

WOMEN AND ARTISANAL GOLD MINING: MOZAMBIQUE

Executive Summary

Women's economic activities in artisanal gold mining are vital for their economic lives but are often over-looked including in laws and regulations on artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) and by state officials.

The money women earn from ASM is important to them and their families but they face distinct gendered challenges.

Women and men have received limited training with women facing particular barriers to learning more about changes in the laws and policies, and about ways to improve their mining livelihoods.

Women are under-represented in community decision-making bodies, as license holders, gold buyers and in state offices overseeing resource development.

The laws and policies on ASM do not fully account for women's artisanal mining roles. The Mozambique Ministry of Mineral Resources and Energy (MIREME) has agreed to "promote gender equity" in mining. Gender is still not sufficiently mainstreamed in line with the African Mining Vision.

Organization of Artisanal Gold Mining Roles by Gender

All women in the research said artisanal mining is the economic activity that provides them more consistent money than farming or petty trading, even though the work is difficult, hard on their bodies, and low status. Women also face many gendered challenges in their mining work.

Mining livelihoods are extremely important for many women in Manica (as it is for many men). Their work generates money for daily sustenance for themselves and their families, for school fees, health expenses, building and improving houses, buying livestock, and investing in businesses. Most women are concentrated in mining activities that are minimally remunerated such as reprocessing tailings in bodies of water (colloquially known as "washing" or "panning"). Many other women cook, have shops, or sell other items and services to miners.

Some females recruited through kin networks or marital ties to do mining work with men are not paid because they are said to be doing "family work."

Although many men and women said women do not excavate ore, some women actually dig, either alone or with another woman or man. Typically, they dig in shallow pits. These women tend to acquire more gold than the majority of women who concentrate in reprocessing tailings.

The Research:

This report is based on field research carried out in different artisanal gold mining zones in Manica District from 2015-2018 and comprising annual visits of two to four weeks in June and July. Interviews with government officials, agencies, and civil society organizations in Maputo were carried out in 2015, 2016 and 2017.

Men almost always sell their own gold and women sometimes give their gold to their spouse or a male relative to sell on their behalf. In these situations, women lose control over some or all of the money earned through the sale of the gold. They also lose the ability to develop a relationship with gold buyers who occasionally lend money to customers.

If they do sell the gold themselves, women in a male-headed household often give all or a portion of the money to the male head.

Men rarely tell their female partners how much money they earned through gold nor allow women a say in how it is spent. Women's contribution to household expenses through gold mining, however, often leads to a greater recognition of their importance by the male head.

In all of these economic activities, decision making is gendered and unequal. Females in male-headed households often require approval of a male head of household to do their economic activities. If the male head needs their labour, women will do that work. Wives who work at their husband's pits/shafts also are assumed to have no rights to any gold found, other than what their husbands give them.

Recommendations

1. Increase the availability of finance for women so they can access more important roles in artisanal gold mining.
2. Provide training to women in different techniques for excavating and processing gold to enable women to mine more efficiently and effectively.
3. Conduct workshops in artisanal mining communities to emphasize that women are economic actors and should have a greater say over the use of money they earn and work with communities to create an environment where women can be more involved in artisanal gold mining.
4. Wives who work with husbands in digging, transporting and processing gold be given the same equal share of the gold as their husbands.

Relationships and Authority Figures Impacting Access to, and Control of, Resources in Artisanal Gold Mining

Recommendations:

1. State officials must recognize women as mine workers in their own right.
2. Engage male leaders in the mining areas in discussions to dispel prohibitions against women working in shafts, and in certain mining areas.
3. Explore making ASM licenses less expensive and easier to acquire.
4. Ensure women are effectively participating in associations.

Many men involved in mining, including mining officials do not recognize that women are gaining some livelihood from artisanal gold mining. Policymakers should provide support to help improve women's incomes from this work.

Mining officials have established many associations across Manica district in accordance with the 2002 *Mining Law* and the 2003 mining decree that artisanal miners should organize themselves into an association (*associação*). Officials have encouraged miners to secure a mining area, or to wait for the government to assign them one, and then to look for investors to work with in the licensed mining area. However, very few associations are actually operating a mine. Most are waiting to secure a mining area.

The executives of associations in our research area are dominated by men. None of the association executive members we met had an explicit focus on helping women. Most artisanal mining we researched is done outside of this legal framework.

During the research, different authorities such as the *Polícia de Protecção dos Recursos Naturais e Meio Ambiente* periodically visited the mining zones to collect fines from those not in compliance with the legislation.

In many of the gold mining areas, traditional authorities have enforced prohibitions against women entering into shafts (and in a few cases in the zones where gold is excavated). Such restrictions limit women's access to certain livelihoods, forcing them into lower-valued economic activities. For women with capital, these gendered proscriptions also have made it difficult for them to successfully invest in developing mine shafts.

Access to Information, Knowledge, and Skills in Artisanal Gold Mining

Women and men both said they currently receive no or limited training to improve their artisanal gold mining techniques from any government agency or non-governmental organization

Most women involved in artisanal mining also said they have difficulty attending any training workshops on other topics such as agriculture as they have limited spare time given their workload and numerous household obligations (such as collecting firewood and water, cooking, childcare, etc.).

Women who have access to steady money through their own businesses or a spouse participate in rotating credit groups (*chitiki, popasa*). These offer women access to larger pools of capital. Participation in these credit groups also require women's involvement in trust-building practices which helps them manage these small-scale organizations.

Legal Regulation of ASM

The Government of Mozambique's approach to regulating ASM/MAPE in the past has led to some negative impacts on women. There are now fewer and smaller alluvial gold locations available for artisanal mining because of Government actions in attracting companies to carry out large- or small-scale mining. This has negative effects along the gold value chain, reducing income for many women and men involved in digging, processing, reprocessing and buying gold. While many men displaced from alluvial mining have turned to hard-rock gold mining, this has not been the case for women and the overall number of women in mining has decreased. Government actions to reduce mining-produced siltation in the rivers have led to the construction of male-owned dams for soil washing. Dam owners monopolize ore-laden soils and prevent women from accessing them. Thus the building of more dams primarily by men has reduced the amount of soil women can reprocess through gold panning activities which have limited women's livelihoods.

Recommendations

1. Recognize in government policies and communications that women are mine workers and develop appropriate women-focused training programs.
2. Ensure that information and training workshops take place in artisanal mining sites, with childcare provided, so more women can participate.
3. Ensure women and men in mining communities better understand laws, policies, and roles of different government officials in governing artisanal mining.
4. Investigate rotating credit groups as a way to encourage women's greater involvement in formal organizations by giving women opportunity to develop skills for managing organizations.
5. Involve women in the governance of more formalized organizations, like mining associations, and businesses.

Mozambique now has a new mining law (20/2014) that requires artisanal miners to have a Senha Mineira (mining pass), use only simple mining equipment, excavate only a small volume of minerals, and only mine in designated areas. Small-scale miners must have a Certificado Mineiro (mining certificate), and can excavate up to 12 kg of minerals, with mines not deeper than 20 meters. In its 2013 Mineral Resource Policy, the Government of Mozambique commits to ensuring that ASM is integrated into rural development plans, will promote good mining practices in ASM, and assist artisanal miners to improve their skills, technologies, productivity. To implement these goals, MIREME has said it will, among other things, encourage women's participation in mining activities and develop programs to empower women to conduct businesses.

With funding provided through the World Bank, programs are planned to increase: numbers of artisanal mining passes/small-scale certificates; numbers of ASM associations/cooperatives; and training for artisanal and small-scale miners. Previous attempts to promote miners' associations, research suggests, have not been successful. These new programs require that women are included as holders of mining passes or certificates, as members of mining associations, and as participants in training programs. These programs appear to be behind schedule and, if so, steps could be taken now to ensure women are more centrally included in their design and implementation.

Recommendations

1. Miners' associations/cooperatives must be inclusive of all mining communities, including women. Efforts to expedite registration of associations must ensure new, diverse groups can form and be registered. Quotas could be used to ensure that women join and participate in the leadership of these groups.
2. Women miners should be specifically targeted for training on forming and registering associations, good mining practices, and accessing and using investment.
3. Mining community members, including women who work in mining and related businesses, must be consulted and have input into plans to develop ASM.
3. Government and civil society organizations could provide training and support for women to build dams and to move into different economic activities within artisanal gold mining.
4. A percentage of mining passes/certificates could be allocated for women who live in and work in ASM areas.
5. Gender focal points should be included in DNGM (MIREME) including in the 'ASM Cell' within DeMAPE. MIREME staff in Maputo, in INAMI and in provincial MIREME offices should receive training on women's ASM livelihoods, to ensure that gender issues are consistently included in mining governance activities, including in all new initiatives.
6. A representative of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare should be included on the Advisory Board of the ASM Cell in MIREME.
7. Revised mining laws and policies, the ASM handbook, and the implementation plan for extension services should be revised to more fully integrate gender consideration in compliance with the African Mining Vision.

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