

IM4DC

Action Research Report

SUMMARY

Researchers:

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Centre for Social Responsibility in Mining

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Key themes:

Community and Environmental Sustainability

Key countries:

Papua New Guinea

Completion:

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Research aims:

The aim of this study was to explore how company, community and government actors share and utilise information about mining projects, based on a case study of the Ramu Nickel mining project, Madang, PNG.

For further information on this action research:

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Exploring the Community's 'Right to Know'

This report presents the findings of a brief field engagement with the Ramu Nickel project operating on the northern coast of Papua New Guinea (PNG) in Madang Province. The research team engaged with the Ramu project on the right of project-affected communities to access information about mining activities. Community access to information is essential to its ability to understand change and negotiate with companies over matters such as access to land, compensation entitlements, development opportunities, management of impacts and for the resolution of grievances. Access to information is also a fundamental element in contemporary debates about social responsibility in mining. These debates include Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), agreement making and community engagement. The study focussed on the flow of information about project lifecycle, mining impacts and development opportunities, and research data was generated through semi-structured interviews, group discussions and informal conversations with key informants.

The primary gaps identified with respect to community access to information at the Ramu Nickel project were:

- The majority of participants had a limited understanding of the life of the mine and some did not know at what stage the mining project was at.
- The majority of participants said that access to information was significantly better in the pre-permitting stages than during construction and operations.
- The process for formulating the second Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was not considered to be consultative or transparent.
- None of the participants were clear about the content of the revised MOA and only 2 participants (landowner representatives) had a copy of the MOA.
- Because of lack of information about future mine plans, resettled families were concerned that the company may require them to move again.
- Access to information was also an issue within the company.
- Written material (e.g. newsletters) did not reflect participants' information needs, but rather, the programming priorities of the company.
- In most instances, participants did not know which core services (education, health, infrastructure) would be established when or by whom.
- Participants were unsure as to the process steps involved in raising concerns about the project or for requesting information.

The report considers information pathways and challenges at the mine level and more broadly, and provides a list of recommendations for the mine, the Mineral Resource Authority, provincial administration and landowners.