

IM4DC

Action Research Report

SUMMARY

Researcher:

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School/Centre:

Sustainable Minerals Institute

University/ Institutions:

University of Queensland

Key themes:

Community and Environmental Sustainability

Key countries:

Colombia

Completion:

July 2014

Research aims:

This project aimed to increase our understanding of the challenges and opportunities in multi-stakeholder collaboration processes to enable communities to forge more sustainable livelihoods in resource regions of Colombia

For further information on this action research:

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Paper: Buitrago, I. and Robertson, S. (2014). Mine Life Cycle Planning - Creating Lasting Value for Communities. *Life-of-Mine 2014* conference, Brisbane

Final report and Life-of-Mine 2014 paper available on request from:

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Artisanal Mining and Livelihoods: Challenges and Opportunities

The escalation of artisanal mining has resulted in critical social and environmental impacts in resource regions. To date, artisanal mining scholarship has focused on measuring environmental impacts, such as mercury pollution. However, there is little research about the social impact of artisanal mining and the possibilities for alternative sustainable livelihood options. Pressing issues around artisanal mining have been addressed by the implementation of international standards and eviction processes. Other mechanisms such as community capacity-building, negotiation and compensation procedures have also been implemented. However, there is little understanding of how existing multi-stakeholder collaboration processes can contribute to addressing existing issues and help mining communities forge more sustainable livelihoods. This project aimed to increase our understanding of the challenges and opportunities in this area in resource regions of Colombia.

Evidence from the research indicated there are several aspects that impact on collaboration processes for the establishment of livelihood options for mining communities. The principal challenges include, but are not limited to, contextual factors (conflict between illegal miners, legitimate small-scale miners and large exploration and mining companies), poor accountability and poor governance. On the other hand, there are opportunities that have the potential to create more sustainable communities, such as a strong government role, active community engagement and effective communication.