

# Four Steps Toward Stronger Women's Voices in Extractives Governance

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As the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) board met in Bogotá on International Women's Day this week, it is a perfect moment to reflect on how mechanisms like the initiative can be better harnessed to empower women's voices in resource governance.

Research has shown women are more likely to be negatively impacted at the local and national levels by natural resource extraction. At NRGI, we believe that the natural resource governance field has only begun to factor in the involvement of women and consider how issues important to them can influence governance decisions in the sector.

In celebration of the achievement of women's movements this month, NRGI is outlining how lessons from the gender and development field can be used to create better outcomes for all involved in natural resource governance.

- 1. Improve women's participation among all stakeholder groups in resource governance.** Across the globe, NRGI has seen less female representation in civil society trainings and in leadership roles at civil society organizations it supports than men. The reasons for this are not yet clear. NRGI is studying why there is less female representation and what can be done to make representation more even. NRGI has created a special leadership program to support women in civil society to grow into these roles. It should be noted that women are not under-represented in every case. Women sit in the powerful leadership roles in global and national coalitions, like Publish What You Pay. In some countries, women are represented equally and dynamically. We don't know the specific impact gender balance can bring to our movement. We do know that when women are involved in [public policy](#) decisions they are more likely to address development needs and when women are involved in [peacemaking](#), there is a greater likelihood of lasting peace. The bottom line across contexts seems to be that improving female participation improves outcomes and sustainability.
- 2. Strengthen women's representation in EITI.** When participation from civil society on extractive issues is not balanced, it stands to reason that it is less likely to be balanced at the EITI multi-stakeholder table as well. [MSI Integrity's analysis](#) of EITI boards in 23 countries found that the majority of multi-stakeholder boards are composed of fewer than 25 percent female representatives. Women represent approximately one third of the global [EITI board](#). MSI Integrity's report brought out some of costs associated with participating in a multi-stakeholder group, noting that more than a third of the countries surveyed did not compensate those attending from outside the capital. Other development studies show that when there is a cost of participation, it is harder for women to self-finance than men. Clear multi-stakeholder group guidelines addressing the actual costs of EITI participation at a national level can reduce the impact across gender lines.
- 3. Project-level data is critical.** If women face political and cultural constraints to mobility and accessing national politics, they are more likely to be able to influence change at the local level. Years of gender budgeting experience show that women can play an important role ensuring that local government spending aligns with development priorities. This only works, however, when there is access to accurate information about local revenues. In order for women to have access to information about revenues that link to the extractive projects in their area, EITI and implementing countries must publish all subnational transfers and company payments on a project-by-project basis. Information that is aggregated across an entire country does not help a woman in one town know what to expect and how it will affect her family. The EITI's board's decision today to implement the EITI's project-by-project reporting requirement is very welcome in this respect.
- 4. The format of EITI data has a big impact on who can use it.** NRGI's report on [subnational transparency](#)

outlines how restrictions on women's physical mobility—from cultural constraints or household obligations—can increase the importance of providing subnational-level information. The format through which data is shared can impact who receives the data. National multi-stakeholder groups might consider making sure they are using means of disseminating their reports that are equally received by men and women. All groups involved in resource governance transparency can do better at making sure their information is in formats accessible by women.

The above can move us toward gender equality in the governing and decision making structures around natural resource policies but of course represents only a starting point for a broader discussion. Much more needs to be done to account for the differentiated impacts of natural resource policies on men and women, and how policy design can better address this. NRGi is excited to pursue answers to how gender participation and consideration of gender in governance decisions can improve the lives of all citizens in resource-rich countries.

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