EITCSOs to define and advance EI revenue transparency agendas that distinctly focus on promoting women’s rights. Ultimately, advancing women’s

<sup>20</sup> The names of these organizations have been deliberately omitted.

<sup>21</sup> For Oxfam, transformational change is fundamental, lasting change that challenges structures, culture, and institutions that preserve inequality and injustice. Gender transformative change is fostered via a feminist approach that seeks to transform unequal gender power relations towards greater equality. Source: (Oxfam 2017).

<sup>22</sup> An example of how WROs are collaborating with EITCSOs is in Zambia, where the project’s partner organizations collectively advocated for the inclusion of gender recommendations in the communique of the Zambia Alternative Mining Indaba. Gender as a focus theme at the 7<sup>th</sup> Zambia Alternative Mining Indaba. As a direct result, a standalone gender section was included in the ZAMI Communiqué, “calling for strong provisions for gender equality in terms of employment opportunities for women in the EI sector” within the Zambia Mineral Resource Development Policy.

rights through EI revenue transparency means increasing government accountability to all of its citizens for the use of EI revenues, and securing increased government investment in programs and services that make tangible improvements in the daily lives of women and communities impacted by EI.

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