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IGF CASE STUDY

Gender-Responsive Mining Policies

Case studies on skills,
employment, and inclusive
governance



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Gender-Responsive Mining Policies: Case studies on skills, employment, and inclusive governance

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Written by Lisl Pullinger, Ege Tekinbas, and Elena Cornaro

Cover photo: Lydia Kinanga Naluwaya, Heavy Machine Operator at the Kamoia mine in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. (Kamoia Copper SA, reprinted with permission)

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AMA	Atacameña Women’s Alliance
B-BBEE	Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment
CBA	Community Benefit Agreement
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
ESD	Enterprise and Supplier Development
IGF	Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development
MPF	Mining Policy Framework
SQM	Sociedad Química y Minera de Chile
STEM	science, technology, engineering, and math
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization



1.0 Introduction, Context, and Observations

Ensuring that the social and economic benefits of mining are focused on and driven by the needs of local communities can be pivotal for transforming the impacts of mining projects into tangible gains for local communities, especially women, who often face disproportionate burdens from mining activities.

Policies that create local socio-economic benefits in and around mining projects must be designed in meaningful consultation with various stakeholders in communities to ensure inclusive decision-making processes. By utilizing participatory policy designs that give agency to women and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups, mining companies and governments can ensure that profits from mining projects are, at a minimum, used to prevent mining projects from exacerbating existing socio-economic inequalities and can also be leveraged to reduce them. This approach recognizes that women's economic empowerment depends on both the size of the overall pool of economic opportunities (i.e., local prosperity) and the share of those opportunities that go to women (i.e., gender equality).

Reducing social inequalities is important in and of itself. In addition, companies that ensure that the benefits of their mining projects actively promote gender equality and social inclusion enjoy a stronger social licence to operate, improved community relations, and enhanced operational stability. More importantly, when women are economically empowered, they contribute to local development through increased household income, greater investments in family well-being, and reduced poverty rates. Integrating a gender perspective into employment and procurement chains, skills development programs, community benefit agreements, and local content policies thus enables mining operations to foster inclusive development, incorporate the perspectives of those most impacted by mining into risk mitigation, and deliver broader socio-economic value for all.

Moreover, governments can further amplify women's economic empowerment by promoting in-country mineral processing or mining-linked manufacturing, which evidence suggests can significantly benefit women who secure employment in these industries (Banerjee & Duflo, 2011). Although such facilities may be located in urban areas away from mining communities, targeted policies—such as job quotas for women from mining areas, job fairs



in mining communities, or support for rural-urban migrants—can help ensure that these new opportunities are truly inclusive.

The Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development's (IGF's) Mining Policy Framework (MPF) lays out the practices required for good environmental, social, and economic governance of the mining sector and the generation and equitable sharing of benefits to contribute to sustainable development. The IGF outlines six policy areas throughout the mining life cycle to ensure international good practice, including (i) laws, policies, and institutions; (ii) financial benefits; (iii) socio-economic benefits; (iv) environmental management; (v) post-mining transition; and (vi) artisanal and small-scale mining.

These case studies provide examples of strategies that companies have used that align with Pillar III (socio-economic benefits) of the MPF to support gender equality and social inclusion. Each of these is accompanied by an analysis of the relevant regulatory framework enabling good mining practice, as well as key lessons learned. This publication is designed to be used by policy-makers, governments, legislators, and mining companies alike when working on or evaluating mine policies for socio-economic benefits to promote gender equality and social inclusion.

1.1 Context

Historically, the impact of the extractive industry on local communities¹ living in remote areas has been profound, bringing both development opportunities and disruption to livelihoods and traditional ways of living (African Commission Working Group on Indigenous Populations, 2017; Odergaard & Andia, 2019).

When land is lost to mining, women in many rural communities are most affected as they are traditionally responsible for growing subsistence crops, collecting firewood and water, and ensuring the food security of their families (Oxfam, 2019). In contrast to their increased burden from the loss of land-based livelihoods, women may not benefit from the financial gains of resettlement or compensation for land degradation because they lack land tenure in many rural contexts (Oxfam & International Institute of Sustainable Development, 2017). These changes can be even more damaging for women facing additional difficulties as a result of caring responsibilities, education, disability and/or age, or Indigeneity, among other factors.

When it comes to sharing the employment benefits of the sector, the IGF's (2023b) research paper, *Women and the Mine of the Future: Global Report*, shows that women are under-represented in the mining workforce, particularly in technical and higher-paying roles. For instance, across 12 countries surveyed by the IGF, women make up only 9% to 19% of mining jobs, indicating the significant barriers they face in entering and advancing in the sector (Ramdoo et al., 2023). Despite this setback, mining activities are often accompanied by other indirect job and procurement opportunities, as well as shared infrastructure benefits that could support the economic activity of women in mining host communities. A large-scale study by Kotsadam and Tolonen in 2016 indicates that the establishment of a mine

¹ For the purposes of this case study the terms “local communities” and “Indigenous Peoples” are used interchangeably. This choice reflects the varying legal recognition of the term “Indigenous Peoples” across the different countries represented in the case studies. While acknowledging that “local communities” might encompass a broader group, including non-Indigenous populations, this approach aligns with the diverse legal and cultural contexts of the regions represented in these case studies.



could trigger local economic shifts whereby women shift from agricultural self-employment (25% decrease) to the service sector (50% increase), where they serve mining and related industries through micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises. Women in these mining communities are 16% more likely to earn cash than before (Kotsadam & Tolonen, 2016), which might support inclusive local economic development.

Gender-responsive policies ensure that women in mining communities benefit from the sector's socio-economic opportunities (Small & van der Meulen Rodgers, 2023). As outlined in Pillar III of the IGF's MPF, such policies focus on economic benefits (e.g., local employment, procurement, and skills training) and social benefits (e.g., inclusive community development activities and health needs assessments). These approaches direct mining gains toward women, Indigenous Peoples, and disadvantaged groups.

1.2 Overview of Case Studies

Kamoa Copper SA in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)** has implemented a multi-layered approach to promote gender-inclusive employment by building a skilled local workforce. This approach includes constructing educational infrastructure, targeted support for girls' education, and a Cadetship Program for skills development with ring-fenced entry-level jobs for local community members. As of 2023, 50% of the 228 local community members who have secured permanent positions through this program were women, and over 50% of its secondary school bursaries in 2023 went to girls. This case study demonstrates that a multi-layered, long-term, community-focused approach is essential for sustainable socio-economic development in mining host communities.

Ivanplats in **South Africa** fosters partnerships between national contractors and local entrepreneurs in Limpopo, South Africa. This has created partnerships and permanent jobs, two thirds of which are held by women with direct ownership in the business, and supported 108 women-owned suppliers with significant financial investments. The approach aligns with South Africa's intersectional legislative framework for economic empowerment, which places a particular focus on Black Women's Economic Empowerment. This case study demonstrates the necessity of including under-served women in local procurement and local partnerships to achieve gender and racial equality.

At the Tasiast mine in **Mauritania**, the Tasiast Women's Cooperative, established by Kinross Gold Corporation, is an example of how mining companies can contribute to the socio-economic development of host communities through supporting women's cooperatives. The cooperative has trained a significant proportion of local women in sewing. Initially, the women focused on fulfilling orders for the mine, but they have since expanded to serve other markets, contributing to the community's long-term economic resilience beyond the life of the mine.

In **Chile**, the Atacameña Women's Alliance (AMA) collaborates with Sociedad Química y Minera de Chile (SQM) to tackle issues such as limited access to health care (with health care campaigns that have benefited 3,160 people), financial support for 1,748 women, and employment support programs for Atacameña women. Key to this case study is AMA's inclusive governance model, which promotes women's participation in decision making, ensuring that interventions align with community needs.



1.3 Observations and Recommendations

Governments and companies should invest in local socio-economic development, with governments establishing and enforcing regulations to ensure equitable and inclusive benefit sharing (Yousefian et al., 2023). By using the profits from mining activities to fund direct local socio-economic initiatives, mineral wealth can be transformed into long-term value that reaches beyond national fiscal revenue and can stimulate economic growth in the regions and communities where mining operations are located. Beyond economic growth, mining policies and programs can address gaps in public services, improve quality of life, and strengthen community infrastructure through investments in roads, schools, health care, and utilities. These efforts enhance resilience and human capital development and reduce disparities, fostering stability for long-term growth (Calderón & Servén, 2014).

Complementary strategies, such as community development programs, benefit-sharing agreements, impact investments, and gender-responsive local content policies, serve as a focused tool to ensure that the economic gains from mining are specifically directed toward women and other marginalized populations. Local content policies are an emerging strategy to ensure economic benefits for communities. The term “local” may refer to host communities near mining operations or a broader national scope, while “content” covers economic benefits beyond resource revenues. These types of content include direct employment, local procurement, downstream value addition, infrastructure, and national ownership (Cosbey & Ramdoo, 2018). Since interpretations vary, local content policies are highly context-specific, with no universal approach. In 2018, the IGF released a *Guidance for Governments*, offering tools for designing and implementing these policies.

While the projects in this publication provide some examples of how companies can support local communities through their mining projects and how governments could deploy incentives or requirements for them to do so, applying the lessons learned to other contexts should always go hand-in-hand with a thorough appreciation of the social and environmental risks of mining projects, including their disproportionate impacts on diverse women in the community.

Crucially, prevention of social and environmental harms is always better than any reparations can provide—and gender-equality projects should never be used to justify damages to the environment and community in question. Rather, integrating a gender- and community-oriented perspective from the very outset of a mining project should be seen as a necessary way to ensure respect for women’s human rights and minimize social and environmental harms as much as possible while redistributing economic gains from the project in a way that benefits all.



2.0 Case Study 1: Direct employment and skills development of local women in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Kamo Copper SA (Kamo) is an expanding copper mine in the Lualaba Province of the DRC and a subsidiary of Ivanhoe Mines and Zijin Mining, each holding 39.6% of the company's shares.² The remaining shares are divided between the DRC government (20%) and Crystal River Global Ltd (0.8%). Kamo began producing copper in 2021 after over 20 years of exploration and construction and has since undergone multiple phases of expansion. It has a workforce of approximately 5,800 direct employees (with over 12,000 indirectly working for contractors) and is situated close to the mining town of Kolwezi on the African Copperbelt.

Thirty-five villages in close proximity to Kamo are directly affected by the mine and are beneficiaries of its social development programs. In 2023, Kamo contributed approximately 6% to the GDP of the DRC, making the mine a significant player in the country's economy.

The DRC's regulatory framework makes provisions for the economic empowerment of local communities through various requirements. The 2018 Mining Code of the DRC introduced significant provisions related to community development and local content. It aimed to ensure that mining activities benefit host communities and contribute to the broader socio-economic development of the country. These provisions include:

- **Community development obligations:** Article 285 of the 2018 Mining Code mandates mining companies to establish community development plans (also called "Cahiers de Charge") in collaboration with local communities. These plans must address infrastructure, education, health care, and other social needs of the mining-affected areas.
- **Social investment fund:** Article 258 requires mining companies to allocate 0.3% of their turnover to local community development projects. This fund is intended to support the construction of social infrastructure and other community development initiatives and is managed by local government structures.

² In addition to sources cited, this case study is based on interviews with Antonio Kanduri, Senior Superintendent I, Technical Training, and Clain Maseka, Senior Superintendent I, Sustainability at Kamo Copper SA.



- **Local employment requirements:** Articles 109 and 110 of the Mining Code stipulate that mining companies must prioritize the employment of Congolese nationals. Specifically, within 5 years of starting a project, at least 10% of management positions must be held by Congolese nationals, increasing to 25% after 10 years. Lower-level positions must be filled predominantly by Congolese employees. No specific quotas for women exist as part of these requirements.
- **Local procurement requirements:** Article 261 requires mining companies to source goods and services from Congolese suppliers where possible. Companies are encouraged to invest in capacity building for local businesses to help integrate them into the mining supply chain.
- **Equity stake for the state:** The 2018 Mining Code also stipulates in Article 71 that the DRC state must hold a 10% equity stake in all mining projects, ensuring that the country benefits directly from mining revenues.

Kamoa's skills development program exemplifies a multi-layered approach to fostering gender inclusion and empowering local communities in the DRC. The company's commitment to building a pipeline of skilled workers, particularly women, is reflected in initiatives such as the Mining Career Preparation Program and the Cadetship Program, which provide tailored training opportunities for host community members. These programs, along with investments in early education and infrastructure, aim to address barriers to women's participation in the workforce and promote sustainable socio-economic development.

The need for such initiatives is underscored by stark gender disparities in the DRC. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), only 51.4% of girls complete lower secondary school compared to 63.5% of boys, with period poverty, teenage pregnancy, and cultural stereotypes contributing to this gap (Cameron et al., 2023; UNESCO, 2024). Furthermore, enrolment rates in secondary education stand at just 44% for girls versus 70% for boys. To address these challenges, Kamoa allocated 51% of its 2023 secondary school bursaries to girls, highlighting its focus on empowering women through education.

The importance of mining skills development in the DRC is heightened by the country's economic reliance on its mineral wealth and the associated need for a skilled labour force that can support sustainable development. Focusing on creating a skilled female workforce and incorporating women into focused training and recruitment programs is critical to ensuring that the mining industry can play a pivotal role in promoting gender equality and enhancing the socio-economic status of women in their communities, thus promoting gender equality in traditionally male-dominated industries.

Secondary school graduates in Kamoa's host communities can apply to pursue different entry-level career paths at Kamoa. These options include the following:

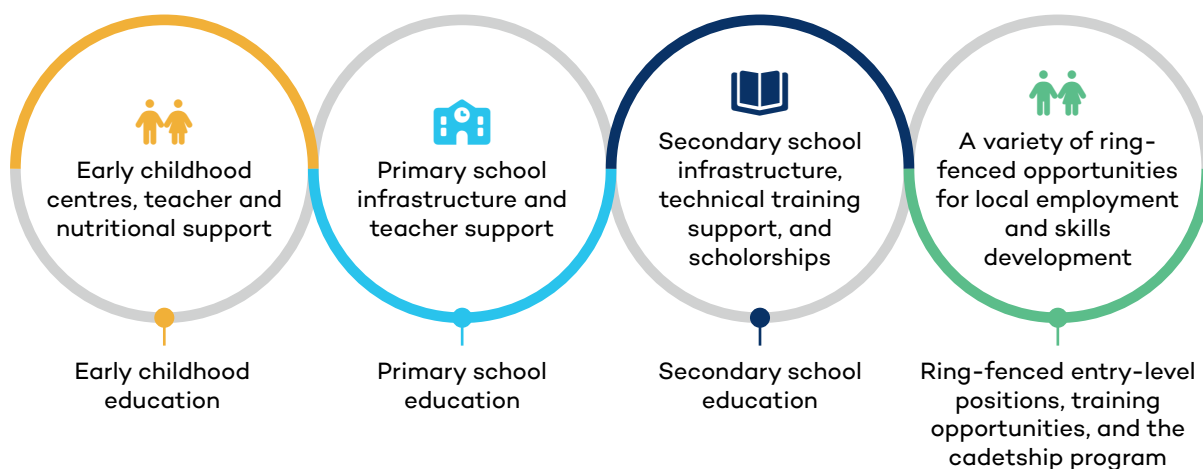
- **Cadetship Program:** Open to all host community members, not just graduates, this program trains approximately 30 candidates each year. Trainees gain hands-on experience in roles like instrumentation attendants and machinery operators at a facility equipped with high-tech simulators and mock mine environments. They are trained in roles like sampling, milling and flotation, agri-truck operators, and telehandlers. Since the program started in 2019, the Cadetship Program has placed 228 local community members in permanent employment positions in the company, of which over 50% are women.



- **Mining Career Preparation Program:** Conducted at the Kamoia Centre of Excellence, this 1-year course prepares 40 students annually for international studies in a mining-related career. The Kamoia Centre of Excellence program is managed by an independent entity. Kamoia supports this by ensuring that competent candidates are sought from community schools. In terms of challenges for ensuring women's participation, the biggest hurdle is that a student must pass with over 60% to join the program. Due to socio-economic disparities, not many female students achieve that grade, which means that, currently, only 20% of the participants are female students. That being said, of the high-performing candidates of the program that were awarded bursaries for international studies, in 2024, eight of the 10 bursary recipients were women.
- **Entry-level positions:** Kamoia reserves general worker roles for local community members and encourages contractors to do the same. Over the last 5 years, approximately 1,650 local community members have been hired, 30% of which were women.

Kamoia's workforce strategy has resulted in over 90% local employment, with women comprising a growing proportion of its employees. To ensure that people from local communities can make optimal use of employment opportunities, Kamoia has a long-term tiered approach to local workforce preparation, as indicated in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1. Kamoia's tiered approach to building a local employment pipeline



Source: Kamoia Copper SA (unpublished) (reprinted with permission).

The mining industry in the DRC has long been male dominated, reflecting societal norms that position men as breadwinners and women in domestic roles. This gendered division has significant implications for the development and economic empowerment of women, particularly in mining host communities. Not only does it create barriers to entry for women in general, but it also places women who live in rural settings in the DRC at a distinct disadvantage, as responsibility for agricultural food production falls to women in these areas (Pugliese, 2021). By promoting gender-inclusive training and employment, Kamoia challenges these entrenched norms, enabling women to contribute meaningfully to the workforce.

The Kamoia social development and stakeholder engagement team noticed a subtle cultural shift over the last few years in which women who were employed shared their workplace success with others in their communities and on social media. This trend led to increasing



enquiries from women about employment opportunities at Kamoia. Another factor that led to women and families finding it more acceptable for women in local communities to be employed by the mine is the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) support that Kamoia provides to schools in the communities in which girls reside. This early contact with the principles of engineering and mining in school also contributed to women living in Kamoia's host communities being open to skills development and employment opportunities offered by the mine.

Although many multinational mining companies in the DRC struggle to sustain a female workforce above 10%, Kamoia has exceeded these benchmarks through its comprehensive, gender-focused approach. By building a skilled workforce and addressing systemic barriers, Kamoia sets a precedent for integrating gender equality into sustainable development in the mining sector.



Lydia Kinanga Naluwaya, Heavy Machine Operator for Kamoia, from the local Chinde-Chinde community. (Kamoia Copper SA, reprinted with permission)

BOX 1. LESSONS LEARNED

1. Beyond traditional recruitment avenues, local women's economic empowerment should be prioritized through building a long-term pipeline of local skills through various educational interventions focused on girls at the primary and secondary school levels. Skills development can be supported by mining companies and educational institutions through collaboration on curricula to provide workers with the skills needed in the industry.
2. A long-term view of education in mining host communities can provide quality local candidates to take up opportunities for local skills development.
3. Governments could assist by setting specific targets for women's skills development and employment for mining companies to reach, per employment level. This could take the form of local content policies.
4. The implementation of gender-inclusive training and recruitment policies can be fraught with challenges, including resistance from local cultures that may perceive such initiatives as imposing foreign values. Therefore, effective skills development programs must be sensitive to local cultural dynamics by providing support to women who might face discrimination in their communities and facilitating awareness programs of the value that women can add to their community as mining employees. Connecting new with existing cultural beliefs may increase acceptance.



BOX 2. IGF'S MPF GUIDANCE: RELEVANCE TO CASE STUDY 1

IGF's MPF Guidance stipulates:

- MPF 3.2.2.c: Governments should require that mining entities increase the participation of women and Indigenous peoples in the mining workforce at all levels of occupations and with all levels of skills
- MPF 3.2.2.d: Governments should require mining entities to develop and implement training and skills development programs for workers, thereby ensuring the transfer of skills and knowledge to local workers

How these policies contribute to gender equality and socio-economic benefits:

Strategies to increase the direct employment of local women in mining projects, when coupled with multi-layered skills development programs to address skills gaps, can have transformative benefits for the mining community as a whole. Empowering local women economically not only fosters growth in mining areas but also improves children's education and well-being, as women often prioritize family needs like nutrition and school enrolment and engage in long-term financial planning when equipped with financial literacy (Klesment & Van Bavel, 2022). While women generally have higher levels of formal education, they often lack the STEM skills needed for stable, well-paid mining roles (IGF, 2023). Targeted training in remote mining areas equips women with essential skills, enabling career growth in mining or its supply chain and breaking traditional gender roles tied to lower-paying positions (Holcombe & Kemp, 2018).

Further guidance:

- IGF, *Guidance for Governments: Local Content Policies* (2018)
- African Union, *Africa Mining Vision* (2009)
- International Labour Organization, *Human Resources Development Recommendation No. 195* (2004).



3.0 Case Study 2: Local partnerships for intersectional and gender-responsive procurement in South Africa

Ivanplats is developing a large palladium-rhodium-nickel-platinum-copper-gold mine in the Limpopo Province of South Africa.³ The mine is projected to be one of the world's largest and lowest-cost platinum group metals producers, with an estimated life of over 100 years. The mine is set to go into production in 2025 after almost 2 decades of exploration and development efforts and is 64% owned by Ivanplats, with a 10% share held by a Japanese consortium. The remaining 26% is held by Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE)⁴ partners, which include the semi-rural 20 host communities in Ivanplats' footprint, as mandated by South African legislation.

South Africa employs an intersectional approach to its enterprise and supplier development (ESD) legislative frameworks, which aim to promote the economic empowerment of women and Black⁵ people, with particular provisions for Black women. This approach is intersectional in that it acknowledges the distinct structural barriers Black women face to economic empowerment in South Africa today, with targeted remedies to remove those barriers.

The following provisions are all relevant to projects in mining host communities and include the following:

- **The Mining Charter** (Broad-based Socio-Economic Empowerment Charter for the Mining and Minerals Industry) is a transformation tool that aims to promote equitable

³ In addition to sources cited, this case study is based on interviews with Poobie Pillay, Head of Transformation at Ivanplats.

⁴ The Ivanplats B-BBEE agreement was reached under the auspices of the Mining Charter (II) (2010), which stipulates that historically disadvantaged South Africans should have 26% ownership in mining projects in South Africa.

⁵ In this context, "Black" is used as a synonym for Historically Disadvantaged Individual, which is defined by South African law as South African citizens who, due to the apartheid policy that had been in place, had no franchise in national elections prior to the introduction of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa; and/or who is a female; and/or who has a disability, provided that a person who obtained South African citizenship on or after the coming to effect of the Interim Constitution is not deemed to be a Historically Disadvantaged Individual (Republic of South Africa, 2001).



access to the country’s mineral resources. It requires companies to achieve quotas in various areas, such as ownership, procurement, enterprise development, and local procurement. The Mining Charter sets quotas intended to promote transformation, equity, and inclusion, ensuring the participation of historically disadvantaged South Africans, particularly Black people and women. The gender and race quotas required by the Mining Charter III (2018) are depicted in Table 1.

- **The Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment Act** is designed to redress the inequalities of apartheid by promoting economic participation and empowerment of Black people, including women, in the South African economy. The B-BBEE Codes of good practice require mining companies to contribute to ESD and report on their activities (among others) in a B-BBEE scorecard. The ESD element of the scorecard measures a company’s contribution to the development of Black-owned enterprises, particularly those owned by women.
- **The Minerals and Petroleum Resources Development Act** governs the rights to minerals and petroleum resources in South Africa, with a focus on ensuring that these resources benefit the broader population. It includes a requirement for a social and labour plan that encompasses ESD activities targeted at women in mining host communities.
- **The Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act** aims to advance the development of Black-owned and women-owned businesses through preferential procurement policies. Though this act applies broadly across all sectors, mining companies are expected to align their procurement practices with its principles.

TABLE 1. Quotas required by the Mining Charter III (2018)

Ownership	<p>A minimum of 30% Black ownership, distributed as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5% for employee share ownership schemes • 5% for community trusts • the remainder is allocated to Black entrepreneurs, which can include women and youth
Employment Equity (Workforce Representation)	<p>Top management (board level): 50% must be Black people, with at least half of those being Black women</p> <p>Executive management: 50% of Executives must be Black, with 25% representation of Black women</p> <p>Senior management: 60% must be Black, with at least 30% being Black women</p> <p>Middle management: 75% must be Black, with at least 38% being Black women</p> <p>Junior management: 88% must be Black, with at least 44% being Black women</p>
Skills Development	<p>Companies are required to spend 5% of their total annual payroll on skills development, with a focus on Black people and women. Specific targets include allocating 35% of the skills development expenditure to Black women.</p>



<p>Procurement and Enterprise Development</p>	<p>70% of mining goods procurement must be sourced from Black-owned companies, of which a portion must be from Black women-owned businesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 44% from Black-owned and controlled companies • 14% from Black women-owned and controlled companies <p>80% of services procurement must be sourced from Black-owned companies, including 12% from Black women-owned companies.</p>
<p>Human Resource Development</p>	<p>The Mining Charter emphasizes the promotion of diversity and inclusion through skills development, aiming to uplift Black women and youth in particular.</p>
<p>Mine Community Development</p>	<p>Mining companies must develop community development programs that are aligned with local needs, with a strong emphasis on benefiting Black women in mining host communities.</p>

Source: Ministry of Mineral Resources, 2018.

Built upon the foundation of this legislative framework, the current status of ESD programs in the South African mining industry highlights both successes and challenges (Mashego, 2023). Training, mentorship, and increasingly inclusive procurement and supply chain policies are noted as some of the successes, while a noticeable gap exists between local procurement policies and practical implementation, securing access to markets and developing programs with long-term sustainable impacts (Mashego, 2023).

To address some of the challenges in ESD implementation in South Africa, Ivanplats has taken an active role in facilitating robust partnerships between suppliers in the mine’s supply chain and local, qualifying entrepreneurs and/or individuals who possess the required skills. Ivanplats also continues to deliver training and mentoring initiatives (Ivanhoe Mines, 2023). Direct partnership facilitation with local entrepreneurs is important due to the lack of experienced local suppliers from its semi-rural host communities and the frequent presence of opportunistic intermediaries who profit from “fronting” local businesses. In the South African context, particularly regarding B-BBEE compliance, fronting refers to practices where businesses misrepresent facts or engage in cover-ups to appear compliant with the B-BBEE Act (Department for Trade, Industry and Competition, n.d.). For instance, businesses may list Black people as beneficiaries to obtain B-BBEE status while underpaying their Black employees. Where fronting takes place, many of the economic benefits from supplying mining companies, its contractors, and suppliers rarely stay within the town and region. To address this challenge, among others, the program aspires to “transform the local economy” through fostering long-term investment in partnership-grown businesses with majority local ownership.

To do this in practice, the team created a criteria list to evaluate potential partnerships (see Table 2).



TABLE 2. Criteria for developing local partnerships

<p>Does the proposed partnership include the following?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Creating opportunities for local businesses to partner with national players to set up local capabilities. 2. Investing in skills transfer from large, national suppliers. 3. Investing in local infrastructure and/or creating a platform for the local entrepreneur to acquire assets. 4. Making use of a transparent, structured selection process aimed at attracting and retaining local candidates with high potential. 5. Setting entry requirements for local candidates at an attainable level to avoid unnecessary barriers to entry into the program. 6. Possibility to provide goods or services on an ongoing basis to the mine AND other potential clients in the region.
<p>Does the proposed partnership discourage the following?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Partnerships set up on the basis of short-term contracts. 2. The use of non-value-adding intermediaries in setting up partnerships. 3. The flow of the majority of the proceeds out of the local area. 4. The use of restrictive commercial contracts that disadvantage small and medium-sized enterprises. 5. A selection of local partners on behalf of national companies looking to invest in the area.

Source: Ivanplats (unpublished).

Once a potential partnership is identified in Ivanplats’ supply chain, the team undertakes an intensive negotiation and planning phase with the national partner.⁶ Contractual decisions include the ownership structure of the business, technical and health and safety requirements, diversification of the client base, and training requirements, among others. Upon concluding these negotiations, the recruitment of the local partner is initiated through a structured process led by the national partner. Ivanplats supports this process by promoting the request for expression of interest in its community

⁶ In this context, a national partner refers to a large company with a national footprint in South Africa who may or may not have local representation in the company’s host communities.



Thandi Kutumela, the beneficiary of the Fuchs Partnership agreement. (Ivanplats, reprinted with permission)



communication channels and ensuring the effective participation of women, youth, and people with disabilities.

While the program is not exclusively focused on women and technical and competency-based qualifying criteria are set for each contract, the program has seen a significant uptake of women participants. This is mandated by the South African regulatory framework and is achieved through active recruitment of women to apply for participation in the program. High-potential women applicants are given priority and training to enable them to participate meaningfully in the bidding process. Through 11 partnerships established over the last 1.5 years, 24 direct, permanent jobs were created, and 18 women held direct shares in the businesses. This indicates that two thirds of all permanent jobs were occupied by women. The established partnerships include businesses supplying goods such as conveyor belt consumables, general hardware, oil and lubricants, electrical cables, and personal protective equipment. Although we do not have a supply chain analysis to determine if the oil and lubricants are from South Africa's petroleum company (Sasol) or imported from elsewhere, this qualifies as local value addition within the mining context since a local partner is able to source oil and lubricants from national partners at preferential prices and then sell them to the mine and other clients. It also includes businesses providing services such as laundry, recycling, information technology services, and on-site catering kiosks. An example of an established partnership is provided in Box 3.

BOX 3. EXAMPLE OF A NATIONAL-LOCAL PARTNERSHIP

The Ivanplats Transformation team negotiated a long-term oil and lubricant contract with Fuchs, a global company based in Germany. As part of the agreement process, a local woman, Thandi Kutumela of Candymore Services, was selected to be co-owner of a local distribution opportunity for Fuchs. Fuchs provided a structured development plan for Thandi to ensure that the local entity is operated in line with Fuchs's ethos and quality assurance. The Transformation Team supported an application to the South African National Youth Development Agency, which granted Thandi a financial grant to help set up the new business. In addition, to support start-up costs, Ivanplats helped to negotiate rent-free premises close to the mining operations.

In addition to these initiatives, the transformation team continues to promote procurement from women-owned local entities. Ivanplats currently has 108 active women-owned suppliers registered and spent over USD 24,502,166 on local, women-owned enterprises from January to August 2024.



BOX 4. LESSONS LEARNED

1. Robust legislative frameworks for inclusive local content policies can provide the required structure and incentives to mining companies to strengthen the economic empowerment of women and other historically under-served groups in mining host communities.
2. Adopting an intersectional lens to legislation supports the economic empowerment of a diverse range of women and can help tackle socio-economic divides among different demographic lines beyond the inequalities between men and women.
3. A strong focus on transparent negotiations between national and local entities can ensure local communities benefit while balancing the advantages of outside investment. Governments should strike the right balance between supporting local businesses to grow and ensuring local people receive a fair share of the benefits.
4. Multiple partnership linkages (with national/global companies and local development agencies) beyond the mining operation can lead to more sustainable outcomes and a diversified income base for local women.



Photo: Tasiast and Kinross

4.0 Case Study 3: Skills development and partnerships with cooperative enterprises in Mauritania

Kinross Gold Corporation (Kinross), a Canadian-based mining company, has been operating in Mauritania since acquiring the Tasiast gold mine in 2010. Located in a remote desert region approximately 300 km north of Nouakchott, the Tasiast mine is one of the largest open-pit gold mines in Africa.⁷ Initially developed by Red Back Mining, the mine began production in 2008 and is now an important asset in Kinross's global portfolio. Tasiast currently produces approximately 600,000 ounces of gold per year, following different expansion projects that have increased its production capacity and extended its operational lifespan. It has annual revenues of around USD 1.2 billion (S&P Global Market Intelligence, n.d.).

The relationship between Kinross and the Government of Mauritania has been shaped by several agreements, most notably a 2021 partnership that allowed the government to nominate two observers to the board of Kinross's subsidiary operating Tasiast. While the government does not hold direct shares in the mine, it benefits through an escalating royalty structure tied to gold prices and tax provisions designed to enhance mutual economic gains.

Supplementary to its mining activities, Kinross has implemented several social development programs aimed at benefiting the local communities around the Tasiast mine. Among these is the Tasiast Women's Cooperative, an initiative that equips local women with skills and economic opportunities through small-scale enterprise development. The cooperative focuses on sewing and entrepreneurship, addressing the limited job opportunities for women in the mine's host communities and fostering economic independence in a region traditionally dominated by male employment. It also offers alternative and more flexible work arrangements for women who need or want to combine paid work with family caring responsibilities; prefer alternatives to mine-site employment due to cultural, religious, or personal reasons; or lack the technical skills required for traditional mining jobs.

⁷ In addition to sources cited, the information provided in this case study is based on interviews with Mohammed Khattar, Community Relations Officer, Tasiast, and Gabriella Rua, External Relations Project Manager, Kinross.



Mauritania's legal and regulatory mining framework is shaped by its Mining Code, which was first enacted in 1977 and has undergone several amendments, most recently in 2012 and 2014. This legal framework is designed to encourage investment while ensuring that mining projects contribute to local socio-economic development. Key elements of the framework include requirements for environmental and social impact assessments that outline obligations for mining companies to mitigate their impact on local communities, though gender considerations in socio-economic development are not explicitly mentioned (Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources [BGR] & Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit [GIZ], 2018). Mauritania's MPF also includes provisions that encourage the integration of local communities into mining activities through local content policies and community development initiatives.

The country's Mining Code, which is undergoing reform at the time of writing (EITI, 2024) mandates that mining companies prioritize local employment and the procurement of goods and services from local suppliers. This policy aims to increase the economic benefits for communities near mining operations. Additionally, companies are required to contribute to local development through social programs, including the construction of infrastructure, schools, and health care facilities (IGF, 2017). Current legislation does not require any reporting of gender-disaggregated employment data, which has been recommended as a reform by the EITI Standard (EITI, 2024).

The local population in Tasiast's host communities is predominantly composed of nomadic and semi-nomadic pastoralist communities. These communities have traditionally relied on small-scale animal husbandry, particularly livestock herding, for their livelihoods. This region has long faced challenges, including limited access to formal education, high levels of illiteracy, and restricted economic opportunities, especially for women. Nomadic pastoralism, defined under Mauritania's Pastoral Code (Law No. 2000-044), remains a crucial part of the community's economic structure, but mining activities are increasingly offering opportunities for economic participation (IGF, 2017).

There is very limited peer-reviewed research available about mining and community development in Mauritania. Information from a report on *Human Rights Risks in Mining* (BGR & GIZ, 2018) indicates that mining potentially offers significant opportunities but could also pose a risk to social cohesion and a traditional way of life in nomadic and semi-nomadic communities if not developed and implemented in collaboration with local stakeholders.

Women in these communities have been particularly marginalized. Systemic factors such as a literacy rate of 62.2% for women, as opposed to the male literacy rate of 71.8% (World Bank, n.d.), in Mauritania and cultural gender expectations



Oum L'khout Mint Bouceif (right) and a colleague working on garments in the Tasiast cooperative workshop. (Tasiast and Kinross, reprinted with permission)



have contributed to a low level of economic participation. In such communities, women traditionally assume domestic roles and small-scale livestock work, with little opportunity for formal employment. Tasiast's establishment of the Women's Cooperative in 2013 was a direct response to these socio-economic challenges. Through participatory community consultations, women expressed a desire to become more involved in the local economy.

With limited economic and job opportunities available in the region, Tasiast established a prolonged engagement process with women, who identified sewing as a viable economic activity, among others. With this input from the local women, and having tested the viability of various ideas for economic opportunities, Tasiast set up a specially equipped workshop and recruited local sewing trainers who provided trained cooperative members in sewing. This created a path for local women to participate in economic activities and generate income by providing sewing services to the mine and surrounding markets. Initially, the cooperative's work focused on small-scale contracts, such as adjusting uniforms for the mine and creating local products like masks, but the cooperative was gradually able to manage more complex orders from the mine.

Over the years, 40 local women have been trained and set up with the appropriate equipment to participate in the sewing cooperative. Considering the sparsely populated region, this number represents a significant proportion of local households. At first, not all women were keen to participate, as there was resistance to adding a new activity to their traditional way of life. As the early adopters of the program experienced success and women saw an increasing number of women being trained and employed by Tasiast in mining positions, their confidence in the program grew and more became members of the cooperative.

Of the 40 training participants, many of whom still work together to operate the cooperative, a portion of the women face additional vulnerabilities in their lives. Though Tasiast does not keep specific intersectionality data about the women, several women have participated in interviews about the initiative and indicated that they face additional challenges, such as single parenting, divorce, and living with a family member with disabilities. The fact that the initiative incorporates vulnerable women makes it a particularly powerful force for good in Tasiast's host communities.

The cooperative members have received additional training from Tasiast, as the needs of the management of the cooperative have evolved. Training interventions, such as basic numeracy and literacy, the fundamentals of business management, order taking, and setting commercial agreements among the group, have been provided by the Tasiast team. While Tasiast is available for ongoing support, the aim is to grow the cooperative into a self-sustainable business unit.

Initially, the women wanted to work from a workshop close to the mine, but because of a lack of electricity, a wide local market, and schools in the small semi-nomadic community, they chose Nouadhibou (162 km northwest of Tasiast) for their workshop instead, as it is where many of their children go to school. This move meant that the cooperative was able to market to the local population and gain additional clients, such as orders for school uniforms, while still fulfilling the mine's orders. Women are also encouraged to take on individual assignments using the cooperative's equipment. The move to Nouadhibou, additional cooperative clients, and individual assignments are all factors that contribute to the cooperative's diversified client base and help minimize its dependence on Tasiast.



BOX 5. LESSONS LEARNED

1. One of the central takeaways from this case study is that participatory decision making in which local communities are consulted on their priorities leads to context-relevant solutions.
2. Mauritania's focus on local content policies helped to drive this women's economic empowerment initiative by creating an enabling environment for the mine to establish the cooperative and supporting it in growing and managing more complex orders.
3. The success of the cooperative illustrates the value of training and skills development to foster economic independence in women in mining host communities. Training and skills development not only ensure women get their fair share of opportunities but also help expand the total range of economic activities in the region, reinforcing overall local prosperity.
4. Programs that make concrete adjustments to include women who face additional challenges, such as caring responsibilities, cultural preferences, single parenting, and illiteracy, help to address vulnerabilities in communities.
5. Diversifying women's income sources reduces economic dependencies on the mine and helps set up initiatives for self-sustainability beyond the life of mine. In some cases, economic opportunities that are located a significant distance from the mine might be preferable, especially if these locations provide better access to energy, clients, and services for women and their families. In all instances, decisions are context-specific and should be driven by the needs and priorities of local women.
6. Beyond focusing on who benefits from existing opportunities, this approach highlights the importance of expanding the overall pool of economic activities. In other words, women's economic empowerment depends both on increasing the total number of opportunities available and ensuring a fair share of these opportunities for women.



BOX 6. IGF'S MPF GUIDANCE: RELEVANCE TO CASE STUDIES 2 AND 3

IGF's MPF Guidance stipulates:

- MPF 3.1.3: Governments should encourage mining entities to procure goods and services from local communities and regional and national providers, including from historically under-represented groups.

How these policies contribute to gender equality and socio-economic benefits:

Gender-responsive local procurement initiatives can enhance economic opportunities and promote broader gender equality within mining host communities by actively seeking out women entrepreneurs and engaging local women-owned businesses from diverse backgrounds in the direct supply of goods and services to and from mining companies, as well as other mining-related activities, such as mineral processing. The integration of women into local procurement networks helps diversify income sources and strengthens the financial resilience of women and their families, particularly in regions where participation in formal economic activities is traditionally male dominated (Ovadia, 2022).

Programs that facilitate access to finance, training, and market linkages are essential to overcoming the barriers that women often face, such as limited access to capital and discriminatory business practices. Furthermore, fostering a supportive regulatory environment that mandates or incentivizes the inclusion of women-owned/led enterprises in the supply chain is crucial to ensuring that the economic benefits of resource extraction are equitably shared across gender lines (Esteves, 2011).



5.0 Case Study 4: Inclusive community benefit agreements and horizontal linkages in Chile

The Chilean mining industry is structured by key regulatory instruments and frameworks that aim to ensure that mining activities contribute positively to the communities they impact, especially in the Atacameña region, where Indigenous populations reside.⁸ These key regulations and frameworks are not prescriptive as to the type of contributions the Chilean mining industry is required to make; instead, they provide a legal and policy environment in which mining companies are required to co-design programs with host communities. The key regulations guiding social investment include the following:

- **Indigenous Law No. 19,253 (1993)** mandates consultation with Indigenous communities and requires mining companies to contribute to their social and economic development.
- **Environmental Impact Assessment (Law No. 19,300)** ensures that social impacts are assessed, often resulting in mandatory mitigation measures, including social programs.
- **International Labour Organization Convention 169**, which Chile ratified in 2008, emphasizes the right of Indigenous communities to free, prior, and informed consent, prompting mining companies to implement social initiatives.
- **Corporate social responsibility** practices, although not legally mandated, encourage voluntary social development initiatives, including health, education, and infrastructure support.

Chile has the world's largest lithium reserves, and 90% of them are in the very arid Atacameña desert region (Reuters, 2023). Lithium extraction plays a huge role in the energy transition as an essential component of many renewable energy resources, but lithium's extraction methods can be very energy intensive, depleting and contaminating local water resources and causing land degradation (Earth.org, 2023). Each tonne of lithium requires

⁸ In addition to the sources cited, the information for this case study is based on interviews with Maria Valente Ferrán, Program Manager, AMA at SQM.



around 2 million litres of water to be evaporated, which increases the risks of salination of underground water reserves and increases the release of stored carbon as carbon dioxide into the atmosphere (Wetlands International, 2023). Given these risks, it is crucial for mining companies extracting lithium to effectively integrate the concerns of their host communities into mining projects and sustainably reinvest in communities.

Within this context, Sociedad Química y Minera de Chile (SQM) and the women of the Atacameña region (where SQM owns large lithium mining operations) co-established the Atacameña Women's Alliance (AMA), a broad-based community benefit agreement (CBA) exclusively for women. The women in the Atacameña region, especially those identifying as Lickanantay⁹ or Atacameño,¹⁰ face a complex socio-economic landscape influenced by historical, cultural, and economic factors. Elderly women are particularly at risk because public health care is mostly inaccessible to them, particularly specialist services. This is the result of poor health infrastructure in the region, as well as inadequate transport infrastructure and services.

The AMA originated in the post-pandemic period, when women of the region experienced increased barriers to accessing public services, grants, and employment. It has been running since then and was still ongoing at the time of publication. As a result of the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, gender-based violence escalated, and women were increasingly isolated from urban centres where they could access job opportunities, health care, and education. Lickanantay women face unique vulnerabilities due to their ethnicity, as traditional gender roles that are deeply rooted in cultural norms confine these women to domestic responsibilities, limiting their participation in decision-making processes and access to economic opportunities.

As agricultural duties form part of their traditional domestic duties, widespread environmental degradation and water scarcity in the region further limit women's ability to participate in the local economy. These intersecting factors—cultural expectations, economic marginalization, and environmental challenges—render Lickanantay women particularly vulnerable compared to other residents of the region (Pause, 2022).

As part of the AMA program, local women co-create programs with SQM staff members. The AMA Advisory Committee is made up of Lickanantay women who help supervise the program, agree on the areas of intervention, approve the intervention programs, and supervise their compliance. It is co-led by nine women from Atacama and five from SQM.

The AMA program is built on four pillars, which have been identified by women community members themselves as high-priority interventions to challenges specific to the region: (i) health and well-being; (ii) productive development and commerce; (iii) cultural and environmental heritage; and (iv) agriculture, water, and land care. The total budget allocated to the program by SQM amounted to USD 3,240,000 in 2023.

⁹ This term originates from the local Kunza language and translates to “inhabitants of this land.” It specifically refers to the Indigenous Peoples of the Atacama region, emphasizing their deep-rooted connection to the land. The term “Lickanantay” is often preferred by many Indigenous people in the region, as it reflects their cultural and historical identity.

¹⁰ This term is a broader label that can refer to Indigenous women of the Atacama region, including those who identify as Lickanantay. It is sometimes used interchangeably with Lickanantay women but can also encompass other Indigenous groups in the Atacama region. The term “Atacameña” is often used in legal and administrative contexts, particularly since the introduction of the Indigenous Law in 1993, which formalized the recognition of various Indigenous groups in Chile.



For the Health and Well-Being pillar, the program has conducted four medical campaigns to date, addressing the backlog of initial public health care services and providing specialized medical consultations. These interventions benefited 3,160 women through services such as eye exams, hearing aids, mammograms, and various other diagnostics. Additionally, 955 eyeglasses and 80 hearing aids were distributed to women in need.

Under the Productive Development and Commerce pillar, the individual support fund provides direct pathways for individuals to access financial support. During 2023, direct financial support was provided to 1,748 qualifying women to promote their autonomy and personal development. The average fund amount is USD 1,485, and the maximum amount is approximately USD 1,836. The fund was primarily utilized for housing and housing improvements (47%), entrepreneurship (19%), and health and well-being (15%). The participatory governance structure of the fund ensures that the decision on where funds should go is made based on a perception study carried out by women from Atacama and SQM.

As the beneficiaries of this program live in areas that public services cannot always reach, many lack basic services such as water or electricity. The 47% of the fund that has been spent on housing and housing improvements, such as solar panels for electricity or thermal panels for heating water, fills a gap in public grant services from the government by focusing solely on women in the Atacameña region who may be hard for public services to reach.

Nineteen percent of the fund was used by Atacama women who have local businesses. Some of these businesses provide services to the mining industry as suppliers, such as those working in gastronomy or hospitality, but it was not made a requirement that they be linked to mining. The AMA support fund has also been used by some women entrepreneurs to make



Dionisia Berna Ayavire, Atacama cultist, ceramist of ancestral techniques, recording for SQM Litorio's "Palparte" campaign, for the prevention of breast cancer through art. (SQM AMA, reprinted with permission)



the necessary adjustments to their businesses in order to access further state support. For instance, many women do not have several requirements that must be met to access certain funds provided by the state—including potable water and specific infrastructure—due to the inability of public services to reach their remote regions. The AMA support fund has helped these businesses meet the requirements established by the state funds, promoting women's autonomy and the sustainability of their businesses.

Due to the distance of women from urban centres, many of them cannot access public health services. There remains a long waiting list for primary care. To make up for the shortcomings of available health care, 15% of the fund has supported women in accessing private health centers and financing their treatments or medications.

The allocation and spending of the funds are closely monitored to ensure that they align with the goals and principles of the AMA program. Monitoring is carried out with the Atacameña women who make up the Advisory Committee. The basis to apply for funds, as well as decisions about recipients, is decided in consultation with the Atacameña women, as they are best placed to understand the social benefit needs relevant to the context and ensure that the recipients are, in fact, residents of the region.

As part of its public–private partnership efforts, in 2024, SQM signed a collaboration agreement with the National Service for Women and Gender Equality, which focuses on the implementation of gender equality and equity policies, plans, and programs in various territories in Chile.

Margarita Chocobar Cruz is one of the participants in the AMA program. She was born in the oasis of Toconao and is heir to the Lickanantay culture. She is considered a guardian of the ancestral traditions, a singer, and a cultural teacher in the Antofagasta Region. She campaigns tirelessly for women's rights in her community and frequently addresses issues of gender equality and the relevance of the role of women in society. She is particularly passionate about transmitting a love for Lickanantay traditions to children and has written a songbook to help the next generation of girls embrace their heritage.

AMA conducts a bi-annual diagnostic survey to gauge the perceptions of beneficiaries of the program. For the second year in a row, in 2023 AMA (and SQM) was awarded a Social Innovation Reward by the C³ Creativity and Innovation Ranking in Chile.

Concerns remain in the region about the continued environmental risks of lithium mining projects, and as such, the participatory model of AMA can serve as a useful blueprint for mining companies to incorporate the concerns of affected communities in the design, implementation, and evaluation of the mining project, in order to minimize environmental risks and ensure that mitigation strategies and economic gains are relevant to the community as a whole.



BOX 7. LESSONS LEARNED

1. Full participation of a diverse range of local women in ownership and implementation of the program (from design to evaluation) is critical, as it enables programs to respond directly to the needs of women in the region and supports direct decision making about issues that affect them and their communities. Incorporating community concerns should be done throughout the entire mining project, and not just through community programs.
2. In regions where access to public services is adequate, partnerships between public services and private companies are important to improve services for women's health, well-being, and economic empowerment.
3. Providing direct access to finance can promote economic autonomy for women and have ripple effects on community resilience. Greater earning opportunities, accumulation of assets, and savings derived from finance access allow individuals and families to better withstand economic shocks, ultimately strengthening the broader community.
4. Regular monitoring and adaptation can continually improve program success through an inclusive approach that allows the program to adapt and evolve.

BOX 8. IGF'S MPF GUIDANCE: RELEVANCE TO CASE STUDY 4

IGF's MPF Guidance stipulates:

- MPF 3.3.1.a. Governments should require mining entities to undertake meaningful and inclusive consultations with affected communities and stakeholders in the design of community development activities, document the consultation process, and make the results accessible to communities.
- MPF 3.4.3. Governments should require mining entities to include community health considerations in social impact assessments, management plans, and monitoring.

How these policies contribute to gender equality and socio-economic benefits:

As part of the permitting process and throughout the cycle of the mine, the MPF recommends that governments require mining entities to consult with affected communities, including men and women, Indigenous Peoples, and other under-represented groups in the design of community development activities. The consultation process must, at a minimum, always be inclusive, accessible, and culturally appropriate. The International Council on Mining and Metals Mining Principles and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative *EITI Standard 2023* provide further guidance on this.

The exclusion of women from decisions on community development activities not only perpetuates existing gender inequalities but also undermines the potential of such programs to be fully effective in fostering inclusive community development. Integrating a gender lens that is attuned to intersectional disadvantages faced by women of different backgrounds in the design and execution ensures that the risks of mining projects are minimized and benefits are distributed equitably across all members of the community (Keenan & Kemp, 2014).



In order to increase the spillover benefits of mining investment into non-mining sectors in a way that benefits all, the MPF recommends investing in non-mining-related infrastructure. Infrastructure investments should be informed by social impact assessments, management plans, and monitoring that include the specific needs of a diverse range of women in mining communities. Beyond gender equality, they should always adhere to best practices in industrial policy (e.g., United Nations Industrial Development Organization, 2024).

Mining entities are encouraged to work with governments and other actors (e.g., non-governmental organizations) to make substantial contributions to the availability of local health services, particularly in rural and remote areas.

Further guidance:

- International Council on Mining and Metals, *Mining Principles*
- Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, *EITI Standard 2023*
- National Resource Governance Institute, *Natural Resource Charter* (2nd ed.)
- United Nations Industrial Development Organization, *Industrial Development Report* (p. 55)



Photo: SQM AMA

6.0 Conclusion

Comparing these projects reveals that tailored, gender-responsive policies to create local socio-economic benefits can be transformative for mining host communities. While direct employment and skills development focus on equipping women with technical competencies for the sector, procurement and cooperative models foster entrepreneurship and resilience outside traditional employment channels. CBAs that prioritize women's input ensure that mining companies' contributions to local development are genuinely impactful and aligned with the needs of the most affected groups.

The case studies illustrate diverse yet complementary strategies mining companies can adopt to support gender equality and economic empowerment in host communities through local content and other socio-economic development policies. Governments can draw on these examples to refine their mining governance frameworks; incorporate regulations and incentives that ensure local content policies, among others; deliver meaningful socio-economic benefits; and foster inclusive development in mining-affected areas. While each case study is distinct in its approach, several common themes emerge, highlighting pathways that other companies and governments could consider.

Kamoa Copper's commitment to building a local workforce in the DRC underscores the importance of direct employment and layered skills development. By investing in educational infrastructure and focusing on long-term skills programs, Kamoa has fostered gender-inclusive opportunities that create sustainable benefits for local women. This approach not only addresses the immediate labour needs of the mining sector but also lays the groundwork for a skilled and diverse workforce capable of contributing to other sectors of the economy.

Governments can take inspiration from this model by prioritizing investments in education and skills development for women and girls and integrating mining-related training into national curricula. Also, specific incentives, such as financial incentives, preferential contracting, or public-private partnerships, could encourage mining companies to expand gender-sensitive training initiatives that align with national development goals.

In South Africa, Ivanplats demonstrates the value of intersectional, gender-responsive procurement. South Africa's emphasis on partnerships between local entrepreneurs and national contractors provides a powerful model for building resilient supply chains that support Black women-owned businesses. By supporting women-owned businesses—which



are often more likely to employ other women—this approach benefits not only the owners but also other women within these enterprises. This approach has strengthened the resilience of women-owned businesses and enhanced their capacity to scale beyond mining, creating a multiplier effect for women's economic empowerment.

Governments can replicate this success by requiring mining companies to meet procurement targets that prioritize women-owned businesses while ensuring access to resources, such as financing, training, and mentorship for a diverse range of women.

Additionally, transparent reporting on procurement practices and outcomes helps maintain accountability and enable continual improvements. Kinross's Tasiast Women's Cooperative in Mauritania offers a contrasting yet equally effective model of empowerment through small-scale enterprise development. The cooperative's work, initially focused on providing sewing services to the mine, has expanded to broader markets, promoting economic independence in a region with limited formal employment. This cooperative approach demonstrates how local procurement policies can encourage alternative income generation and enhance community resilience.

Governments can facilitate similar initiatives by fostering environments where cooperatives and small businesses can thrive. This approach includes providing access to capital, building entrepreneurial skills, and creating market linkages that enable women-led enterprises to diversify their activities and remain sustainable beyond the life cycle of mining projects.

It is important to highlight that women's economic empowerment depends on both the share of opportunities that women can access and the total volume of local economic opportunities generated by mining. Although this case study focuses on a sewing cooperative, Mauritania's mining policy could further expand local prosperity by promoting in-country mineral processing or manufacturing, which evidence suggests can benefit women who secure employment or supply contracts in these industries.

Meanwhile, in Chile, the AMA, partnered with SQM, underscores the impact of inclusive CBAs, which provide health care, financial support, and cultural programs tailored to women's priorities. The AMA's participatory governance ensures that interventions align closely with community needs, underscoring the importance of meaningful community involvement in designing and implementing initiatives.

Governments should institutionalize CBAs that include legally binding gender-specific provisions coupled with robust monitoring mechanisms to evaluate their effectiveness. Furthermore, governments and mining companies should co-fund gender-responsive infrastructure—such as childcare, health facilities, and transportation networks—that address barriers to women's participation in economic activities.

Together, these cases illustrate the importance of a flexible approach that adapts to specific community contexts. For governments, establishing frameworks that encourage gender-inclusive practices—whether through recruitment, education, procurement, cooperatives, or CBAs—can enhance the positive impacts of mining on local communities. For companies, aligning corporate strategies with gender-focused policies not only benefits communities but also strengthens their social licence to operate and drives sustainable development outcomes. These lessons provide a practical foundation for companies and policy-makers alike, underscoring the broader socio-economic value that can be achieved when local socio-economic initiatives incorporate a strong gender perspective.



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