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**Mining Minerals Sustainable Development
Southern Africa**

Research Topic 3: Mining and Society
GENDER AND MINING: COMMUNITY

Input to:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The mining industry is moving into a new era of social responsibility. For a long time it has been viewed as an industry that did not take into account outside interest. This is however changing and mining houses are busy consulting interested parties and communities. It should be acknowledged that the mining sector has always had a positive impact on many lives. It provided infrastructure in remote areas and provided essential services where non existed. Despite all these positive impacts, the mining industry has not been beneficial to women in mining communities.

The mining set up has never been gender sensitive. Women exist in mining rarely as workers but as spouses of mine employees. Opportunities for women are very few in mining communities. This scenario is not sustainable as women are known to play a significant part in reducing poverty at the household level as well as in the community. Women in mining communities are generally neglected. The industry as a whole has a responsibility to address this anomaly and assist in strengthening the position of women, facilitate their attaining better livelihoods for the sake of sustainability.

It is equally critical for the industry to take into consideration the reasons behind the unequal distribution of benefits between the different genders. Although most women have marketable skills, they find it difficult to take part in economic activities mainly because of the isolation of mining sites, lack of credit facilities and insecure tenure, among other problems. Obviously, it is not only the mining sector that need to address these problems, but the sector together with other key players such as government, non governmental organisations and the communities themselves can work out solutions that will enhance the economic standing of women in mining communities, and thus assist them attain sustainable livelihoods.

Communication and transparency are critical issues for harmonious relations between communities and business. The mining sector in southern Africa has made visible efforts to communicate with and involve communities in various

mining projects in the region. Problems still arise where certain stakeholder groups that have specific needs and problems are subsumed in larger 'communities' and end up not being heard. Women in mining communities have suffered as a result because they are not identified as a stand-alone stakeholder in mining, and hence are generally not consulted or listened to.

Developments in the mining sector in southern Africa that include privatisation and massive retrenchments have also brought about problems that tend to affect women in mining communities. Privatisation has in most cases been accompanied by the move by mining companies away from provision of social services such as housing, health care and educational facilities for mineworkers and their families. Women are responsible generally for the upkeep of children and when homes are lost, women are sometimes left with a huge burden that they sometimes have to shoulder alone. Although these developments do help in solving some of the viability problems the industry is facing, it is very important for the industry to monitor and evaluate its social performance in view of this, for any negative changes particularly affecting already vulnerable groups such as women.

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GLOSSARY

ACPD	African Community Publishing and Development Trust
Agritex	Agricultural Extension Services
AIDS	Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome
Cyclone Eline	Cyclone that affected Southern Africa in February 2000 and caused extensive damage to Infrastructure among other things
CBO	Community Based Organisation
HIV	Human Immuno Virus
IISD	International Institute for Sustainable Development
ITDG	Intermediate Technology Development Group
MMSD	Mining Minerals and Sustainable Development
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
PSG	Project Support Group – A USAID funded HIV/AIDS project operational in mining and commercial farming area
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women

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1 INTRODUCTION

Social issues in mining generally include (a) the provision of social infrastructure, such as educational facilities, (b) consultation and disclosure, (c) the environmental impacts that mines have on society such as water and air pollution, (d) the management of labour such as migrant labour policies, accommodation, skills development and (e) the impact of the socio-economic conditions such as job creation and purchasing from local suppliers.

Mining companies manage these issues differently, with some companies addressing all the issues and others addressing some of the issues. The management of these issues however fail to cover women in mining communities. Mining communities in this report refer to those communities lying within the geographical area covered by the mine lease. These communities are mostly mine worker communities. This is the area where the mine has control and where its employees and their families reside. Women in these communities are mainly dependants of the mine employees, most of them wives or partners of miners.

This report will discuss some of the factors that affect women in mining communities, the problems they face globally and in southern Africa, their opportunities and constraints. It will present the findings of a case study based at Renco Mine in Zimbabwe and make recommendations.

2 SECONDARY MATERIAL AND DOCUMENTATION REVIEW

Mining communities have been defined as including mine workers, home communities of migrant workers, artisanal mining communities as well as the communities on the doorsteps of large mining projects (MMSD, 2001). This definition is fairly broad and for the purposes of this research, it has been narrowed down to cover only mineworkers. Women are part of these communities and may be mine workers or spouses and children of mine

workers. The position of the women in these communities is especially interesting as they are hardly ever mentioned in most mining literature.

In general, these women only become a factor after major shocks such as mine closure or major job cut backs. Once these shocks have been experienced, the plight of the women in these communities becomes exposed as they try to step into the shoes of their husbands and provide for families. In Peru, Portillosⁱ reported that most of the women were previously only known as ‘such and such a miner’s wife’. For years they had been victims of unemployment and poverty as they resided on the mines with their partners. The situation is reported to be the same at some Indians mines (Nairⁱⁱ). It is reported that women in mining communities have conceded that; “there are no jobs for women, only for men” (Nair, *ibid*). In Zimbabwe it has also been acknowledged that employment opportunities are fewer for women in mining communities (ACPDⁱⁱⁱ). Even skilled women find it difficult to find jobs at mining locations, especially the remote ones. Women work in the traditional female white-collar jobs such as teaching, nursing and secretarial (ACPD, *ibid*). Job opportunities even for skilled women become less with the remoteness of the location. In some cases, the sheer numbers of women with the same skills in a location reduce employment opportunities by the simple fact that there is limited demand for certain skills in any given location. The story of unemployment and poverty among mine workers’ families is replicated at most of the mines across southern Africa, only that the stories have not been documented.

Although mining companies have been involved in community consultation for some time (Anglo American at Kongola in Zambia, Anglo Base Metals at Gamberg in South Africa^{iv}, among other projects), there is no evidence to show that women in mining communities benefited as a result of the consultations. It is possible that the consultation processes are not broad based and may not be taking measures to ensure that there is equal participation by both men and women. Ensuring that consultative processes take into account the gender differences in communities at the very early stages in the consultations could go a long way in ensuring that women

receive a fair share of benefits from community projects that come as a result of mining activities. Mining companies have also managed to assist communities in such areas as health, education and infrastructural development. In some cases mining companies have assisted in setting up of small enterprises in various sectors, which benefit local people. There is no gender-disaggregated data on the beneficiaries of some of these community projects, but on a small scale, it has been shown that fewer women have benefited (Personal Communications with Agricultural Extension Officer at Rupike Irrigation Scheme, June 2001^v).

Many examples can be found in southern Africa of community engagement and participation in discussions with mining companies on various social issues (examples include Anglo American in Zambia, Anglo Base Metals in South Africa, Rio Tinto in Zimbabwe). What is lacking however, are the benefits accruing to women in these communities in general and in mining communities in particular. In a community irrigation scheme sponsored by a mining company in Zimbabwe, only 20% of the plot holders are women. These are not even poor women, but powerful landowners. Ideally, a scheme of such a nature would have more impact in terms of poverty alleviation if more women were plot holders. This would mean that the women have more power over what crops to grow and thus enhance household food security. In most cases government policies are to blame for the discrepancies that exist. In the case of this particular irrigation scheme, the criteria used to select plot holders was biased against the poor. One could hold a plot (0.5 hectares in size) if one had an annual income of Z\$600 (1990 figures), had land in the dry fields to exchange with the previous owner of the field now under irrigation, among other things (Source: Agritex Official Resident at the Scheme). In 1990, it was difficult for a woman in Zimbabwe to own agricultural land in the communal areas as land is inherited along the male line. This criteria basically excluded single women, widows and other landless classes. A conscious gender sensitive policy on the part of the sponsors can however go a long way in alleviating some of these problems.

In Zambia, however, some mining companies have gone a bit further by addressing issues specific to certain groups in the community through their social programmes. Programmes such as the provision of neo – natal health care, which directly relates to women alone is a conscious effort by mine owners to deal with some of the problems faced by women in mining communities (refer to Mining and Society- Privatisation report). Another way of addressing the problem of exclusion of women would be for either the sponsors to include a clause on the distribution of beneficiaries in the project. Alternatively, central and or local government can put in place a requirement that for any social project, a certain percentage of the beneficiaries have to be women. This could apply to all projects not specifically those emanating from the mining sector only.

It has been acknowledged that mining activities have many benefits for people in host communities (MMSD, 2001, Clark and Cook Clarke). Mining activities through provision of many services and creating employment raises people's living standards to new levels. This applies to families of miners, especially spouses and partners, who have more disposable income, better housing and better services. What the mining activity overlooks in many cases is whether those standards will be maintained once the mining activity ceases. The impact of sudden loss of income and other social services will be felt more by housewives, dependent on a mine derived income (Waddington, et al, 1992). A parallel process of encouraging the growth of other industries, support for local community projects and skills development especially for women in the communities are some activities that can assist cushion the shock of mine closure and help sustain livelihoods.

Legal and financial requirements are forcing mining companies to comply with various requirements for social and environmental sensitivity. This is a positive development in the sector, given its past record of little consultation and environmental damage (McMahon and Strongman). What is missing from all these positive changes are efforts directed at marginalized groups within the mining community itself, i.e. the mine settlement and the women resident in them. These communities have come a long way from the single sex

hostels to the current family dwelling units with facilities such as schools and hospitals being the norm at most mining settlements.

The problem that still remains is that in these settlements, it is only the mine employee whose capabilities as an individual are being realised. It is the mineworker only who has access to employment and the benefits that come with being employed such as self-satisfaction, training, and an income. The needs of his dependants are identified as being satisfiable by provision of water, electricity and a good house, from the point of view of the mining company. Employment opportunities for family members are virtually non-existent outside certain fields such as teaching. This set up does not promote the attainment of sustainable livelihoods as defined by the International Institute of Sustainable Development (IISD^{vi}). They do not encourage individuals, especially women in these communities to seek ways of making a living or improving their living conditions; neither do they encourage people to realise their capacities to generate and maintain means of living. There are few options available to women in these communities. Women have less access to resources such as money, skills and even land in mining communities. Such communities encourage the subordination of women by creating material conditions that leave one group dependent on another for a living.

Poverty has four dimensions according to Kunananyagam, et al (2000). The four dimensions are economic opportunity, capacity, security and empowerment. In order to address gender-based poverty in mining communities and foster sustainability, it is necessary to address these issues in mining communities. Women in mining communities need to have economic opportunities such as those that come with the option to trade and to start income generating activities, they need to have capacity built in them through training and the attainment of skills among other things. Equipped with some of these skills and opportunities, women would be empowered enough to make a living. This not only helps during the life of the mine, it is crucial after mine closure when household incomes are low and women have to supplement these incomes.

Portillos (*op cit*) pointed out that women's skills and income generating power become crucial when the mine starts to deteriorate or is privatised. These developments always force women to abandon their roles as housewives and mothers to join the workforce (Portillos, *ibid*). In most cases they had had no preparation or training for these new activities. Waddington, *et al* (1992) also points out that mine closure makes women's lives harder as they struggle to manage on a reduced budget, to find work in an economically depressed area and care for their families. It can be argued that the problems faced by women in mining communities are just a reflection of the problems faced by women in society in general and most of them can be blamed on culture. While culturally there could be restrictions on women's entry into the formal job market in some areas, the subordination of women in the mining sector is not cultural. It has to do with the material and economic conditions that favour male employment.

Nair (*op cit*) states that a gold mine has no official place for women, at least in the underground work. This echoes the voices of many other women resident on mines across the world (refer to section on Gender in Mining-women in the workplace). The roles and responsibilities of these women have become much narrower in these settings because employees and their families own very little at the mines. The houses they live in are mine houses, so is the infrastructure. There is no security with regard to tenure as this depends entirely on being an employee of the mine. The women thus have no claim on anything at the mine where they live. Allen (1989)^{vii} is of the view that roles and responsibilities of males and females in mining communities are not exaggerated when compared to other working class communities. Gender specific roles and responsibilities in mining communities are however clearly affected by the poor employment prospects for women. While this argument is justifiable, the women in mining settlements do not only have less chances of being employed, they can not take up other activities that women in working class communities can take up, such as urban agriculture.

Bearing in mind the fact that the mining sector has made great strides towards accommodating social issues in its operations, it is critical to note that if the

approaches that are being used with communities such as consultation and assistance in setting up community projects were extended to the women in mining communities, a lot would be achieved in a short space of time. It is being realised that women are an integral part of their societies and sustainable development must include the full and equal participation of women^{viii}. Women in mining communities are no different from all other women. They play key roles in mining families, being responsible for [economic management], household maintenance and psychological sustenance (Waddington, *et al* 1992). Despite this realisation, women in mining communities are passive recipients of development, with benefits from mining trickling down to them and their families through the pockets of a mineworker husband or partner.

Much difference is observed where miners' wives or partners get an opportunity to take part in economic activities. At times the activities such as gold panning in abandoned shafts are not legal and are risky, (Nair, *op cit*). In La Oroya (Peru), the *mineras* or miners' wives managed to break the cycle of unemployment and poverty by starting small businesses, after the establishment of a community bank that lend money to these women. To date, a successful community exists among the wreckage of pollution and dereliction of an old mine.

3 PERSPECTIVES ON SOUTHERN AFRICA

Emphasis so far has been placed on large-scale mining operations as these have large resident populations who depend on the mining company's services. In southern Africa, women are found in the small-scale mining sector as well as in the large-scale sector . The overall picture of the lives of women in the small-scale sector is that they are workers as opposed to "kept women". This is the case in Zimbabwe, Tanzania and most of the southern African countries (Personal Communications with Representative of the Intermediate Technology Development Group – ITDG). The conditions of living and work are worse for the women than for men and so are the rewards.

Women who are resident at large scale mining settlements are hardly covered by research on the mining sector in southern Africa, as evidenced by the absence of literature on the topic. The emphasis has been on women miners. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (Unifem) (Harare) indicated that efforts are being concentrated on women miners because their problems are more visible (Personal Communications with Unifem Programme Officer -Harare, 2001). Although the global trend in the mining sector is now to consult communities, the sector has neglected its own backyard. When mining companies define their stakeholders, they are looking at their shareholders, communities around the mines, trade unions, their workers and even governments, but not the women resident on mines.

The biggest single benefit that miners' wives in southern Africa received from the sector was the move away from the single sex hostels to the family dwelling unit at the mine settlement. This was beneficial to women in the sense that families could live together, and those who could, at least kept an eye on the money earned by their spouses. This created other problems such as ghost towns after mine closure. Now the sector is moving towards shedding these responsibilities to local authorities, or alternatively, only providing temporary accommodation for mine workers and allowing workers short working periods spaced with vacations. In an interview with the Chamber of Mines Zimbabwe, it was put across that the situation in the mining sector in southern Africa is not only bad for women. It is bad across the board for lower working grades because of poor government policies governing the sector. It was argued that a correction in gender policies whereby Governments make a conscious effort to assist women in both the public and private sectors in these countries will benefit the women in mining communities (Personal Communications with Chamber of Mines representative,2001). As it is, laws have been amended to remove some of the restrictions that affected women such as eligibility to borrow from banks and land ownership (Dalencour, 1994). Access to credit is still a problem for most women in southern Africa and it is necessary for government policy to correct such inconsistencies.

The African Community Publishing and Development Trust (ACPD) found that women in mining communities are generally poor and unemployed. This is reinforced by the findings of the case study in section 4. While the case study focussed on only one mine in Zimbabwe and thus making it difficult to generalise to the whole of southern Africa, these findings confirmed issues raised about the condition of women in mining communities world wide.

The Chamber of Mines Zimbabwe, Ministry of Mines – Zimbabwe, and some private mining companies have argued that mines are not a substitute for government (Personal communications with Chamber of Mines representative 2001). While it is true, it is still imperative on the mining sector to contribute towards the well being of women in mining communities given the wealth generated by this sector, and directly by the spouses of these women. It will also assist in sustaining livelihoods in the mining communities and in attaining sustainable development through better and more equitable distribution of benefits from mining.

Other than restrictions in employment opportunities, women in mining communities in southern Africa face a host of other problems emanating from the current drive towards mine privatisation and also as a result of mine closure. Mines that were formally owned and run by government agencies are now being privatised and the Zambian Copperbelt is the single largest case in the region. With privatisation come significant reductions in labour, thus job losses for some miners, and in the majority of cases, the new mine owners do not want to shoulder the responsibility of provision of social services that government agencies used to provide. This disadvantages women more as they have to struggle to care for families and deal with the problem of less social services such as less access to health care, more expensive schools and in some cases, loss of homes. Closely related, is the problem of mine closure and retrenchments that is significantly increasing in southern Africa (In Zimbabwe alone, 90% of all the mines are under threat, according to the Chamber of Mines). Mine closure means that there are no jobs for men, and therefore no means of livelihood for many women who depend on miners' salaries. Problems are felt right through to the home village of a mineworker

as a result of job losses. A study in South Africa's Western Cape villages describes a story of poverty and broken families as women and men fail to handle the problems that follow retrenchment (Ngonini, 2001).

Developments in the region are showing a growing popularity in partnerships entered into by mining companies and other key players such as international donor agencies and civil society in handling issues that come out of mining operations. This could be a good approach towards addressing the problems being faced by women in mining communities, given that mining companies already feel burdened by their social responsibilities (This is implied from the move by most mining companies away from providing social infrastructure in mine settlements). This however could have limited success because the women concerned are hardly independent of the mine authorities. Power relations that exist between the mining company as employers of breadwinners in the family and providers of shelter, health care, etc tend to shift the balance of negotiating power too much in favour of the mining company. There is nothing that frightens a miner's wife more than the prospect of a husband losing employment. Such relations and the insecurity that generally prevails at mines especially in these days of downsizing and privatisation tend to curtail the formation of any new powerful communities whose bonds are forged by 'interest and place' among these women.

Mining communities are very closed at the local level. There is very little external influence. The lack of interaction with outside or neighbouring communities at the local level negatively affects women as they learn more from direct local level interactions (personal observation). Where mining communities are exposed to external influence of a higher magnitude, communities tend to demand more from mining companies in the form of benefits. An example is the negotiations for social benefits between the residents of Misima Island and Placer Pacific, the owners of Misima mine, in Papua New Guinea (Clark and Cook-Clark, undated), which were influenced by events that were happening in the mining industry in the area around that time. These included problems that lead to the closure of the Bougainville

Mine on the Bougainville Island (Clark and Cook Clarke, *ibid*). Better bargaining power and better communication also helps avert possible conflict.

NGOs have been known to assist in empowering women in other marginalized sectors of the community especially in Zimbabwe's rural areas. This is not the case in mining communities as there is no NGO activity in these settlements in Zimbabwe. The few that are operating in these areas concentrate on HIV/AIDS issues. In Zambia however, there are some NGOs operating in mining communities especially on the privatised mines on the copperbelt.

4 RENCO MINE CASE STUDY.

“We do not belong,---- we simply do not exist”

(Respondent to the Survey on Women in Mining Communities)

4.1 Background to Renco Mine

Rio Tinto Zimbabwe was approached for a mine site to be studied as part of the MMSD project on Gender and Mining – Women in Communities. The mining house then made available Renco mine, located about 70km south east of Masvingo town for the case study purpose. Renco is a gold mine that was established in the late 1970s. It is in the middle of the Nyajena Communal Lands in Masvingo province. Masvingo province is a drought prone area to the south east of Zimbabwe. The province's main economic activities are agriculture, with the sugar estates of the south eastern lowveld playing a key role and mining. Subsistence agriculture is the main occupation of the largest section of the population. The mining activity at Renco plays a key role in providing a market for local agricultural products and also providing employment to the local population.

The mine itself is one of the key gold mines in Zimbabwe. It employs 873 people in total. Of these, 23 are women, all employed in various activities at

the surface. The total number of people in the mine community stood at approximately 9 000 at the time of the survey.

The mining company provides all the infrastructure and amenities at the mine, with a total housing stock of 843 units for both senior and junior employees. The mine provides electricity and water, supports social services such as sporting facilities, recreation and health facilities. There are two schools in the mine lease area, one of which belongs to the mine. The mine is however in the process of handing this school over to the government, as it is in the process of shedding off non core activities. There is also a clinic to cater for mine workers and their families. There are churches, a market place, and community service centre, a beer hall, social clubs and a small commercial centre.

The mine has an educational scholarship, the Renco Mine Bursary to support the education of mine workers' children and the Rio Tinto Foundation scholarship, which is open to all students at Renco Mine Secondary School. These are won on a competitive basis. Although a breakdown of past beneficiaries could not be obtained, discussions with parents of children attending the school pointed to the fact that any child could win. The Rio Tinto foundation is also involved in community projects within the communities outside the mining lease area as part of its community relations drive. An example is the Tugwane Dam and Rupike irrigation scheme, established in 1990. The mine also assists local schools in their small projects. The schools normally approach the mine with their requests and the mine assesses whether these can be met. The mine, according to the Human Resources Manager, always assists in kind as it is difficult to make schools and communities account for cash.

The mine's involvement in the wider social environment is demonstrated by their assistance during the 2000 cyclone Eline disaster. The mine assisted many local schools rebuild structures that were destroyed by the rains. It also repaired a stretch of road leading to the mine used by both mine bound traffic and the villagers.

Villagers involved in the irrigation scheme indicated that the mine has an environmental outreach programme in the communal areas. Plans are also underway to implement a community health program covering some eight wards in the Nyajena communal lands. The programme is being implemented together with the World Health Organisation and the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare. It was revealed by the mine management that this project came up as a result of the health problems prevalent in the area (no resident doctor at local hospital, among many problems).

Details of the methodology used appear in the appendices.

4.2 Findings from the survey

4.2.1 Summary of Findings

The survey of the women at Renco mine revealed some interesting findings. The findings are discussed around the following headings:

- Nature of relationship with the mine management
- Opportunities and Constraints
- Impacts of the mining activity on Women
- Governance
- Coping Strategies

A summary of the findings is presented in tabular form in Table 1 and the detailed discussions follow.

Table 1- Summary of Survey Findings

Key Issue	Summary
Nature of Relationship with the Mine Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of women feel that the relationship is not good. • Management feels that it is good • Mine authorities do not consult women in the community • The social infrastructure is very good at the mine
Opportunities and Constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployment is high – 87% of surveyed women are unemployed • 50% have marketable skills • Restricted in other economic activities that generate income by market size, lack of credit facilities, insecurity and negative attitudes on the part of mine management • Women's needs prioritised as employment opportunities, access to credit, vocational training and support to women's activities are not met at the mine. • 15% of sample have access to means of production and control of benefits • Information in general does not get to the women • Mine management view women in the community as lacking initiative, hence their inability to take up other economic activities

Key Issue	Summary
Impacts of the Mining Activity on Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women in the mining community depend on their husbands for livelihoods • Women feel they are ill –equipped to take up responsibility • Provision of services and the support the mine used to give to women’s club did not help in building capacity, it created dependency • The Environment around the mine is not polluted. There are no negative health effects
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mine is an equal opportunity employer • Employs few women, though, because women do not apply for underground jobs • Information does not filter through to women
Coping Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women have managed to cope at the mine by forming various informal groups

4.2.2 Nature of the Relationship between the Mine and the Women in the Community.

When the women in the community were asked to define the nature of their relationship with the mine (management), 9% of the respondents said that their relationship was good, another 9% said it was neither good nor bad and 11% said it was bad or non-existent. Some women chose not to answer the question.

Generally, the women in the community are not consulted on any issues that may arise at the mine. These could be to do with reduction in support that women’s activities used to enjoy before, or job reduction at the mine. Queries and complaints that are entertained by the mine authorities are those that concern infrastructure maintenance. All women maintained that housing and other physical infrastructure at the mine are in good condition, and generally above average. Women with a higher level of education (secondary and tertiary level) felt more disgruntled about the way the mine consults the women. Women in the lower and middle income groups generally make use

of the community services office to raise queries and complaints, hence the general feeling that their relationship with the mine is tenable. The women in the higher income group channel their complaints through their spouses and are thus not in touch with the mine management in general.

Mine management felt that there is a good relationship between themselves and the women in the community. The mine management is responsible for the running of the mining settlement including the provision and maintenance of all infrastructure at the mine. The management maintained that their offices are open to handle issues from the community. Women interviewed particularly from the low and middle income groups expressed reservations on this assertion. It is possible that the authorities think their offices are accessible to everyone. From the discussions, the women feel that demanding anything including the right to being treated as stakeholders from the mine could jeopardise the employment conditions of their spouses, hence the collective decision not to say or want anything, at least loudly.

4.2.3 Opportunities and Constraints

The women in the community studied are generally unemployed, with 87% of the sample surveyed unemployed. They depend on their husbands for the bulk of the household requirements. Out of the total surveyed, less than 50% have marketable skills or training that can enable them to enter the formal job market. They have skills such as tailoring, crocheting and knitting that can be used to generate income. The survey found that they have no choices with respect to employment opportunities, business opportunities and other economic activities. They do not even have choices on where to live. Teaching is the only choice of employment open to the women as there are schools in the mine lease area and in the neighbouring communities. The majority of women are traders /vendors of vegetables and clothes.

The women cannot venture into private business as they face a number of problems that restrict their options. These are summarised as:

Market size: The mine community is small. There is a limit to how much business it can support. Vegetable and clothes vending are two of the major activities carried out by the women. Chicken rearing is also another widely undertaken activity. These are however tightly contested activities with rural farmers taking part in them. This generally tends to disadvantage the traders in the mining community who do not produce the agricultural commodities themselves.

Lack of Credit facilities: Access to credit facilities to help start individual and group activities was given as a major handicap. The women in the low and middle income groups indicated that they would want to take up income generating projects as groups in order to ease the burden of loan repayment and management requirements, but they lack the resources to finance such activities. The mine does not have a loan facility to assist women in starting up economic activities. Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), which are creating opportunities for rural women, do not operate in mining communities. No one could explain why NGOs are not covering these areas.

Lack of Security: The mining activity by its nature is temporary. All mine residents know that. Accidents, illness and death compound the temporary nature of mining life to miners and their families. The economic downturn in Zimbabwe and the low gold prices on the world market have combined to demonstrate to the community that the mine is not home to anyone, as it cannot provide forever. As a result of this, and the fact that management is said to constantly remind everyone that the mine can close anytime, everyone and especially the women feel they are in transit. This restricts the kinds of activities women can engage in. It would not make sense to invest at a location where one is not assured of a reasonable period of tenure. A woman's tenure at the mine depends on the availability of a husband's job.

Attitudes by Mine Management: The research has highlighted the difficult relationship between the mine management and the women who reside in the community. Currently the women do not get part time employment from the mine, although they used to; most of the women at the mine used to belong to

a women's club which ceased functioning between 1997 and 1998. Through this club, the mine used to hire women to provide catering services at mine hosted functions, to sweep the compound and to do laundry. This was welcomed among the women as it supplemented the family income and also made the women feel appreciated. This has since stopped and those surveyed gave various reasons for the cancellation of the contracts. Although it was not clear whether an explanation was ever sought from the mine management, the women blamed change in management and economic problems being faced by the mine as being responsible for their failure.

The women felt that the mine should at least consider them for odd jobs particularly in these difficult times when families need extra incomes to cope. The mine management on the other hand feel that they have done enough for the women. That they are failing to realise their aspirations is being viewed as lack of initiative and a culture of dependence ingrained in the women at mining locations.

The location of the mine is viewed as a major constraint to the development of the area and opportunities for women. Among the women interviewed were a number whose husbands had been transferred from other mining locations to Renco. These were asked to compare the opportunities open to them at Renco and the other mines where they came from. Renco is "in the middle of nowhere", was the major perception of the women. They suggest that there is not much one can do other than sit at home. Transport costs are high to the nearest major centre, which is about 70km away, where business is viable. The surrounding communities are poor. They depend on the mine for relief of their poverty, making it less likely for the unemployed women to engage in anything economically viable here.

The only benefits the women derive from the mine are related to the employment of their spouses, housing and social services. Asked whether they actually use the sporting facilities at the mine, one woman responded, "I am too frustrated to play netball".

When an analysis of the gender division of work was carried out on the activities of women and men in this community, it emerged that the women are engaged in domestic reproductive work, have very little or no control of capital, labour and profits.

Closely related to choices and opportunities are the women's needs. In the case study site, the women's needs were ranked as:

1. employment opportunities
2. access to credit
3. vocational training facilities
4. company support for women's activities such as the women's club

Unemployed women in urban areas in Zimbabwe can take up urban crop cultivation to supplement the family diet, as well as income. Agricultural activities are restricted in the mine lease area. Generally, gardening on the individual family yard is what is permitted. This was seen as another disadvantage directly related to being resident in a mine lease area. The women bemoaned the lack of competition within the community itself as also to blame for their lack of opportunities. Most, if not all the houses for people in a particular income group are the same. No one owns a house in the community as they all belong to the mine. There is no incentive for people in this community to want to change their lives.

The existence of the mine has been blamed by the women for their powerlessness in the home, particularly with respect to control of assets. The women feel that if they had something to contribute to the household income, they would be better placed in the home. The women contribute the reproductive work, which has no or very little financial reward, hence, the diminished power. A similar situation was found to exist in Peru, where the women in the mine settlement stated that they were only allowed to make decisions in the household by their husbands, after they started making financial contributions to the family.

(Portillos, *op cit*).

From the responses in the interviews, an analysis was carried out focussing on gender division of work, access to means of production and control of benefits and participation in decision making at the household level. The following results were recorded. The only productive tasks carried out by the majority of the women were agriculture (in the rural homes) and informal trading, they have less social responsibilities (food preparation and family care) than usual and have normal community tasks (Appendix 2 shows a summary of the tasks that fall on women in this community).

Very few (approx. 15% of the sample) have access to means of production and control benefits as well. Information in particular is difficult to come by. The women participate in decision making at the household level, but without control or a reasonable degree of control, over household resources and assets, implementation of these decisions remain a man's domain.

4.3 Impacts of the Mining Activity on Women

From the discussions with the women at the mine, it can be concluded that there are significant challenges to improve the lives of women in mining communities. It seems however, that the constraints outweigh the opportunities.

The women at the case study site generally felt that mines do not have opportunities for women to exploit. They leave the women ill-equipped to take care of families in situations where husbands are no longer in a position to shoulder the responsibility of family care. The interviews revealed that women in mining communities are "kept women". They depend on their husbands and the mine for survival, and their relationship with the mine goes as far as the husband or breadwinner is still in employment at the mine. Mining activities, which are contained and in remote areas promote powerlessness on the part of women and reduce their access to assets that are accessible to other women.

A group discussion with women who were club members revealed that the women can not even regroup and form a new club outside the patronage of the mine authorities. The women stated that they needed someone to guide them in their activities. The background to this is rooted in the fact that the mine used to support the club's activities financially and materially. The mine employed an adviser to these women who saw to it that the club activities took place. The mine used to provide transport for the women to travel to other parts of the province for women's competitions and other events. When this was withdrawn, the women did not know how to proceed. The dependence created and fed over a long time could not just vanish overnight. Instead of building capacity within the women, the club and the way it was run actually destroyed the confidence in the women to stand alone without the backing of the mine.

It was not clear whether the mining activity makes women's work more difficult. One could say that compared to the rural women, the women at the mine 's work especially domestic work (which is basically what they do) is made much easier by the availability of services such as water and electricity. Asked whether the mining activity had any negative impact on the health of women and children, over 90% of the respondents said it did not have any negative impact. The mine surroundings are well kept. The residential areas are not exposed to any harmful effects of the mine and the mine has managed to rehabilitate its waste dump so effectively that there is virtually no dust emanating from it.

It was difficult to establish the extent of conflict within the community and within the household. Prostitution is an issue particularly from the point of view of the non working women. The existence of a satellite settlement just outside the mine lease area, said to be a haven for prostitutes was viewed as a negative impact on the women. The group of peer educators who reside in this area and are former prostitutes also reported resistance from the women when they started the HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns. The peer educators do not use mine facilities except the community hall where they hold their meetings twice a week. Over time though, the relations between the women

in the mining community and the peer educators have improved, mainly because the women in the community now realise that the peer educators are no longer in the prostitution business. Mine management stated that there is a mine AIDS awareness drive. At the time of the survey, little was said about its work by the women in the community. It was only mentioned by the Nurse at the clinic.

4.4 Governance

Women wherever they are need to take part in making decisions that affect their lives. In Mining areas, especially remotely located sites, women's lives revolve around the mining activity. The Human Resources Manager said that Renco is an equal opportunity employer. They however do not receive any applications from women for underground jobs, thus there are no women in underground work at the mine.

Consultation is minimal especially with women in the community. The women claim that the mine consults its employees only. Critical issues that affect women such as retrenchments, threats of closure are communicated to the mine workers only, and depending on one's relationship with her spouse, that information can be lost. All women in the survey indicated that there was no consultation with them. Access to mine management is limited according to the women. The channels are there but women feel intimidated by the presence of men right through the hierarchy. They feel their issues are not understood especially by male managers. The general feeling is that mine management does not view them as stakeholders.

4.5 Coping Strategies

The women in the study area went to great lengths to try and show that they really have difficulties in trying to live normal fulfilled lives as women at the mine.

- There are a number of loose associations that they fall back on and which help them cope. Most of them are built around church membership and also on common interests such as vending.
- Informal cooperatives help the women cope with some of the difficulties they face. Women who are in the chicken rearing business indicated that most of their sales are credit based. This helps the other women to have access to food and then pay later when they get their allowances from their husbands at the end of the month.
- There are also savings clubs where groups of women in the vegetable market contribute a small amount of money every day that they give to one person to enable that person to buy meat for the family. It is commonly referred to as “meat money”, but the beneficiary for the day can use it to purchase any other groceries.
- The church based organisations are more effective in providing moral support and assisting in times of bereavement. These are more popular and they also have their fund raising activities though the proceeds go to the church coffers instead of to individuals.

The women from the high income bracket do take part in the church based activities, but they are more inclined to belong to sports clubs than to any other form of association.

5 LESSONS LEARNT

There is a general misconception among people outside mining communities about those who live in mining communities. It is also generally thought that mining communities are rich and thus women in these areas shun working. From the visit, it was clear that these women are forgotten. The majority of them view the mine authorities as *the absolute powers* in such communities, making it a taboo to stand up to them. Women in mining communities depend on the jobs of their husbands, they dare not demand anything extra from the mine authorities. The truth is that there is a lot of poverty in these communities which is masked by nice houses, electricity and water, and

sometimes tennis courts which are hardly ever used by the ordinary woman.

The causes of the poverty according to the women surveyed are:

- Low wages on the part of the husbands
- Dependence on a single income because women generally are unemployed

Women interviewed particularly in the low income bracket were quoting very low figures as monthly salaries for their husbands. On such salaries, an urban dweller with a family of four children to look after would not last a week in Zimbabwe. Mine authorities are on one huge public relations campaign, they cannot see what is happening in their own backyards. Nowadays, nearly every mine is talking of “concentrating on our core business”. Concentrating on one’s core business makes economic sense. Looking at it from a mining perspective, it implies not only abandoning some of the methods of running mine areas that were working well, but a move into a completely new area that might further remove the industry from moving towards sustainability. When women at the study site were asked whether they felt the settlement would survive once the mine has closed, the women said no. The mine brought life into the area and given the fact that other than the mine, there was no other significant development in the area over the past two decades, the women are most likely correct.

The main question then is what will happen to the infrastructure? If it goes to the local authority, which seems to be the only logical option, who will buy or even lease the properties once the money that came with the mine is gone? Community issues might not be part of the mine’s core business depending on how one views mining, but it is communities that help mine survive, especially the women. We are currently looking at a general industry shift away from providing housing, health, educational and other facilities to a situation where local authorities provide these to the mine workers. While this move could be in the best interest of the industry in terms of maximising profits, it is difficult to visualise the industry as contributing towards poverty alleviation and equal opportunity for instance. Such a move will help the

industry survive in the short term, but will not move it towards sustainability. Mining operations, which had moved from the single sex hostel type of accommodation to family unit accommodation, have a more satisfied workforce.

If mining operations shift completely to provision of temporary shelter for the workers and longer leave periods for employees, problems that were found in the single sex hostels will emerge again. This time around they will be more detrimental to the industry considering the ravages of HIV/AIDS.

The fact that mine authorities at the case study site had no idea that women in the community felt that their relationship with the mine was not good shows that it is important for mining companies specifically and the sector in general to open communication channels between mines and women in communities. Emphasis has been put on channelling information to community leaders (chief, headman, member of parliament) on developments on mines without realising that hardly do we find women occupying these leadership roles in community. Women as an interest group should be targeted for information dissemination, using their various associations.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

Emanating from the survey at Renco, one can recommend that:

- 1 Mine authorities need not run away from their responsibilities on the social front. They need to engage all stakeholders including women in the community on the best way forward. This has to be done through constructive engagement with stakeholders. Participatory planning and dialoguing would be the most appropriate and would yield results most likely to satisfy all parties.
- 2 Communication is very important between the haves and have-nots in the mining community. Women, unemployed as they mostly exist at mines, are 'have-nots' while the mine management as the employers of spouses and breadwinners are the 'haves' of the mining settlement. It is therefore important for mining companies specifically and the mining sector in

- general to involve women in coming up with decisions on issues that affect the women directly. It is also important for the sector to take into account the needs, aspirations and concerns of women as they emanate from the community.
- 3 In the process of weaning non-core activities, priority should be given to the women in the community to take over those activities by subcontracting them and encouraging them to provide services that the mine requires.
 - 4 To sustain livelihoods, it is necessary that the role of women at mine sites be revisited with the view to creating more opportunities for them.
 - 5 Non Governmental Organisations should be encouraged to form partnerships with other key players and the women themselves for the betterment of women's lives in mining communities.
 - 6 Individual mining companies should put in place monitoring and evaluation systems for social indicators for their operations. Specific measures should be put in place to monitor and evaluate the gender performance of operations during the different phases of mine life right through to post closure to ensure that women do not bear unnecessarily huge disadvantages compared to other groups.
 - 7 A more detailed study covering a wider community (mining community as defined by MMSD) would create a better picture of the issues that affect women as a result of mining activities.
 - 8 Central and local government(s) should put in place policies that promote a more equitable distribution of benefits emanating from social projects, by ensuring that such policies take into consideration the different roles played by men and women in communities.

Generally, mining communities are hostile to women. The systems are not open or gender sensitive. There are a lot of gender stereotypes especially on the roles of men and women in the communities. These communities are closed and outsiders find it difficult to penetrate, hence change is slow.

7 CONCLUSIONS

Women in mining communities are forgotten. In reasonable set-ups such as the Renco case, they have good housing and other services. Their problems would be viewed as belonging to a lesser category. Generally, there is need for a review of mine operating procedures to take into account the needs of women. Opportunities need to be opened in these communities to enable women to realise better lives. By allowing women more active roles in the economic sector, this would greatly contribute to poverty reduction and sustainable development. The power and confidence that the ability to earn a living creates in women who had nothing is summed in these quotations:

“I am a businesswoman whereas before I was only a woman. I used to be known as ‘the wife of Toribio, the miner’, but now I have my own money and can buy and sell my own animals”. And “You know what’s the best of all? We are no longer sitting down waiting to be given food and other things. Now we ourselves produce, invest, and harvest the fruits”, says another, whose happy smile is adorned by only two teeth. (Portillos, op cit).

It is not necessary to have women struggle to take over responsibility only when problems have hit a mine. It is only logical to build into plans for the mines the interests of other players such as miners’ families. Most miners’ wives have no hope for themselves and their children. To achieve sustainable development, it is crucial to plan with and cater for current generations, for the sake of future generations.

Transparency and consultation in the way mines operate is equally critical if the sector is to achieve sustainable development. It is thus necessary for all sections of the mining community to be consulted and informed of critical decisions affecting not only the operations of the mine, but relations between the mine and the community.

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Personal Communications

Interviews help with various representatives of Organisations in Zimbabwe between April and June, 2001.

9 APPENDICES

9.1.1 Methodology

The survey of the women at Renco Mine was conducted between the 11th and the 15th of June 2001. The interviews were self administered to individuals and group meetings were held. Individuals who preferred to fill in questionnaires (shown in appendix 1) were given the option to do so. The interviews were carried out across the mining community, which basically can be divided into three classes, with distinct locations on the mine.

- Group 1: Low-income group are the wives of lower grade workers, who live in the high-density section of the mine residential area. Most of these women run vending stalls at the vegetable market. They generally preferred to have the questionnaires administered to them by the interviewer. Ten women from this section were interviewed individually, while 3 group meetings were held.
- Group 2: The middle-income group. Two group meetings were held, while 6 individual interviews were conducted.
- Group 3: The high-income group, some of the women are employed. This group comprised spouses of the senior management at the mine. They preferred to fill in the questionnaire instead of discussing the issues with the interviewer. A total of 20 women filled in the questionnaire from this section.

A further two groups of women were also covered in the survey. The first of these are the women employed at the service centre. They are not employed by the mine itself, but by entrepreneurs who lease commercial properties at the mine. They however occupy mine housing. Three women from this section were interviewed. The other group of women are peer educators in an HIV/AIDS project run by the Project Support Group (PSG). This project is independent of the mine, though the mine gave the PSG permission to operate at Renco and to engage with the mine workers. The project targets former commercial sex workers and trains them to work as peer educators on

a more or less voluntary basis. The group at Renco had 22 former commercial sex workers and a project coordinator. These women live outside the mine lease area, but have direct dealings with the mine population.

Interviews were also held with the Human Resources Manager at Renco, the Sister in Charge at the clinic, who preferred to fill in a questionnaire and three Agricultural extension workers stationed at the Rupike Irrigation Scheme, and the Chairperson and secretary of the irrigation scheme. **Table 2** shows the different respondents in the survey.

Table 2- Breakdown of Survey respondents

Category	Description	No of Interviews	No of Group meetings
Group 1	Women from the low income bracket	10	3
Group 2	Women from the Middle Income bracket	6	2
Group 3	Women from the High Income Bracket	20	nil
Group 4	Women employed at the commercial services centre, not employed by the mine	3	nil
Group 5	Peer Educators in PSG HIV/AIDS programme, Former commercial sex workers, live outside mine lease area	nil	1

9.1.2 List of Key informants in the survey

1. Human Resources Manager, Renco Mine
2. Resident Agricultural Extension Officers at Rupike Irrigation Scheme
3. Chairperson of Women's club at the Mine
4. Chairperson and Treasurer of the Restaurant Cooperative at the mine
5. Chairperson and Secretary of Rupike Irrigation Scheme (Plot holders)

The questionnaire was generally self administered and acted as a guide for the group interviews.

Questionnaire for Women in Mining Communities

1. Are you employed? Yes No
By whom?
Doing What?
How did you come to be here at the mine?
Do you get part time employment from the mine?
2. Education: Primary Secondary Tertiary
3. Skills:
4. Which clubs do you belong to?
5. Your Household duties:
6. Who controls the family's assets?
7. Does the mine consult you on any developments?
8. What is the nature of your relationship with the mine?
9. Do they take into account your complains? Queries?
10. How do you channel your queries to the mine authorities?
11. What is the state of social services?
12. Do you derive any benefits from the mining activity as women?
If so, please list:
13. What are the negative effects of the mining activity on you as women?

14. What choices do you have, with respect to:

Employment

Education of children

Taking part in various activities

15. Prioritise your needs:

16. What are your assets?

Skill

Money

Animals

Property

17. How would you rate your health?

18. Would it be somehow related to the existence of the mine?

19. What are the problems that you face here at the mine as women?

20. What would you want to see done differently?

9.2 Gender Analysis Matrix used at Renco Mine

Productive task	Men	Women	Both
Agriculture		X	
Industry	X		
Service	X		
Formal	X		
Informal		X	
Social Tasks and Responsibilities			
Food			X
Water			
Family Care		X	
Education	X		
Health	X		
Community Tasks and Responsibilities			
Births			
Funerals		X	X
Marriages		X	X
Maintenance of Public Places (market)		X	
Access to Means of Production and Control of Benefits			
Land			
Labour	X	X	
Capital	X		
Equipment	X		
Inputs	X		
Information	X		
Training			
Benefits	X		X
Participation in Decision Making			
Production	X		
Domestic and reproduction ; No of Chn, contraception, education for boys & girls	X		X
Management of Family budget	X		X

9.3 List of People Contacted

Name of Contact	Organization	Location	Nature of Contact
Mr. D.D Matanga	Chamber of Mine - Zimbabwe	Harare	Meeting
Bernd Drechsler	Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG)	Harare	Meeting
Mr. Madume	Renco Mine	Renco	Meeting
Mr. Mafirakureva	Agritex	Rupike	Meeting
Mrs Muzembi	Rupike Irrigation Scheme	Rupike	Meeting
Mrs Mukarati	Agritex	Rupike	Meeting
Mr P. Tembo	Moolmann Mines	Harare	Meeting
Mr. C.	Ministry of Mines - Zimbabwe	Harare	Meeting
	UNIFEM	Harare	Telephone Conversation

ⁱ Portillos Z. "From Miners' Wives to Businesswomen".

ⁱⁱ Nair, J. "As Gold Strike ends, Women find ways of Survival".

ⁱⁱⁱ ACPD, Inside Our Mining World

^{iv} In "our Local Communities, Culture and Heritage", Anglo American PLC SHE Report 2000.

^v Rupike Irrigation Scheme is one of the community projects set up by a major mining house in Zimbabwe for the benefit of communities that live adjacent to a mining activity.

^{vi} The IISD defines sustainable livelihoods as being "concerned with people's capacities to generate and maintain their means of living, enhance their well-being and that of future generations. These capacities are contingent upon the availability and accessibility of options which are ecological, socio-cultural and political and are predicated on equity, ownership of resources and participatory decision making"

^{vii} In Waddington *et al* (1992)

^{viii} In Gender Equity: Concepts and Tools