

Why it is important to look at artisanal and small-scale mining from a gender approach and how to do it

Mining communities are often marked by a strong sexist culture that hinders and limits women's economic empowerment and access to opportunities, as well as it negatively affects their economic, social and cultural rights. In fact, artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) is the most precarious mining subsector for women. This is because it is often practiced in impoverished and rural areas, with little state presence, which has traditionally been attracting all kinds of exploitation and rights violations. (H.Hidron y R. Koepke, 2014).

In ASM communities the feminization of poverty is usual, due to the **low participation of women in the sector, the overload of care work and the precarious conditions of traditionally feminine jobs.** Cases of exploitation and sexual abuse are common due to sector's dynamics, political violence and the traditional exclusion of women from political participation (Arcos, 2018). In addition to the above, **the isolation of some of these areas kept traditional patriarchy structures and cultural sexism alive, demoting women's economic independence and participation** (Maldonado y Roa, n.d.). Today, it is unquestionable that society must advance towards gender equality and eradicate discrimination and gender violence. For this, we need fairness and equity, which can be achieved by mainstreaming the **gender approach.**

A GENDER MAINSTREAMING APPROACH



Mainstreaming here is essential, as **gender relations pervade all social relations**, including those that happen in and around ASM. That's why we talk about **gender mainstreaming**, which relates to the fact that gender relations affect social relations in all spheres (cultural, social, political, scientific and more). It is therefore important to apply to all actions related to a com-

munity's development an approach that can encompass all aspects of social relations. Thus, the mainstreaming of the gender perspective requires, **first of all, a gender analysis** on the activity we will apply it on, in this case the ASM sector, to **then be able to implement adequate actions** and/or adapt an existing plan to consider and work with the gaps and differences identified in the analysis.





For the organizations working in the ASM sector (ASMOs), applying a gender perspective means **identifying and recognizing how gender relations affect work relations, decisions and distribution** within the organization. Also to be able to design and implement actions to promote equality, always keeping in mind the concept of fairness. With this aim, ARM published, in 2018, the **study “Brechas de género: la minería artesanal y de pequeña escala desde un enfoque de género”** (Gender gaps: artisanal and small-scale mining from a gender perspective), available in Spanish.

THE GENDER CONCEPT



The **term gender does not refer to woman**, even if it is the female gender that suffers the most in a patriarchal society. This is why equality usually starts by working with women with the aim of empowering them and working towards their equality with men. However, working with a gender perspective does not only mean focusing on women, but also keeping in mind **how gender, as a social and cultural construct, involves men**, and how they can promote or hinder action to achieve equality.





At this point, it is important to mention that **men must not be excluded from this process; they can work and get involved in trainings** in order to raise their awareness on the subject, as, after all, gender equality is a common good.

ARM thinks that men should be included and participate in the creation of a fair mining sector.

This is why we promote a vision that does not only focus on women, but also takes into account how gender involves men, and how they can promote or hinder action to achieve gender equality. At ARM, we work with men by raising their awareness and helping them **promote equity and gender equality as a common good.**

INTERNATIONAL TREATIES AND DECLARATIONS



The concepts and approaches gathered above are part of the following **international treaties and declarations:**

- The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979).
- Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women (Convention of Belém do Pará, 1994).
- The Declaration and Action Plan of the International Conference on Population and Development (El Cairo, 1994).
- The Declaration and Action Plan of the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995).
- The Indigenous and Tribal People Convention nº 169
- Various OIT conventions on women's rights (Number 100, 111, 156 and 183).

Let's remember that ASM is a traditionally exclusionary environment for women, as it is usually controlled by patriarchal societies. For this, it is necessary to see the gender issue as a social issue, with a greater approach, and to analyze **its implications not only for women as individuals, but for their families, communities and, in general, the entire society.**



ARM PROPOSES: PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR ASM



ARM has identified the following priority actions that must be implemented with the aim of improving gender perspective in ASM:

- **Raise awareness and dignify the work of women miners**, on both the political level and public eye;
- **Prioritize the education and training of women miners**, as this is their means to enter into the sector and as it can help them improve their conditions;
- **Raise awareness in the communities, and especially for children and teenagers**, on gender equality by including the topic in public education;
- **Promote women miners associations**, as well as bringing economic profit, they can be platforms for the defense of their rights;
- **Integrate men in the positive action plans for awareness** in order to involve them in the process;
- **Promote and create policies, procedures and protocols to integrate gender equality in ASM**, and specifically to prevent and eliminate gender violence;
- **Promote social and solidary economy models in ASM** that have gender equality at their basis.
- **Participate in political debates** for a fairer ASM.

