IM4DC
Action Research Report
SUMMARY

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Key themes:
Governance and Regulation
Community and Environmental Sustainability

Key countries:
Six African and Six Asia-Pacific countries

Completion:
June 2012

Research aims:
This project aimed to create a register of materials to increase awareness of the unique health risks impacting miners, their families and communities in the development sector, to promote dialogue and social responsibility and inform interdisciplinary studies among scientists, companies, regulators and mining communities. The materials integrated two themes:

- A centralised database of current health management activities as recorded in resource industry Corporate Sustainability Reports from IM4DC/AUS-AID target countries
- A library of public regulations/governance documents that address health outcomes in the mining and oil and gas sectors within individual IM4DC/AUS-AID target countries

Mining and Health in Development

Data and preliminary outcomes from analysis of different mining and oil and gas corporate sustainability reports on public health and disease management are presented for six African countries (Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Mozambique, Sudan, Tanzania, Zimbabwe) and six Asia-Pacific countries (Indonesia, Mongolia, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Vietnam).

Based on the information provided in the corporate report inventory, sustainability reporting is most often structured according to categories set out in the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) framework. The framework, although recognising environmental and social aspects of responsible business and project management, lacks a reporting category to specifically address public and community health issues in the region(s) in which a company operates. Similarly, national resource industry regulations and governance processes generally lack specific requirements for health management planning (e.g. health impact, or health risk assessment (HIA or HRA)) and any requirement to address health or community impact is often buried in the fine details of the environmental impact statement. Regardless, the majority of corporate reports included in the inventory (over 88 percent) to some extent addressed health issues associated with both workers and the wider community.

At least one report for each of the 34 companies provided health content. Over 82 percent of the companies (n = 28) also reported information on health programs and initiatives to address diseases. In some cases, programs were focused on the general reduction of disease prevalence in a given country or region through education, prevention or treatment initiatives. Additionally, several company efforts were designed to encompass the control of a range of communicable diseases. Almost every company operating in Africa participated in The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria (a public-private partnership created by the United Nations). While several companies included detailed plans and objectives for rolling out health and disease management programs, several reports were vague as to how progress would be monitored and measured. Occupational health data was provided for every company, such as accident and injury rates. However, comparable progress indicators and structured monitoring were lacking to assess community health and wellbeing.

Although Health Impact Assessments (HIAs) and Health Risk Assessments (HRAs) had been implemented by ten companies, the HIA or HRA framework employed was not detailed in any report. Baseline assessments were sometimes included in the process, and encompassed either the surrounding town or community, or were based on previously available local, regional or national government data. A trend was also observed regarding the integration of environmental, social and health impact/risk assessment; however, most companies were in the developmental or initial implementation stages of adopting this method.

A further investigation of the data could provide information regarding the types of initiatives companies use across regions, as well as within specific countries and mining activities. The development of a library of relevant public regulations/governance documents that address health outcomes is ongoing. Future directions are proposed and the use of these Corporate Sustainability Reports as primary source material to investigate other questions, such as corporate behaviour and initiatives around other competitive resources, such as water and land reclamation, is encouraged.

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