

IM4DC

Action Research Report

SUMMARY

Researcher:

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University/Institution:

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Key theme:

Community and Environmental Sustainability

Key country:

The Philippines

Completion:

June 2015

Research aims:

The aim of this research is to understand the perceptions and concerns of key mining development stakeholders in the Philippines in order to develop a shared agenda for responsible mining. The specific objectives are to:

- provide a brief history of mining in the country
- determine the issues and concerns surrounding the positions of stakeholders
- analyse the opportunities/benefits and risks/negative impacts for mineral extraction
- identify the requirements of a shared agenda for responsible mining development

For further information on this action research:

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Developing a Shared Agenda for Mining Development in the Philippines

The Philippines is among the most mineral-rich countries in the world, with large quantities of mineral resources such as gold, copper, chromite, iron, nickel, chromite, bauxite, marble, and limestone. Despite this, there is concern over the insignificant contribution of mining to the national economy. Mining production accounts for only about 1.5 percent of GDP and mineral exports have averaged 3.7 percent of total exports since 2007. The mining sector's low contribution to government revenue is partly due to the mining sector comprising mostly small-scale mines, older mines in their twilight years, and a few new mines that are enjoying tax breaks.

Innumerable persisting issues continue to surround mining development in the Philippines. Why do resource-rich communities remain as poor as ever? How can it be ensured that minerals are tapped and utilized in a safe and sustainable manner? How should environmental degradation and repeated occurrence of disasters be reduced? There are reports of polluted air, contaminated rivers, destroyed mangrove forests, weakened slopes, ravaged corals, ruined agriculture, endangered biodiversity, as well as damaged indigenous and local cultures. Considering that there are various environmental, technical, economic and sociocultural issues, it is a continuing challenge as to how to harmonize efforts towards responsible mining anchored in science and technology.

This status review sought to present in a concise form a critical overview of the key facets related to mining development such as critical environmental, social, political and technical aspects, including a brief history of mining in the Philippines in the post-colonial era, to help understand the resistance to current mining development. Information was generated from roundtable discussions, focus group discussions, key informant interviews and a desktop review.

Preliminary recommendations are articulated in the Executive Summary.