

RESEARCH BRIEF

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Photo: Akshay Mahajan / Oxfam Australia

ACCOUNTABLE TO WHOM? PROMOTING WOMEN'S RIGHTS THROUGH EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES REVENUE ACCOUNTABILITY

LESSONS FROM THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC AND ZAMBIA

Revenues from oil, gas, and mining should fund essential social services that lift people out of poverty and improve development outcomes. **Social accountability initiatives** (SAIs), using tools such as information campaigns, community scorecards, and participatory budgeting, can support citizens in demanding greater transparency about the flow of revenue from the extractive industries (EI) to the government.¹

SAIs that push for the disclosure of information about EI revenues can equip citizens—especially those in communities most affected by oil, gas, and mining projects—with the knowledge necessary to determine whether they are getting a fair share of EI revenues. Yet the challenge of citizen-led SAIs is to ensure inclusivity and meaningful participation, so that the voices of women and other marginalized people have representation.

Women's engagement in SAIs seeking to improve transparency around the flow of EI revenues is especially critical because of the gendered impacts of oil, gas, and mining projects, where women tend to be the hardest hit and benefit the least. Local economic

benefits of EI—such as employment and compensation—often go to men, while women disproportionately shoulder any negative impacts of extractive projects, from environmental degradation to disruptions in social and family life.

A distillation of a larger report,² this brief provides a quick look at the interplay of women's rights and social accountability within the context of EI revenue transparency, with case studies from the Dominican Republic and Zambia. It addresses whether and how social accountability related to EI revenue transparency can be a catalyst for women's rights. The research identifies key barriers to women's participation in SAIs and explores opportunities for overcoming them.

Contributing new findings to the largely unexplored field of the gender dimensions of social accountability related to EI revenue transparency, the research³ demonstrates that when SAIs fail to promote women's meaningful participation, they miss important opportunities to advance women's rights and ensure that EI revenues address the development interests of all citizens.⁴

WHERE ARE THE WOMEN (AND *WHICH* WOMEN) IN SAIs?

Research has found that women's participation in SAIs can lead to "increased budget allocations for services that benefit women, more accessible or responsive services for women, particularly local health services but also personal safety and social protection."⁵ Yet despite the potential for SAIs to promote inclusive resource governance and to advance women's rights and gender equality by driving investments of EI revenues toward targeted programs and services, EI revenue accountability initiatives have been largely silent on gender.⁶

One reason for this missing gender lens in SAIs is that efforts to improve EI revenue transparency have not been understood by reform actors as having implications for gender equality. Only within the past few years, for example, has the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI)⁷ begun to consider the gender dimensions of its mandate.⁸

Another reason is that women's rights advocates and organizations have demonstrated little interest in engaging in EI revenue transparency and EITI processes; the feminist and EI revenue transparency agendas have seemed irrelevant to one another. Feminist visions of development that reject market-driven models based on resource extraction⁹ seem diametrically opposed to the typical EI transparency agenda, which seeks to improve governance of the industry itself: one seeks to dismantle the industry, the other seemingly to promote it. This research, however, posits that these agendas can find common ground in efforts to seek greater accountability for the collection and use of EI revenues.

DEFINING SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

There are many definitions of social accountability. This research defines social accountability broadly, as an approach that involves citizens and/or civil society organizations in driving government accountability. Social accountability strives to amplify citizens' voices, level power differentials between governments and citizens, and foster citizen engagement in decision-making about the use of resources.



Photo: Chris Hufstader / Oxfam America

A WOMEN'S RIGHTS APPROACH TO SAIs

WOMEN'S RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS, AND VICE VERSA

Women's rights run the gamut from political rights to employment rights and the right to education. Women's rights respond to the specific discrimination women face based on their gender, such as the right to freedom of movement, to nondiscrimination, and to sexual and reproductive health.

In design and implementation, SAIs can promote women's rights in two ways: SAIs can inform *processes*, where women's participation in social accountability has intrinsic value as a function of their rights. SAIs can also improve women's rights *outcomes* because women's participation can help drive public resources toward funding programs that can advance gender equality. SAIs can promote equitable development by creating mechanisms for holding governments accountable for protecting and promoting women's rights.

Applying **feminist principles** can further clarify the gender dimensions of SAIs. These principles underpin the women's rights approach that the research

takes. They call for addressing the root causes of structural discrimination based on gender and other identity factors (such as race, ethnicity, age, and physical ability), using an intersectional¹⁰ lens to transform systems of power and oppression. A feminist approach also encourages diversity, honors local ownership of knowledge, and highlights consciousness-raising about rights at the individual level. In the context of EI revenue transparency and accountability, this lens points toward a rights-based approach that prioritizes citizen participation, individual agency, and empowerment, and that aims to address underlying gender norms, values, and behaviors.



Photo: Oxfam America

IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT THE NUMBERS

Women's participation is essential to a women's rights approach to SAIs. But it is not just about having women in the room or around the table. According to UN Women, **women's meaningful participation** is about women exercising agency, voice, and leadership to influence decision-making and effect change.¹¹ It is also about receptive decision-making environments that adequately consider and address women's interests. Without these conditions, women may have little influence over decisions about compensation, employment, benefit sharing, and the use of EI revenues. Consequently, the absence of women's meaningful participation has the potential to exacerbate the disproportionate negative impacts of oil, gas, and mining projects on women's rights.

A feminist lens also recognizes that, historically, movements to advance women's rights have relied heavily on the leadership of women's rights organizations (WROs). Critical to a women's rights approach to SAIs related to EI revenue transparency, therefore, is building cross-sectoral movements between WROs and civil society organizations (CSOs) working on EI transparency efforts.

METHODOLOGY

The research includes a desk review of scholarship on women's rights and EI, with a focus on social accountability initiatives on EI revenue transparency, supported by data from semi-structured interviews with key experts.

The case study research was conducted in partnership with the Instituto de Investigación y Estudios de Género y Familia (IGEF) and the Observatorio Dominicano de Políticas Públicas (ODPP) in the Dominican Republic, and with the Zambia Institute for Policy Analysis and Research (ZIPAR) in Zambia. The researchers conducted key informant interviews with members of CSOs, WROs, and other EI experts.

THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC AND ZAMBIA AS EI SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY SITES

Both the Dominican Republic and Zambia have significant extractive sectors and vibrant and active CSO networks engaging on EI transparency and accountability. However, accounts of SAIs on EI revenue transparency in both countries are notably thin, and of these, none set explicit targets to promote women's participation and/or to increase government investments in social programs that promote women's rights. While this limits the analysis of whether a focus on women's participation in SAIs leads to increased government accountability for women's-rights focused spending, learning from the two countries' experiences with extractives and social accountability more generally adds new information on whether and how SAIs on EI revenue transparency incorporate women's rights.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC: "Transparency, it does not exist here"¹²

In 2016, mining was the fastest-growing industry in the Dominican Republic, and the sector has continued to expand considerably. The country became a member of the EITI in 2016, stimulating the creation of a network of CSOs on EI transparency called ENTRE (El Espacio Nacional por la Transparencia de la Industria Extractiva, or the National Space for Transparency in the Extractive Industry). CSO representation on the Dominican Republic's EITI multi-stakeholder group (MSG) is comprised solely of ENTRE members. Although ENTRE includes WROs as members, none of the CSO representatives in the MSG are WROs.

While mining contributes significantly to the economy, the benefits of the industry do not fall equally, especially for the communities in areas surrounding mines. Dominican Republic Environmental Law 64-00 stipulates that five percent of the net profits of EI companies must be transferred to municipal mining development funds. Yet members of communities in mining project areas do not believe the EI revenues are being transferred—there is a strong sentiment that transparency and accountability are minimal.

Examples of SAIs in the country include the following:

- (1) A public information campaign in Cotuí (a mining-affected community in the province of Sánchez Ramírez) does not appear to have resulted in substantial gains for women's rights in terms of agency in setting campaign targets or in government investment of EI revenues in programs and services that support women's rights.
- (2) CSOs and WROs are officially involved in overseeing municipal mining development funds like FOMISAR (Provincial Council for the Administration of Mining Funds in Sánchez Ramírez). In practice, however, WROs have minimal involvement, and they often do not feel empowered to influence decision-making.

ZAMBIA: "How can women talk? Men are in the room!"¹³

Zambia is one of the world's major copper exporters. A member of the EITI since 2009, Zambia's nonetheless limited transparency around EI revenues still plays a significant role in depriving communities experiencing poverty of much-needed funds.

Despite its contribution to the national economy, the EI sector in Zambia has had negative impacts in Zambia, ranging from environmental and health costs to the resettlement of communities to areas with inadequate social services.

Examples of SAIs in the country are the following:

- (1) CSOs are advocating for a legal provision for a mineral revenue-sharing mechanism that would transfer mining revenues to local government, a provision that was eliminated when the 2008 Mines and Minerals Development Act was repealed and replaced in 2015. It is not clear whether WROs are engaging in the campaign, and to date the campaign has made no mention of women's rights or the gendered impacts of mining.
- (2) The Centre for Trade Policy and Development, through its Natural Resource Watch Groups (NRWGs), has undertaken a public expenditure tracking initiative. The NRWGs created a revenue-tracking toolkit to monitor local governments' and companies' disbursements and use of mining revenues. The initiative gives no explicit attention to women's participation in the NRWGs and does not address how the mining revenues can be used to support women's rights.

ROADBLOCKS TO PARTICIPATION

A number of gender-based barriers to the meaningful participation of women and WROs emerge across the research. Common to many of the barriers is the powerful role that sociocultural norms around gender roles and relations play in determining whether and how women are able to participate. The research identifies the following structural barriers:

- *Inaccessibility of information:* Information sharing on EI may exclude women if it is shared predominately via the internet (a resource many women may not be able to use) or in languages that women, particularly those from rural areas, may not speak or be able to read.
- *Opacity around decision-making:* Women report confusion about EI revenue decision-making processes, such as not knowing with which bodies to engage, when meetings are, or how to participate. For example, members of a WRO in the Dominican Republic who are on the council of the local mining development fund express frustration that decisions seem to be made behind closed doors. Clarity on these processes would benefit not only women and WROs, of course, but CSOs and community members in general. More transparency on EI decision-making processes is better for all.
- *Women's time poverty:* Women often experience excessive time pressure because of the proportion of unpaid care work for which they are responsible. Collecting water, cooking, and caring for children and the elderly, for example, leave little time to spend on income-generating or other activities, including SAIs.
- *Restrictions on mobility:* While location can limit participation generally, women face additional barriers, owing to restrictive gender norms. Women from mining-affected communities may not be able to travel freely, and they often do not have access to or control over the resources necessary to travel for EI consultations and other meetings (see Box 1).
- *Fears of disrupting cultural norms:* Social accountability actors may hesitate to encourage women's participation out of fear they may be perceived as disrespecting local culture and/or undermining traditional leadership hierarchies (which are usually composed of male leaders—see Box 2).
- *Gender-insensitive consultation processes:* SAIs are not designed or implemented in ways that support women's participation. Initiatives may target heads of households (most often men), view the community as a homogenous unit, or assume that women are able to engage in public arenas, all of which inadvertently limit women's participation.

Photo: Caliesha Comley

BOX 1: RURAL WOMEN'S GROUPS FACE ADDITIONAL PARTICIPATION HURDLES IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

While logistical challenges affect the participation of many small and rural organizations in the CSO network ENTRE, women's groups face particular limitations. A member of one women's group recounted that she and others waited hours for a bus, purportedly hired by ENTRE, to take them to a meeting of ENTRE's general assembly. The bus never came. "We had to figure out how to come on our own," she said.



BOX 2: SOCIOCULTURAL NORMS IN ZAMBIA LIMIT ENGAGEMENT

Even when women participate in EI-related meetings, whether convened by CSOs, the government, or companies, they generally do not speak out. Some women from Solwezi, a mining district in the North-Western Province of Zambia, consider EI consultations relevant only to men. As noted by a stakeholder, "Very few women will come, and even those that come will not participate in that activity. Well, it is traditional you know, how do they talk when there are men [there]?"

PATHWAYS TO MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION

What needs to happen for women to contribute to agenda-setting, exert influence, represent their own interests, and make decisions about EI revenue disclosures and how EI revenues are invested?¹⁴

Because it is exploratory and work on SAls is nascent in both countries, the research does not lend itself to specific policy recommendations. It does, however, illuminate a range of opportunities to address barriers to women's meaningful participation in SAls. Actors, such as governments, CSOs, and multi-stakeholder initiatives, should:

- *Actively encourage women's participation:* Tailor and design SAls to target women's participation and to address gender-based barriers.
- *Be intersectional:* Recognize that women are not a homogenous group, and SAls should account for this by design. Bringing diverse perspectives to decision-making around the use of EI revenues supports more equitable development outcomes, including for women and communities directly affected by extractives.
- *Make information accessible:* Simplify EI-related information and make it available in languages and through media that are widely accessible to women and others with accessibility challenges.
- *Support feminist consciousness-raising of women in EI impacted areas:* Promote approaches that raise women's consciousness of their rights at the individual level. The research finds that women in the Dominican Republic and Zambia are not aware of their rights to information and participation in relation to EI revenue transparency and accountability (see Box 3).
- *Build cross-sectoral alliances:* Alliances between WROs and EI transparency CSOs can bolster advocacy efforts and outreach to women. See Box 4 for an example where collaboration between WROs and CSOs led to gender-sensitive advocacy efforts on EI.
- *Connect EI revenue transparency and WRO agendas:* WROs may not work explicitly on EI issues in Zambia, either because they focus on other issues or because they do not work in communities where mining occurs. Some CSOs find success by pursuing issue-based engagement with WROs, such as by focusing on gender-based violence in EI contexts.

BOX 3: WOMEN'S RIGHTS AWARENESS IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Raising women's consciousness of their right to have a say over how resources are managed in their communities is crucial to promoting more inclusive social accountability. A member of a women's cooperative emphasizes this, saying, "I think that we need to ... 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. We need to participate."

BOX 4: COLLABORATION BETWEEN EI TRANSPARENCY CSOS AND WROS IN ZAMBIA

Every year CSOs in Zambia working on EI issues convene at the Zambia Alternative Mining Indaba (ZAMI). In 2018 collaboration between WROs and EI-focused CSOs led to a tabling of gender concerns, which resulted in the incorporation of gender recommendations in the ZAMI communiqué. The communiqué notes that the "discontent[ed] voices from the local mining communities, especially women and girls, have increased over the years, emanating from largely gender blind policies and laws."

Source: Zambia Alternative Mining Indaba. 2018. Communiqué, 7th ZAMI. Lusaka: ZAMI, p. 4



Photo: Patrick Harris / Oxfam Australia

TOWARD ACCOUNTABILITY TO ALL

Oxfam asserts that the women's rights approach to SAIs developed by this research can enact women's meaningful participation as a catalyst for increasing government accountability to all of its citizens for the use of EI revenues. Such an approach—grounded in feminist principles of honoring diversity, raising consciousness, and building cross-sectoral movements between WROs and CSOs—has the potential to promote positive results for women's rights in terms of *processes* that increase women's participation and *outcomes*, where women's participation drives government resources toward goods and services that advance women's rights and improve overall development outcomes. A women's rights approach to SAIs, we argue, can provide opportunities to secure increased government investment in programs and services that have the potential to make tangible improvements in the daily lives of women and communities affected by EI.

Advancing women's rights through SAIs requires the following:

- **Feminist approaches:** Leverage feminist approaches that are based on (but not limited to) intersectional analysis and feminist consciousness-raising, especially of women's rights in the context of EI revenue transparency and accountability.
- **Women's meaningful participation:** Ensure women's agency and their ability to exercise voice and leadership to influence decision-making around the use of EI revenues. This involves being intentional about women's participation and privileging their interests and priorities.
- **Address gender power relations and sociocultural norms that constrain women's rights:** Use gender power analysis to inform the design of SAIs. Understanding the ways that sociocultural norms undermine women's rights can inform how organizations engage women and address barriers to women's meaningful participation.
- **Build alliances:** Fostering cross-sectoral movements between WROs and CSOs working on EI revenue transparency can augment advocacy efforts.

For more information and to access the full report, *Accountable to Whom? Promoting Women's Rights through Extractive Industries Revenue Accountability*, please visit us at <https://www.oxfamamerica.org/explore/research-publications/accountability-extractive-industries/>.

¹ It is important to acknowledge that the precursor to social accountability is "accountability." The Transparency and Accountability Initiative defines accountability as the "means [of] ensuring that officials in public, private and voluntary sector organizations are answerable for their actions and that there is redress when duties and commitments are not met." Source: Transparency and Accountability Initiative. 2017. "How Do We Define Key Terms?" Transparency and Accountability Glossary." Washington, DC.

² This research was generously funded by the Hewlett Foundation.

³ Namalie Jayasinghe, Mirna Jiménez de la Rosa, Maritza Ruiz, Tamara Billima-Mulenga, and Mwiinga Cheelo, *Accountable to Whom? Promoting Women's Rights through Extractive Industries Revenue Accountability*, Oxfam America Research Backgrounder series (Washington, DC: Oxfam America, 2019).

⁴ It should be noted that this research was inspired by an earlier Oxfam research backgrounder: Sarah Bradshaw with Brian Linneker and Lisa Overton, *Gender and Social Accountability: Ensuring Women's Inclusion in Citizen-led Accountability Programming Related to Extractive Industries*, Oxfam America Research Backgrounder series (Washington, DC: Oxfam America, 2016).

⁵ P. Domingo, R. Holmes, T. O'Neil, N. Jones, K. Bird, A. Larson, E. Presler-Marshall, and C. Valters. 2015. *Women's Voice and Leadership in Decision-making*. London: Overseas Development Institute, p. 2.

⁶ Bradshaw, Linneker, and Overton, *Gender and Social Accountability: Ensuring Women's Inclusion in Citizen-led Accountability*.

⁷ The EITI is a multiparty international transparency platform. Countries and companies that join the initiative are required to disclose information relating to oil, gas, and mining projects, from contracts to revenue flows. EITI implementation is overseen in member countries by multi-stakeholder groups composed of representatives from government, industry, and civil society.

⁸ Beginning in 2017, the EITI published several policy documents and briefing papers on gender. In June 2019 the EITI Board will ratify, for the first time, gender provisions in the EITI Standard and accompanying policies. For more information, visit the following link: <https://eiti.org/document/overview-of-proposed-changes-to-eiti-requirements>

⁹ Statement on Gender, Economic and Ecological Justice by Young Women Activists: http://www.dawnnet.org/uploads/documents/GEEJ%20Statements_Combined_PacAfLatC_2011-Jun-23.pdf

¹⁰ The concept of intersectionality is defined as "identity-based disadvantages interacting with other dimensions of exclusion, such as income or location." Source: V. P. Arauco et al., *Strengthening Social Justice to Address Intersecting Inequalities Post-2015* (London: Overseas Development Institute, 2014), p. 11.

¹¹ UN Women, *Women's Meaningful Participation in Negotiating Peace and the Implementation of Peace Agreements* (New York, 2018).

¹² Key informant interview, Dominican Republic.

¹³ Key informant interview, Zambia.

¹⁴ Ibid.

