

IM4DC

Action Research Report

SUMMARY

Researchers:

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School/Centre:

Accelerated Learning Laboratory

University/Institutions:

University of Western Australia

Key themes:

Governance and Regulation

Key countries:

Mongolia, Zambia, Kenya, Gambia, Nigeria, Ivory Coast and Indonesia

Completion:

February 2014

Research aims:

The aim of this Action Research was to:

- Identify the risks, practices and beliefs in mining-related companies across developing countries
- Identify which areas require targeted training interventions and provide initial benchmarks that can be used by regulators and training agencies

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Benchmarking the “Status of safety”: Safety Risks, Practices and Beliefs in Developing Countries

The purpose of this research was to gather information about the risks, practices and beliefs in companies across developing countries engaged in mining or associated activities. This information can then be used to identify areas of safety that require targeted training interventions as well as providing initial benchmarks that can be used by regulators and training agencies.

National cultures vary greatly in their support for practices that improve safety and in their beliefs about the way individuals contribute to safety. The types of risks faced by workers in the mining industry also vary from country to country. These differences have implications for the type of training interventions that are likely to be effective in different cultural contexts.

Data was collected using the International Safety Survey, a survey that assesses 17 distinct factors contributing to safety at the individual, team and organisational level. Surveys were completed by 776 respondents from seven different countries: Mongolia, Zambia, Kenya, Gambia, Nigeria, Ivory Coast and Indonesia. Respondents came from various levels within organisations, with 51.2% of respondents being operational staff who worked onsite and 46.9% working in non-operational roles (e.g. supervisory, managerial or administrative positions).

The results from the survey showed respondents from all countries identified a large number of risks as being present in their worksite. Besides the most common risks present in the mining sector in Western countries, a number of risks specific to mining in developing countries were also identified, such as: hygiene and sanitation, poor working conditions and the adequacy of safety equipment and protocols.

At the individual level, participants tended to believe safety was important. However, individuals generally tended to comply with safety requirements more than they actively participated and promoted safety in the organisation. At the organisational level, highest rated subscales were related to perceptions of overall organisational vision and values oriented towards safety. Contrastingly, the lowest rated subscales were related to tangible safety outcomes, suggesting there is a disconnect between perceived attitudes toward safety and actual safety in the workplace.

Two broad sets of recommendations were outlined in this report and elaborated upon in the Executive Summary:

1. To investigate mechanisms for extending and embedding information about safety in developing countries so that the present database of information can be developed to provide more comprehensive, representative, and practical insights into country needs
2. To incorporate country-level insights about safety practices and beliefs into current training programs