

Devonshire Initiative Gender Equality Workshop Report

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St Paul's University, Ottawa Canada

Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	1
Confidentiality.....	1
About the Devonshire Initiative (DI).....	1
Executive Summary.....	2
Context for the DI on gender equality.....	4
Session #1: Framing gender equality.....	5
Session #2: Group learning and sharing perspectives.....	8
Session #3: Identifying areas for empowerment and collaborative action.....	12
Session #4: What do we want to learn more about? What do we want to do next?.....	14

Confidentiality

The workshop referenced in this report was conducted under the Chatham House Rule. Accordingly, this document in its entirety and any un-cited quotations, facts, or other sources, is to be considered privileged material. Find more information about Chatham House Rule [here](#).

About the Devonshire Initiative (DI)

The Devonshire Initiative is a multi-stakeholder forum focused on improving development outcomes in the mining context. Our members include mining companies, non-profit organizations and other practitioners.

The objective of the DI is to provide learning and cross-sector networking opportunities that improve member practice on the ground. We do this by hosting workshops and events with representatives from various sectors. Over the past decade, the DI has successfully fostered debate, dialogue and discussion in this field. Find more information about the DI [here](#).

Executive Summary

The Devonshire Initiative Gender Equality Workshop was held on May 31, 2018. Participants included DI member organizations and active observers (international NGOs, mining companies, government agencies, and other interested stakeholders). The session built on three previous gender equality-focused events organized by the DI in the last 4 years. The objectives of this workshop were to:

- Build a foundation among participants about gender equality;
- Identify gaps in knowledge about gender equality concepts and practices, and knowledge-building opportunities; and,
- Identify opportunities for mining companies and NGOs to work collaboratively to promote women's empowerment.

The workshop took a different approach and was anchored around a series of interactive learning activities facilitated by Dean LaPlonge from Factive. Factive is a consultancy that works across sectors to provide knowledge and solutions to gender equality.

The key take aways from the discussion are:

- The terms we use and how we interpret them are complex. There are multiple (and sometimes competing) interpretations which can lead to discomfort, misunderstanding, and tension in how the terms gender equality, women's empowerment, and feminism are used both by development actors and corporations. We do not necessarily need to agree on these terms. The point is to promote a culture of listening and respectful dialogue, where it is acceptable to be confused or uneasy, so long as we acknowledge and seek to understand divergent perspectives.
- By exploring 12 topics that are central to gender equality issues, participants were able to begin to articulate how gender is experienced in different facets. Participants identifies several knowledge gaps and questions to consider in the future. Moving forward, participants are interested in exploring gender within 4 specific elements - community decision making; access to resources; land rights; and cultural practices.
- To achieve gender equality, we must take a multi-stakeholder approach and there are many ways that mining companies, NGOs' and local governments can drive gender equality. Some of the ways that organizations can collaborate to improve gender equality include:
 - Co-create and deliver engagement, awareness, activities (e.g. consultation) and programming to ensure it supports/promotes gender equality
 - Co-construct decision-making frameworks that are gender sensitive and inclusive
 - Improve info sharing and communication with women
 - Establish common baseline of gender situation/context (including a stakeholder analysis that highlight power dynamics)
 - Work with local governments (NGOs build capacity, companies leverage position to promote gender equality)
 - Host events that have deliberate women's representation with multiple stakeholder groups

- To support this discussion, workshop participants would like to:
 - Map work each group is doing to see where there is energy and opportunity for potential partnership;
 - Explore what mainstreaming gender at the DI looks like; and
 - Test academic information in real life.
- Participants are interested in the following topics for future workshops:
 - Practical ways to discuss gender equality internally? To discuss GE with external stakeholders? To challenge social norms around gender in a respectful way.
 - Information and examples on implementing a feminist approach to natural resource management.
 - Examples about how mining companies are working on gender (e.g. engagement, community development programs, local content etc.).
 - Pilot gender impact assessments in mining.
 - Explore gender and identities more fully, not just female/male.

Context for the DI on gender equality

Discussions related to gender equality are not new for DI members. Already 50% of DI member NGOs have an explicit focus on gender equality. There is a robust body of 'good practice' and multi-stakeholder discussion happening around gender equality. This has historically focused on internal, workplace gender equality programs as well as frameworks for accountability and remedy. DI members are increasingly focused on integrating a gender lens to engagement practices, standard programming and monitoring and evaluation.

In 2016, DI members talked explicitly about gender equality within their organizations and their workforce at the CEO summit. A 2017 workshop went deeper on the topic looking at gender equality in terms of operations, programs, and development impacts. In addition, the gender equality is a cross-cutting theme across many DI activities, including discussions on 'vulnerable groups' and human rights.

Challenges

DI members have noted that there are many challenges in driving gender equality, including:

- Across the mining and development industries gender equality can often still feel like an 'add-on' to initiatives and programs.
- Gender equality is not fully integrated and mainstreamed within the work of companies and or NGOs in mining contexts. Workshop participants noted that this is partially due to 'apathy' within organizations, or even the perception that gender equality represents a zero-sum game, where more attention to women means less benefit or resources to other groups.
- Many of our social, cultural, and economic systems are rooted in elements that are built on inequality.
- Discussions about gender equality can feel more personal than some other discussions in the development context. This can leave individuals feeling vulnerable or as if the discussion is a judgement of character.

DI members have also noted that there are many opportunities to advance the pace of gender equality within our organizations. We can collectively:

- Leverage and learn from the broader mainstreaming of the GE discussion. This includes the notable attention on gender equality through social movements like the gender pay gap and #MeToo.
- Build off the strong and growing interest by government in gender equality.
- Support and learn from organizations in the development sector that are coming to terms with less acknowledged but serious issues of gender inequality and sexual mis-conduct.
- Support and learn from the increased attention the private sector is giving their 'gender equality footprint.'

Session #1: Framing gender equality

Concepts

At the start of the workshop, participants were asked to define and discuss four key elements related to gender equality. These terms resonated and were repeated throughout the workshop.

The activity highlighted that terms in the gender equality sphere are complex, often debated, and not always something commonly agreed upon. Differing perspectives and the evolving nature of these terms means that **gender** should itself be seen as a concept and a practice subject to change, not as a fixed idea.

Participants were asked to match four terms with examples of how those terms play out in real life.

Term	Example
Gender equality	The organization introduced a policy to remove visibility of the gender of applicants from the initial screening phase for employment.
Women's empowerment	The organization introduced a new fast-track learning and development program for women.
Gender socialization	The organization carried out an assessment to find out how well its training programs for teachers were encouraging teachers to challenge gender norms for boys and girls.
Feminism	The organization wanted to change how its managers worked to focus on the process and collaborative work, instead of getting things done.

DI members discussed several different definitions and references related to the terms:

Gender

- The difference between '**gender**' and '**sex**' is commonly misunderstood
 - Gender is constructed and is something that is an ongoing 'practice,'
 - Sex refers to the physical biology of a person
- Gender is a social construct – this refers to the various external pressures that influence how we understand and perform our gender. You can 'see' this social construct whenever you are denied freedom to behave the way you want (e.g. you're too emotional), or change the way you want to behave because of external pressures.
- Individuals make decisions – conscious and unconscious – about gender on a daily basis (e.g. how they dress, how they behave, how they speak etc.) It is not an absolute, it is an ongoing practice.
- As people grow older, their understandings around gender tend to solidify and become more persistent. Children, adolescents, and youth tend to be more malleable in how they understand and 'practice' gender. Young people can be highly influenced, which can have long-term implications for how they grow-up and understand their own and other peoples gender.
 - Not an absolute, every morning I am acting out my gender with what I decide to wear
 - Constant, ongoing practice
 - Scope of influence (e.g. kids are influenced more directly, teenagers are influenced more widely, might become more narrow again as we get older)
 - Can perform gender back and forth, step in and out of different practices of gender

Gender Equality

- Emphasizes removing gender from the analysis and looking at the person on equal terms.
- Can be seen as an end point, a goal or as a current state.

Women's Empowerment

- Focuses on supporting women/girls in order to achieve a state of gender equality.
- Some participants find that women's' empowerment provides more agency to women and girls and acknowledges the challenges specific to women and girls.
- Some participants noted that women's empowerment is in fact a form of inequality: giving preference to women or denying them their agency as 'equals'. Or that women's empowerment focuses on men because it looks to promote masculine qualities, as opposed to making feminine qualities more acceptable.

Feminism

- Feminism is traditionally understood as a way to apply a *collaborative* lens on social, cultural, economic, and political issues. At its core, feminism deals with issues of systems and of power: who has it? who does not?
- A feminist lens refers to looking at the structures and systems that support a given situation in order to approach and value all view points equally. It also means acknowledging that historically women's/feminine view points haven't been valued equally.
- The term feminism has become loaded and is understood differently. Feminism is often understood as *excluding* men. As a result, it often avoided by both the private sector and civil society
 - In the mining AND civil society sectors the term feminism is less commonly applied than women's empowerment and gender equality.
 - As one participant at the workshop noted, "putting an '-ism' on the end of the term has made feminism as charged of a term as communism – wrongly so."
 - Another participant asked "why is it so radical to want to level things off?"

A few specific questions emerged through this discussion.

What is the difference between "gender" and "sex"?

- Gender is linked to social norms, expectations etc. It's about behaviours and roles.
- Sex is linked to the body and biology.
- There are problems with the sex-gender relationship, including the idea/fact that sex is not so absolute.

How do social constructions of "gender" work?

- There can be external pressures to "do" gender in a particular way – laws, peer pressure, education, religion, family structures, media.
- Some of these are often said to be "cultural" norms whereas in fact they are "social" norms.
- There can also be internal pressure to try and reach an unobtainable hegemonic masculinity/femininity.
- The fact that gender is constructed means it can be challenged.

How is gender equality different from women's empowerment?

- Gender equality means equal rights and opportunities regardless of gender.
- Women's empowerment is a strategy to reach gender equality in contexts where women—as a specific gender—do not have equal rights and opportunities.
- Gender equity is another term, often used interchangeably with gender equality, but gender equity recognises that giving men and women the same opportunities doesn't always result in gender equality, so gender equity is about factoring in the different positions and experiences of men and women, to ensure fairness in potential to succeed.

What is "feminism"?

- See above.
- Feminism is often used to imply support for women's empowerment or gender equality or gender equity.
- There are different kinds of feminism: liberal, socialist, radical, queer, eco-.
- It is not a new or even a "1960s" thing.

The two key take aways from this session are:

- The terms we use and how we interpret them are complex. There are multiple (and sometimes competing) interpretations which can lead to discomfort, misunderstanding, and tension in how the terms gender equality, women's empowerment, and feminism are used both by development actors and corporations.
- We do not necessarily need to agree on these terms. The point is to promote a culture of listening and respectful dialogue, where it is acceptable to be confused or uneasy, so long as we acknowledge and seek to understand divergent perspectives.

An update from the Government of Canada.

During the workshop, Global Affairs Canada provided a perspective on the topic of gender equality as well as updates relevant to the themes of the workshop. Gender equality is a cornerstone of Canada's new Feminist International Assistance Policy, which includes explicit call-outs and directions on women's empowerment and gender equality. From a sector perspective, natural resources remains of key importance, as it cuts across many or all of FIAP's areas, including peace and security as well as economic growth, among others. Sub-policies are being written for many of FIAP's coverage areas, and will possibly include links to natural resources, governance, and other topics related to the interests of DI members.

As regards the intersection of gender equality and natural resources, GAC is aware of and considering its contributions to a number of relevant issues, such as: human rights analysis and gender impact assessments; gender based violence; promoting and protecting women's roles as human rights defenders; and encouraging improved multi-sector engagement and management with explicit attention on gender equality. From these themes, a number of GAC-funded initiatives have woven gender equality into natural resource-focused programs, at country levels (i.e. one example was of a CESO & WUSC project in Mongolia) and globally (i.e. promoting women's rights in multi-lateral platforms such as the OECD, EITI, and IGF). In June 2018, Canada will be supporting the World Bank to convene a discussion on gender in oil, gas, and mining.

Session #2: Group learning and sharing perspectives.

This session focused on a collectively building a 'gender equality knowledge map.' This activity explored 12 topics that are central to gender equality issues and allowed participants to identify knowledge gaps and questions to consider in the future.

Participants discussed:

1. **The underlying concept of the topic** (e.g. cultural practices, livelihoods etc.)
2. **How the topic might shape the lives of men and women differently.** To do this, participants considered how the topic might change if men or women were the subject (influencing/owning), or the object (where the topic acts upon them).

These are the notes/themes participants discussed.

Community decision making

- Community decision making refers to 'everyone' having a say.
- It can include the community that is directly and/or indirectly impacted by those decisions.
- Communities are often diverse and multi-faceted but there is an element that binds them (e.g. place, culture, rights, political group etc.).
- Community decision making infers there is a process that representatives from the community participate in, although that is not always the case.
- Context is very important – It's not the same in every community, although there are trends that are similar.
- The tendency is that a small group participates in the process and they are generally men
 - Small group of men represent the community, usually decide on and participate in process (e.g. who is consulted, how consultation takes place etc.)
 - Women tend to influence decision making outside of established processes
 - Small group of men represent the company and/or NGO in the process
- If community decision making is not inclusive, is it an outsiders place to influence that? If so, how can they influence that?

Cultural practices

- Cultural practices rely on societal norms and socially accepted (and expected) patterns of behaviour
- There are expectations about how people of different genders participate in various cultural practices – specifically the time, control and resources that are devoted to them (e.g. women are more involved in weddings, men are more involved in sporting activities). This 'genders' these activities and creates expectations for how people should engage based on gender. When people don't perform these cultural activities in the same way it can be difficult for the broader community.
- A key take-away for the group was to recall that people don't have a single cultural role because of their gender. It is substantially more complex in nearly all cultures, even when cultural norms appear simple, rigid, and predictable.

Livelihoods

- Livelihoods refer to both income and non-income generating activities.

- This is about more than just jobs, it is about tangible experiences such as access to skills training, as well as intangible aspects such as the experiences women face when working.
- Livelihoods can be limited based on gender, there are many jobs that are geared for men based on expectations for men/women (e.g. time away from home, physical requirements).
- When livelihoods are gendered it means that one group (predominately male) controls resources and purchasing power.

Economic opportunity

- What opportunity do people have to participate in the economy (e.g. employment, direct and in direct, small business opportunities) and control their experience (e.g. what work they do? what they do with the assets from that experience?). Similar to livelihoods, this touches on issues of access and control.
- How can women and men experience economic empowerment differently?
 - Men often have more opportunities for formal economic activity
 - Women are often more involved in informal economic activity
 - Men can control assets of all activities for a households, although women are responsible for household management
- The gender equality goal is for people to have a equal opportunities to participate and control outputs from economic activity.
- Companies have a direct influence over economic opportunities. Communities have indirect influence.
- It is important also to bear in mind how women and men build/cultivate, access/manage, and shape their networks (people, resources) differently.
- Increasingly we are seeing the benefits to society, to organizations (i.e. firms), and to individuals, when women are in greater control over productive resources (i.e. the gender lens investing movement).

Sexual and reproductive health (SRH)

- SRH refers to the state of reproductive processes, functions and system at all stages of life. It addresses both physical and mental health, gendered based violence is a core element of the definition.
- Sexual and reproductive health can be experienced very differently by women and men, both what it means to be 'healthy', health issues, access to health care services and rights to treat health issues.
- Key elements of sexual and reproductive health are:
 - How youth are taught about sex and reproductive rights (impacts behaviours and perceptions on key issues like control of reproductive rights and contraceptives).
 - The legal practices and systems concerning reproductive rights.
 - Social and cultural considerations including gender based violence.
- An underlying question is whether laws (which are among the most important determinants of SRH) can promote equal sexual and reproductive health when men are disproportionately influential in legal systems.

Gender based violence (GBV)

- GBV includes harm or violence perpetuated on a person or group based on gender.
- While this appears to be a straight-forward topic (“I would know GBV when I read about it”) it is in fact very complicated: there are many gray areas where common agreement is lacking.
- In some contexts, cultural norms make it more possible for GBV to occur or to go un-punished legally or normatively.
- Both women and men can be perpetrators and victims of GBV.
- In other situations, cultural stereotypes create a ‘victim’ identity that stigmatizes women and thereby inhibits disclosure and healing.
- The law can both ameliorate and exacerbate GBV, and should not be taken as an entirely neutral or positive pathway for resolution of the issue.

Domestic violence

- Domestic Violence is abuse that is carried out in the home, intimate partner relationships.
- Often relates to power relations and dynamics, with the abuse carried out by a person in a position of power in the relationship.
- The judicial system can make domestic violence worse and can downplay the voice, power, and needs of the victim.
- Increasingly we are seeing businesses and other organizations/employers paying closer attention to domestic violence. It is predominantly not seen as a workplace-based issue, but it significantly affects the working environment, culture, and productivity.

Sexual exploitation and abuse

- Women can be marginalized or stigmatized against standing up, speaking out, acting with voice on issues around exploitation or abuse.
- Power dynamics and victim identity creates a sense of wrong-doing on the part of the victim more often than on the perpetrator.
- Rape culture has become pervasive in many places (even subtly) such that men in power positions often have a sense of no-wrongdoing.

Access to services and resources

- Ability to access the services and resources required to lead a full, healthy life - including education, health, economic opportunities and general community services.
- Accessing key social development and well-being services is a cultural norm that is socialized early in life.
- Often boys receive more of these services of all types, more frequently and earlier in their lives, than do girls.
- Access to services is a subtle but important element of creating binary distinctions in our culture.

Community health and safety

- Increasingly we are becoming aware of the mental health needs of community members and how those differ based on lived experience and culture.

- Hyper-masculine behaviours in some cultures and in some work environments can lead to risk taking, to power dynamics that mask community health needs, and to marginalization and stigmatization of certain peoples and issues.
- Can look very different at the field and corporate level.

Land rights

- Land rights are tied up in power dynamics, access to resources, access to and influence over decision making rights
- Generally, men are in positions of power and thus strongly influence decisions over land ownership, use, access, privileges, and rights
- There is an important distinction between ownership and use: often access for use masks underlying issues around power of ownership
- When women are given more say and control over land rights of all types, significant societal and community benefits can accrue (environmental, economic productivity, social wellbeing and community cohesion)

Session #3: Identifying areas for empowerment and collaborative action

In this session, participants voted on the topics they wanted to explore further. The most popular topics were **community decision making; access to resources; land rights; and cultural practices.**

Participants then identified how each sector could impact the topic positively and negatively. Participants also mapped opportunities and barriers to collaboration between the sectors and risks to collaboration. The initial exercise was designed to focus on the mining and NGOs sectors. The group decided to add local government as a stakeholder group as well. The group noted that a similar exercise could be done for home countries, national host countries, and governments as donors.

Summary

Common activities and behaviours that empower and disempower women and girls, by stakeholder group

Stakeholder Group	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts
Mining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include women's voices in consultation, engagement, decision making processes where previously they were not included • Follow standards that improve or are over and above local laws • Promote alternative livelihoods, training, economic opportunities • Inclusive stakeholder engagement and analysis process can highlight where women are not empowered and support decisions that empower women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tendency to support or work with current gender biased/paternalistic systems • Benefits of mining can disproportionately focus on men, while negative social impacts can disproportionality impact women • Gender seen as an extra hurdle/hoop to jump through • Heightened conflict and violence • Sexual exploitation and impacts on women's safety • Disrupts livelihoods/dynamics/disrupts social structures • Perpetuates practices that may not advantage women (e.g. decision making process where women's voices may not be represented)
NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education of rights and how to exercise them • Awareness and facilitate access to dispute resolution • Platform for voices • Fostering dialogue and engagement • Support a women-centered approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imposition of western cultural practices creates conflict (at least short term) and violence against women • Reinforcing gendered roles in programs • Disrupt social structures or coping mechanisms, impact resiliency

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to improved resources and services • Initial assessment focused on women • Build capacity of local women's/girls groups • Creating spaces for discussion on cultural practices • Engagement faith leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exclusion due to narrow scope, increasing conflict and impacting social dynamics • Creating dependency • Imposing new concepts / ideology which can results in disruption to domestic life /violence • Conflict with government • Poor understanding of local customs can create conflict and create unattainable expectations
Local Governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs / laws that support women's rights and interests • Public awareness programs • Transparency of benefits • Supporting women in participating in negotiation, consultation, engagement, decision making etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal frameworks and decision making processes reinforce patriarchal systems, don't give rights to women • Lack of social support / inheritance low for at risk women • Laws can reinforce cultural practices vs. women's roles • Lack of enforcement • Poor mining impact and assessments, don't address gender impacts

Opportunities, Barriers and Risks for Collaboration between sectors

Opportunities	Barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-create and deliver engagement, awareness, activities (e.g. consultation) and programming to ensure it is supporting gender equality • Co-construct decision-making frameworks that are gender sensitive and inclusive • Improve info sharing and communication with women • Establish common baseline of gender situation/context (including a stakeholder analysis that highlight power dynamics) • Work with local governments (NGOs build capacity, companies leverage position to promote gender equality) • Host events that have deliberate women's representation with multiple stakeholder groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contradictory interests and different priorities • Process and timelines are not inline • Financial resources • Local perceptions / resistance to external players • Different points of intervention • Different understanding of topics • Organizational culture • Accountability and incentives • Reputational risks

Session #4: What do we want to learn more about? What do we want to do next?

At the end of the workshop participants noted the elements related to gender equality they wanted to explore at the DI.

Activities for the DI

- Take a deliberate gender lens to a DI topic in more depth (e.g. partnership, economic development, measuring outcomes).
- Map work each group is doing to see where there is energy and opportunity for potential partnership.
- Explore what mainstreaming gender at the DI looks like.
- Plan to use academic information in real life.

Potential Topics for Workshops

- Practical ways to discuss gender equality internally? To discuss GE with external stakeholders? To challenge social norms around gender in a respectful way.
- Information and examples on implementing a feminist approach to natural resource management
- Examples about how mining companies are working on gender (e.g. engagement, community development programs, local content etc.)
- Pilot gender impact assessments in mining
- Example of best practice by mining companies to empower women
- Explore gender and identities more fully, not just female/male.