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BUILDING POWER IN CRISIS

WOMEN'S RESPONSES TO EXTRACTIVISM

A Landscape Analysis by The SAGE Fund

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STRENGTHENING ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Background

This report was produced by the SAGE Fund as foundational research for the **Resilient Women and Natural Resources Plus Fund**, a new initiative of the Ford Foundation. The initiative seeks to boost the impact, resilience, and collective response of women defenders resisting natural resource extraction, and the structural violence that extraction engenders and exacerbates. Over a period of three years, the initiative will create a deeper understanding of linkages across social movements, identify opportunities for strengthening alliances and strategies, and support targeted actions. Through learning, convening, and grantmaking, the initiative will amplify the impact of work at the intersections of natural resources, climate and environment, civic space, human rights, global economy, feminism and women's rights, and indigenous peoples.

SAGE is one of three intermediary partners across fields and regions who are leading the initial phase of work under the Resilient Women and Natural Resources Plus Fund. SAGE conducted a comprehensive landscape analysis of the context and drivers of structural violence, gendered impacts, and strategies and approaches guiding the work. The Global Alliance for Green and Gender Action (GAGGA) mapped the groups and actors working at the intersection of climate, environmental, and gender justice, informed by their global grantmaking and networks. Global Greengrants Fund leveraged their funder learning platform on climate and gender to lead a process of mapping funders to identify opportunities for resourcing more work. From late 2020 through 2022, the partners met regularly to share learning and refine understanding of the problem. A summary of their joint learnings will be released in early 2023.

The SAGE Fund gratefully acknowledges the Ford Foundation for its support of this participatory research and analysis, and the opportunity to support exploratory grantmaking based on the findings.

ABOUT THE SAGE FUND

SAGE cultivates powerful new ways to build a healthy, just, and inclusive global economy. Our “laboratory” approach equips advocates across fields with the financial and technical resources along with hands-on support that creates breakthrough strategies that hold economic actors accountable. Since 2015, the Fund has supported 59 projects with $8.2 million in over 40 countries, creating a pipeline for emerging work on human rights and the global economy. SAGE concentrates collective work on a theme that is poised for innovation and builds a critical mass of strategy development and learning around that theme, sharing it with civil society organizations, movements and donors for greater impact.

Visit SageFundRights.org to learn more about the work of SAGE and its partners.

Introduction

This report is a cross-movement landscape analysis of the needs, gaps, and opportunities for supporting work at the intersections of women, natural resources, and extractivism. Developed as a resource for funders, civil society, and social movements accompanying communities impacted by extractivism, this report offers multiple entry points to understand the problem and strengthen collective responses. The report is meant to deepen understanding about a highly complex set of issues, opening the door to further exploration among the donor community and civil society about how to center women's experiences, knowledge, and practices as a springboard for further support and action. It identifies a range of strategies—led by women, their organizations and movements, and their allies—that can be strengthened to support women's struggles against extractivism and amplify solutions.

Drawing from 96 interviews with leaders working in Africa, South and Southeast Asia, and Latin America, the analysis represents a wide cross-section of views, from women in communities impacted by extractivism to civil society groups working on national and global policy, to academics studying emerging gender impacts of extractivism. This report connects work within diverse social movements, from local to global levels, and grounded in geographical and field perspectives. Just as the SAGE Fund seeks to fill gaps in work across the fields of corporate accountability, global economy, and human rights, our goal for this report is to connect work that often operates in silos.

The first half of this report lays the conceptual and definitional groundwork necessary to understand how and why extractivism is gendered. Patriarchal power structures tend to exclude, or make less visible, the ways that women, trans, intersex, and nonbinary people experience the impacts of extractivism differently than men. This analysis recognizes the breadth of gendered harms but focuses on the particular experiences of women and girls. An important conceptual underpinning of this report is that extractivism produces and reinforces what "gendered structural violence." Violence is multidimensional, produced in various forms including economic, environmental, political, sociocultural, and gender-based. Violence is also structural, meaning it is embedded in the systems, institutions, and practices that affect women's daily lives. Consequently, this report attempts to map spheres of power in the context of extractives, unpacking the intersecting agendas of public and private actors, and how they collude to violate rights and fundamentally change the relationship between people and natural resources. The report analyzes the critical drivers of gendered structural violence caused by extractivism, positioning the current crisis in a historical context while connecting it to other critical struggles such as the closing of civic space and rise of authoritarianism around the world.

The second half of the report lifts up women's strategies to reclaim power—specifically, to build, confront, and transform it. These are grouped into three types: (1) foundational power-building, which strengthens organizational structures, leadership, and practices necessary for future struggles; (2) site-specific, which targets an extractive project or addresses an imminent threat; and (3) transformational, designed to tackle the drivers of violence and create an alternative and sustainable future. These categories highlight how women-led strategies face unique challenges or leverage specific opportunities that civil society and funders have yet to fully understand. These strategies are not meant to be interpreted in isolation but rather as interdependent pieces of a whole. Each complements or reinforces the others, demonstrating the need for agile and context-specific support. The strategies section offers insights about key needs, gaps, and opportunities to support women in their struggles against extractivism.

In recognition that movements and civil society are constantly adapting to meet the challenges of extractivism, this report is intended to serve as a living document. A summary of key findings appears at the end to distill the learnings for a diverse set of readers. For those seeking a synthesized analysis, a short version of the report will be published concurrently. Our expectation is that these initial insights will change as the field's understanding of the problem deepens and our approaches evolve. In the meantime, SAGE will use this analysis in our grantmaking and learning, integrating it into our global economy work and including a more explicit gender focus. We will also use the report as a tool to engage other funders and support civil society as we seek to deepen our understanding and respond with fresh insight.

Understanding the Problem

In many indigenous and rural communities, women and girls have unique roles with respect to land and natural resources, including as cultivators, producers, healers, knowledge keepers, and environmental stewards. When industry enters a community for the purpose of extracting resources, the disruptions to land and community life often lead to violence. Violence may be perpetrated by individuals, as in the case of murder or rape, but it is also structural, meaning it is embedded in social, economic, and political systems that enact harm on the marginalized to serve the interests of the powerful. Violence in the extractives context is also gendered, in terms of how it operates as well as who it benefits and harms.

This section explores the historical roots and contemporary expressions of extractivism from a gendered perspective. Although people of all genders are impacted by extractivism, the following focuses on how structural violence created and reinforced by extractivism excludes, harms, and discriminates against women and girls. It shows how violence in the context of extractives impacts women differently and disproportionately than men. Dimensions of gendered violence stemming from extractivism include gender-based violence as well as economic, environmental, political, and sociocultural violence. Lastly, this section addresses the key drivers of extractivism that perpetuate this model of development over others, irrespective of the costs to people and planet.

“Indigenous women are very much dependent on natural resources, and at the same time we have the knowledge of how to protect them. We use the natural resources not only for food supply and to sustain our livelihoods but also as a place to gather materials for handicraft, wild food, medicinal herbs, etc. Land is not meant (only) for agriculture but has a deeper connection to our ancestors. We also have a practice that the spirits of the areas are respected. After we do planting or harvesting, we organize a ceremony to respect the spirits and thank them for protecting our lands.”

DIANA SIPAIL
LEADER OF THE TASKFORCE AGAINST THE KAIDUAN DAM,
KOTA KINABALU, SABAH MALAYSIA

Women, Natural Resources, and Extractivism

Extractive industries can profoundly disrupt women's roles in family and society, which for many are deeply connected to their relationship with the natural world. In the rural and indigenous communities where the impact of extractivism is most acute, land and natural resources directly determine women's access to food, water, housing, and safety. When access to or control over land and resources is negatively impacted, women are often the first to feel the effects and bear the added burden to repair or rebuild. In many indigenous communities especially, women have a spiritual connection to the territory, land, or environment.[1]

> "Extractivism is a nonreciprocal, dominance-based relationship with the earth, one purely of taking. It is the opposite of stewardship, which involves taking but also taking care that regeneration and future life continue."
>
> –**NAOMI KLEIN**
> *THIS CHANGES EVERYTHING (2014)*

The indigenous cosmovision emphasizes unity and complementarity between people and the natural world, and it is often women who preserve the sense of the sacred as spiritual and physical healers. Women's roles extend from caretaking for the family, such as children and the elderly, to environmental stewardship. In many indigenous and rural communities, women are also traditional knowledge holders and play a key role in imparting wisdom about sustainable agricultural practices, seed collection and saving, or traditional medicine across generations. And because women tend to engage in subsistence-based livelihoods more than men, they are seen as cultivators of food for the family and community. In rural, indigenous, and other marginalized communities, women often physically remain on their ancestral lands while men emigrate—to capital cities or beyond—for income-generating employment.

Women organize themselves in various formations, ranging from informal social networks to highly organized cooperatives that reflect the roles they play in family and communal life. These formations often become the base for community organizing and social movement building. Women play critical, albeit often under-recognized, roles in social movements as educators, organizers, and mobilizers. From marching at protests to preparing food for community meetings, women help maintain community cohesion. In the words of Gustavo Castro from Otros Mundos, "Women do a mountain of things simultaneously and in parallel that allow and explain how the movement continues."

Increasingly, indigenous, rural, peasant, campesino, and Dalit women are at the forefront of struggles to defend land and territory, including against the threat of extractivism. This is reflected in actions including:

- Putting their bodies on the line in direct actions to stop or delay extractive projects;
- Participating in community governing bodies where decisions concerning extractive projects are made;
- Exercising leadership within community groups, social movements, and civil society organizations (CSOs) organized against extractives;
- Developing regenerative systems based on ancestral knowledge, such as sustainable livelihoods, agroecology initiatives, small-scale economies, and mutual aid, which challenge the very logic of extractivism as a form of development.

The research for this report surfaced a diverse range of proposals led by women to create new relationships between themselves and the environment that stress complementarity and interdependence. These efforts show that women are not only victims but also agents of change, working to create or revive sustainable ways of living as alternatives to the extractive model.

> "Women are the educators—the ones who share the information, give workshops, even if not formal, in meetings, organizing, weaving together. They're the ones who are developing and strengthening the social fabric. I don't know if it's a premeditated strategy always. Sometimes it may come more naturally because of their role in the community—that of making dialogue, being with the children, with other parts of society care work. They take advantage of these spaces to build."
>
> **—FERNANDA HOPENHAYM**
> *EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PODER*

When extractivism leads to changes in their livelihoods and relationship to land and resources, women adapt differently depending on need and context. Not all engage in resistance activities. Some may relocate to find work elsewhere, while others remain on the land to farm or manage the household while their spouses and children migrate for work. Still others seek employment in the extractive industry, which may provide a reliable income stream or simply be the last resort when other income sources disappear. Whether they choose to resist, adapt to, or engage extractive industries, women's strategies are informed by context, arising from their existing roles in community and shaped by their particular constraints.

Definitions

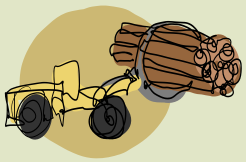
EXTRACTIVISM

Extractivism is a dominant economic model that centers growth and profit over the wellbeing of people and planet. This model—typically framed in terms of development—relies on the removal of natural resources and raw materials on a massive industrial scale for export.[2]

Extractivism is rooted in a colonial mindset, and now a fully globalized phenomenon, designed to benefit elites without concern for the social and environmental impacts caused by extractive activities. Crucially, the term extractivism pertains not only to the activity or the process itself, but also to the *conditions* under which these resources are extracted (such as the absence of consultation or consent of local populations) and the *interests* they serve (such as elite, corporate, and criminal interests rather than the public good).[3]

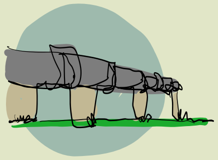
Many kinds of activities characterize extractivism:

Appropriation of nonrenewable natural resources including fossil fuels and minerals

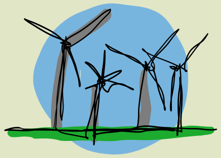


Appropriating renewable resources through practices such as logging, fishing, and poaching

Operating industrial agriculture plantations such as palm and soy



Building infrastructure to sustain projects such as roads, ports, and pipelines



Implementing some renewable energy projects such as large-scale wind farms and hydropower including dams

STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE

Structural violence as a concept was first proposed by Johan Galtung (1969) as a form of violence "wherein some social structure or social institution may harm people by preventing them from meeting their basic needs." Others have built on the concept to refer to the systemic ways that social, economic, political, and cultural institutions marginalize and exclude certain social groups. This exclusion prevents equitable access to the benefits, rights, safety, and resources that other groups have had access to over generations, affecting wellbeing and negatively impacting life chances.[4] This report addresses gendered dimensions of structural violence in the context of extractivism, referred to throughout as gendered structural violence.

FRONTLINE COMMUNITIES

Frontline communities refers to the communities and people most impacted by extractive industries (as well as environmental devastation and climate change). Most often, these are rural people, Indigenous people, campesinos, farmers, or fisherfolk who reside and work on territory that is either claimed for extractive projects or directly harmed as a result of the extractive activity.[5] Women in frontline communities include women-led groups as well as other community-based organizations and movements that include women in positions of leadership.

WOMEN HUMAN RIGHTS AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDERS

Women Human Rights and Environmental Defenders are activists who experience risks *because of their gender*, such as gender-based violence or smear campaigns that attack them for violating prescribed gender roles, as well as those who are targeted *because of their defense of the environment and/or women's rights or feminist agendas* in that context. Women human rights and environmental defenders (also called "women environmental defenders" or "women defenders of land and territory") includes a range of leaders, such as Indigenous women defending their territory against extractivism, women environmental lawyers helping communities, journalists exposing how environmental degradation or land grabbing threatens women, and women-led groups mobilizing communities to resist environmental harm or injustice. Because the term "defender" emerges from a human rights framework that may be understood to center individual rather than collective rights, the term does not always reflect the ways that some leaders, particularly indigenous activists, self-identify. Consequently, this terminology is used sparingly throughout this report.

Key Characteristics of Extractivism

Extractivism operates differently in the regions surveyed in this report, but certain characteristics are consistent across context. The extractive model is supported by a complex web of power, involving diverse actors with similar agendas. Their shared goal is to maximize profit notwithstanding social and environmental costs. Extractivism is neocolonial in that it harvests raw materials for the benefit of those living far from the lands where the resources are taken. It is an inherently violent model, and this violence is both racialized and patriarchal.

Photo: Justiça nos Trilhos

These trends, which are explored in more depth below, exist across the Global South (and in the Global North on indigenous and rural land). While a more extensive discussion of regional trends would require far more detail and is beyond the scope of this report, some key patterns surfaced in regional contexts that interviewees sought to highlight:

In **Latin America**, a new wave of extractive expansion began in the 1990s and grew rapidly with the cooperation of states that were eager to grow their national economies while asserting control over territories held by Indigenous peoples.[6] This expansion, and the resulting environmental destruction and structural violence against Indigenous peoples, is enabled by weak state institutions that fail to regulate or provide oversight of extractive projects, corruption among national elites that benefit financially from extractive projects, and democratic instability in the region. Additional destabilizing forces, such as cartel operations in Mesoamerica or civil conflict in Colombia, foster conditions for violence and impunity. States and corporations use policing and force (through both public and private security forces, the latter often comprised of former military officials) as a key tool to control communities impacted by extractive projects and preserve corporate interests, contributing to conflict and political instability.

The **African continent** has also witnessed a dramatic expansion of extractive activities in the past several decades that has displaced rural and peasant communities, disrupted food sovereignty, and—combined with climate change—led to widespread environmental degradation. African countries court transnational corporations with incentives like tax breaks and weakened regulation, as well as access to water, energy, and infrastructure. As in other regions, China has become an outsized player, buying up enormous tracts of land for agricultural production and infrastructure. The extractive development model is seen as having exacerbated the wealth divide, deepened conflict, and entrenched corrupt, authoritarian leaders which were the legacy of colonialism in Africa.[7] It has also left a legacy of widespread human rights violations.[8]

In **Asia Pacific**, the pursuit of a neoliberal economic model combined with competition among governments has led to increased extractive activity as a way of raising foreign revenue to pay down national debt. Many countries in the region are former colonies with a legacy of weak natural resource governance, which manifests in the unclear regulatory frameworks around the granting of contracts, licenses, and concessions; lack of due diligence legislation to guard against adverse environmental and social impacts; and the absence of benefits-sharing frameworks.[9] These conditions are ripe for corruption and human rights violations, and have led to encroachment by transnational corporations on lands, forests, and waterways used by indigenous and local communities. States are providing incentives to attract extractive industries, such as exemptions from taxes on profits, which accelerates wealth inequality and deprives the public sector of revenue.[10]

A COMPLEX WEB OF POWER

Extractivism is grounded in a neoliberal development model that prioritizes the free flow of capital and seeks to shift control of economics from the public to the private sector. This shift is accomplished through policies promoting fiscal austerity, deregulation, free trade, privatization, and reduction in public spending, especially social welfare. At its core, an extractive economic model is designed to maximize profits and growth, yet capital generated from resource extraction is not significantly reinvested in the people or places directly impacted by the extractive activity. Rather, wealth is accumulated by a powerful few, amounting to a transfer of economic, social, and political power from public interests to individual elites.

In the extractive context, it is not always obvious where and who holds the power, nor how it can be effectively targeted. A constellation of actors from local to global levels including government officials, corporations, investors and financiers, security forces, media elites, armed groups, and criminal enterprises wield power in complex and interconnected ways. International financial institutions provide the crucial financing for extractive projects, while also generating the economic rationale and policies that preserve the dominance of the extractive economic model over others. The actors in this interconnected web of power may work in concert to accumulate resources or collude to preserve their power, but even where the ties are not explicit or the interests fully aligned, these actors share the goal of concentrating wealth and power.

“In Africa, women work largely on land and waterbodies as fisherfolk... When extractives come to grab women’s livelihoods, it results in conflict because the relationship between government and companies can be dangerous for women pushing back. The global trend of militarization of mining areas, megaprojects – they are militarized to silence women who are pushing back on extractives. Women are sitting at the intersection of fighting extractives while fighting a development model that is impoverishing them of their rights and of their land. It’s how development is modelled. Colonialism perfected Third World economies into being suppliers of raw materials and labor. African countries and countries in the Global South are so entangled in these colonially perfected roles of providing raw materials for industry, the majority of which is in the Western world.”

–MELA CHIPONDA
INDEPENDENT

NEOCOLONIAL MODEL

Colonialism was based upon the extraction, development, or harvesting of raw materials from countries rich in natural resources to be exported and processed in countries of the Global North, creating an unequal economic system of suppliers and producers.[11] Extractivism is built on this same pattern and logic. It begins with the seizure and control of natural resources for the purpose of export rather than consumption by local populations. Today, those benefiting from extractivism may be urban elites or corporations located in the Global South, but whether flowing to the North or South, profits rarely return to those on lands where the resources were taken. By design, extractive activities separate local people from the land, water, forests, and territory they rely on for their survival. This disrupts—often permanently—the relationship between humans and the natural environment.

In addition to sharing many of the same elements of colonialism, extractive activities are often located in places struggling with the colonial legacy such as extreme economic inequality, corruption, and weak governance. Those impacted on a day-to-day basis include former colonial subjects—rural, Indigenous people, Dalits, ethnic minorities, and poor people—who neither figure prominently in the public consciousness nor receive adequate protection from legal and policy frameworks. Like colonialism, extractivism relies on violence as a tool used to subdue populations and secure the potential for maximum profit.[12] (See further discussion in "Militarization," under "Drivers of Gendered Structural Violence.")

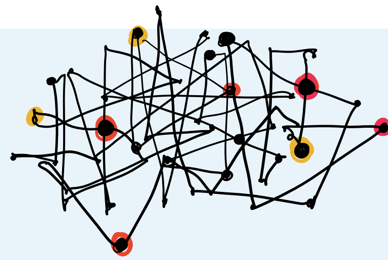
Many low-income countries—all located in the Global South—derive a greater share of their gross domestic product (GDP) from natural resource exports than Northern, more economically diversified, countries.[13] Neoliberal economic policies developed in the Global North, and now thoroughly embedded at the national level in the Global South, support extractivism as the key engine for economic development and growth. National and international development finance institutions (DFIs) are banks supported by governments to provide capital to fund large development—often extractive—projects.[14] They have built and sustained the infrastructure to make extractivism the dominant global economic model. For example, these banks promote regulatory reforms that favor easy access and investment in the extractive sector as part of loan conditionality and technical policy advice. While some development banks now require environmental and social standards as a condition for financing, poor implementation and enforcement has limited the ability of these institutions to address the true social and environmental impacts of their investments.

The competitive market in extractives is beginning to shift power from Global North–based companies towards China, which now boasts the two highest earning extractive companies in the world. In Africa,

Characteristics of the Extractive Model

PATRIARCHAL

Extractivism is designed for the benefit of men and operationalized through the domination of women, nature, and Indigenous and rural people. Women's exclusion from decision-making roles around extractives extends from worksites to corporate board rooms to agenda-setting spaces on climate, environment, rights, and security. Even within families, communities, and social movements, women must navigate patriarchal norms that prioritize male leadership and relegate women to supportive or caretaking roles.



A COMPLEX WEB OF POWER

Extractivism involves a constellation of actors including government officials, corporations, investors and financiers, security forces, media elites, armed groups, and criminal enterprises—who wield power in interconnected and often non-transparent ways. This web makes it extremely difficult to disentangle for the purposes of holding actors accountable.

NEOCOLONIAL

Extractivism is built upon the seizure and control of raw materials for the purpose of export rather than the benefit of local populations. Today, those benefiting from extractivism may be urban elites or corporations located in the Global South, but whether flowing North or South, profits rarely return to those on lands from which the resources were taken.

Asia Pacific, and Latin America, China is buying up enormous tracts of land for agricultural production and infrastructure, expanding large-scale mining and oil exploration, and greatly outpacing Northern countries in the renewables sector.[15] The concept of "neo-extractivism," developed by the Uruguayan social movement scholar Eduardo Gudynas, captures the nationalist trend of formerly colonized countries now asserting greater state control over their natural resources and the profits they bring, while continuing to tolerate the social and environmental harms as the price to be paid for "the ideology of progress."[16]

INHERENTLY PATRIARCHAL

Feminist scholars and activists understand extractivism as an inherently patriarchal development model, one that relies on male power and reinforces it through wealth accumulation.[17] As with colonialism, extractivism is designed for the benefit of men and works by dominating women, nature, and Indigenous people. Feminist economists point to how the drive for "supernormal profits"—the hyper-competitive, high risk, and high reward conditions that generate maximum profits—lays the groundwork for "supernormal patriarchy."[18] The "hegemonic masculinity"[19] in extractive industries is characterized by rigid gender roles, with women expected to remain within the private sphere of the home while men engage in public roles as community negotiators, social movement leaders, elected officials, and workers in extractive industries.

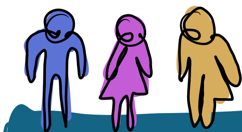
> "What Indigenous peoples want is to challenge the economic system that is undermining the existence of lifeways, epistemologies, of the land-based knowledge and autonomy of Indigenous peoples over their ancestral territory. Extractive projects are part of a developmental paradigm that is very patriarchal, just as the colonial project is. This is reflected in the most violent extractive paradigm perpetrated against racialized and gendered bodies."
>
> **—ANGELA MARTÍNEZ**
> *DIRECTOR, AMAZON DEFENDERS FUND, AMAZON WATCH*

The exclusion of women from decision-making roles around extractives extends from corporate board rooms to policy forums and agenda-setting spaces related to climate, environment, land rights, conflict and security. Women's lack of representation also extends to the community level, where gender norms often prevent women from participating in negotiation around extractive projects and compensation agreements. Extractive worksites are also male-dominated, with women often prevented from benefiting from higher wage employment in the sector.[20] Even within social movements, women must navigate patriarchal norms that prioritize male leadership and relegate women to supportive or caretaking roles. Women leaders and defenders are therefore forced to challenge patriarchy in its external (corporations, states, security forces) as well as internal manifestations (family, community, social movements).

This report does not suggest that women are targeted or impacted by extractivism more than men, but rather that they are *differently* affected. A rich body of feminist research analyzes in detail how extractivism both perpetuates existing, and creates new, forms of structural violence that are gendered.[21] Nevertheless, analysis of the harms posed by extractive industries is often either gender-blind or tends to focus on gender-based violence—and sexual violence in particular—as the principal form of harm.[22] Forms of gendered structural violence that are often omitted from the mainstream analysis of extractivism include: the devaluing of women's roles, work, and knowledge; restrictions on women's use of and access to land, territory and resources; and limitations on women's participation and decision-making about their economic survival and everyday realities. Also overlooked is the increasing workload and pressure on women environmental defenders to confront the ever-evolving challenges of extractivism while also maintaining their traditional care roles in family and community.

Dimensions of Gendered Structural Violence

The harm that women experience in the context of extractivism is often discussed in terms of gender-based violence. With the framing of "gendered structural violence," this report (1) distinguishes between the multiple and gendered dimensions of violence that arise in the context of extractivism (gender-based, economic, environmental, political and sociocultural) and (2) focuses on the systems, institutions, and structures that give rise to and sustain violence. For those directly impacted by extractives, identifying specific harms is often the first step towards understanding the problem. The strategies section that follows explores the breadth of responses used to confront these forms of violence.



GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a direct form of violence used to control, subjugate, and maintain rigid gender roles and inequality.[23] Rooted in patriarchal social norms reflecting the view that men are superior to women, GBV is a form of discrimination intended to keep certain groups—often women, trans people, and non-binary people—in subordinate positions to more socially powerful groups, often cis-gendered men.[24] It encompasses any action directed at an individual based on his or her biological sex or gender identity as a way of controlling behavior and preventing deviation from prescribed gender roles. Some forms of GBV include physical, sexual, verbal, emotional, and psychological abuse; harassment; threats; coercion; economic or educational deprivation; and control over freedom of movement. GBV may also be directed at organizations or groups as a means to control, stop, or influence their activities. In the extractives context, GBV occurs at multiple levels: within the family in the form of intimate partner violence, within organizations and social movements, in the workplace of extractive sites, in community, and in the political sphere.

"Gender-based violence" is preferred over the term "violence against women" for two reasons. First, it recognizes that boys and men can also experience GBV, as can sexual and gender minorities such as transgender persons and men who have sex with men. Second, it emphasizes the structural causes of violence and the need for systemic solutions that transcend the individual perpetrator.[25] Regardless of who is targeted, GBV is rooted in gendered structural inequalities and is characterized by the use and abuse of physical, emotional, or financial power and control. Nevertheless, there is widespread recognition that women and girls are disproportionately targeted with GBV because of their gender.[26] GBV resulting from extractivism is consistent with this trend.

Critically, not all women are similarly impacted by GBV. Multiple, and often intersecting, factors including race, age, ethnicity, caste, geographic location, and disability increase discrimination against certain women and make them differently vulnerable to GBV.[27] For example, the broader contexts of discrimination against Indigenous peoples such as colonial domination, continued discrimination and racism, limited access to social services, dispossession from ancestral lands, and militarization increase Indigenous women's vulnerability to violence and limit their ability to seek protection and recourse. Culture and tradition can also be drivers of GBV, as in the case of Dalit women who are marginalized by the caste system. Services and support for survivors of GBV are generally difficult to access in remote areas, but Indigenous women face additional economic, language, and culture barriers.

In the context of extractives, a militarized presence—of public forces like military and law enforcement or private security forces—charged with securing sites of extractive activity leads to high rates of GBV. Security forces perpetrate many forms of GBV as a tool to quell resistance and instill fear in communities resisting extractive industries or land grabs.[28] A survey of the impacts of mining on women in Asia revealed that across a number of countries, "violence, sexual harassment and abuse, (and) rape are used to intimidate and establish power over the community."[29] This fear pervades daily life, raising fear as women bathe, care for children, fetch firewood, and work in fields or waterways. Extractive sites are typically situated in remote locations that lack good roads or adequate services—conditions that increase vulnerability to GBV. For example, in the securitized Marange diamond fields of Zimbabwe, where the Zimbabwe military owns a stake in the mine, GBV is commonly perpetrated against women who enter the military camp near the mine—the only place in the area that is not deforested—in order to gather firewood. Soldiers rape women who enter the camp or use firewood to coerce sex, forcing women to choose between their safety and gathering resources essential for their survival.[30]

Women and girls living in communities near extractive sites, or working in these industries, also experience high levels of GBV perpetrated by male workers. Hyper-masculinity is the dominant culture in the "man camps," or areas that house male workers on extractive projects. This culture results from a sense of powerlessness among male workers surrounding their exploitative working conditions, and a need to exert their domination to restore their position in the social order.[31] Employers at extractive worksites often encourage sex work and drug and alcohol consumption to maintain morale and subdue worker unrest.[32] These conditions lead to numerous forms of GBV. Rape, gang rape, and other forms of sexual violence occur both in camps and communities surrounding them. Intimate partner violence also soars in communities close to extractive sites, triggered by stressful living conditions and uncertainty around livelihood.[33] This hyper-masculine context creates the conditions for women to engage in "patriarchal bargains"[34] to survive, where women gain male social and economic protection in exchange for submission or propriety.

Transactional sex is common in or near extractive sites, as women will often migrate to mining communities for sex work due to the high concentrations of male workers. GBV against sex workers is both extreme and common. Interviews in Zimbabwe conducted for this report describe attacks targeting sex workers committed by male workers as well as machete gangs. Stigma against sex workers keeps them further disempowered and marginalized, and magnifies barriers to health care.[35] In sub-Saharan Africa, sex workers are at the highest risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections, with nearly 70% of new cases among women, especially young women.[36] In many countries, violence against sex workers is often not recognized as GBV and is rarely investigated or punished.

ECONOMIC VIOLENCE

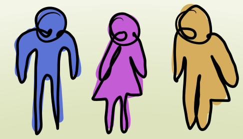
Economic violence refers to the destruction, appropriation, exploitation, and devaluing of the sources and products of people's livelihoods and basic economic survival, including the taking of land, crops, access to forests; nonpayment of wages; human trafficking; slavery; and exploitation of domestic and reproductive labor. Economic violence perpetuates a permanent underclass and undermines the possibilities of basic wellbeing for generations.

Women are disproportionately excluded from the economic benefits of extractive projects, including employment in that sector. Gender discrimination in law and society in many countries often favors male employment in extractive industries. In Nigeria, for example, the Labor Act prohibits women from working in mines.[37] A higher ratio of male workers in extractive industries earning higher salaries (though relatively low wages) than women increases the gender imbalance of labor in communities. Women, who typically already perform more unpaid care work than men, take on more caretaking responsibilities when men migrate for work. Such roles include farming land that is degraded or contaminated from extractive projects; fetching water from ever-diminishing sources, often at further distances; caregiving for male workers injured during high-risk extractive projects; providing services such as driving trucks, doing laundry, or feeding male workers; or raising children under poor and exploitative conditions.[38] As sexual divisions in labor widen, women's reproductive roles become less visible and consequently less valuable.[39] Women are also left out of compensation agreements with lack of payment for their land and labor.[40] Their exclusion from community negotiations with extractive companies means that projects aimed at compensating the community are often not what women would have chosen. And for women defenders of land and territory who are resisting extractivism, tensions often arise with male partners and family members who are employed by extractive enterprises.

Women who manage to secure jobs in the male-dominated extractive sector face various forms of discrimination and violence. Many extractive sectors employ workers informally, offering few labor protections, and unsafe and unsanitary living conditions that are particularly dangerous for women. In parts of South Asia, women and children are employed informally in open mines for very low wages. In South Africa, the Center for Applied Legal Studies documented conditions for pregnant migrant workers at the infamous Lonmin platinum mine. They were told to report to "surface work" because it was not safe for them to work underground, only to discover there was no work for them on the surface. Women were left with two options: hide the pregnancy or quit.

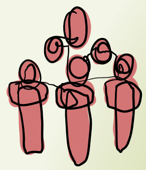
Extractive industries can change the economies in indigenous and rural communities by bringing access to new markets and introducing a culture of consumption. This cultural disruption provokes changes in behavior, creating new incentives for transactional work such as exchanging sex for cell phones and money. Accruing household debt also increases women's vulnerability to GBV, as they are often the ones to assume the debt burden. This trend occurred when the fracking industry disrupted indigenous communities in Mexico's Oaxaca state. With the introduction of a debt-based economy, new forms of GBV emerged including forced prostitution, trafficking of women, and the disappearance of girls.

Gendered Structural Violence



Gender-Based Violence

Violence within the family, community and workplace, perpetrated by private and/or public actors.

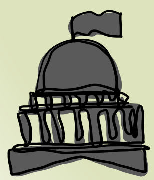


Socio-Cultural Violence

Violence caused by disruption to indigenous or traditional ways of life and women's roles in preserving them.

Economic Violence

Violence arising from threats or disruptions to women's livelihoods and economic survival



Political Violence

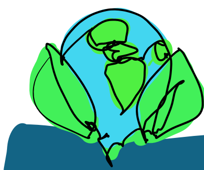
Violence that aims to silence or delegitimize women community leaders and land defenders

Environmental Violence

Violence stemming from the degradation of natural resources and threats to health, food systems and livelihoods

Women overwhelmingly engage in land-based livelihoods such as rotational agriculture, pastoralism, fishing, or harvesting forest resources. Globally, women are less likely to own or control land than men despite their critical roles in food production.[41] Thus, when land and resources lost due to land grabs or environmental degradation, women's economic security is threatened, as is food sovereignty for entire communities. The loss of land is more devastating for people who are already poor or marginalized. For example, Indigenous peoples often lack adequate legal protection under national constitutions to protect their resources and property. While most Indigenous people must deal with harmful stereotypes (such as being backwards, ignorant, or uneducated), Indigenous women face additional barriers to education and workforce participation that would help them adapt to livelihood loss.[42]

Women are differently impacted from land displacement or degradation due to lack of secure land tenure, coupled with patriarchal norms that assign decision-making power about land use to men despite women's key roles in fishing and farming (see "Land and Resource Grabs" under Drivers of Gendered Structural Violence). This can lead to other gendered impacts; for example, GBV tends to rise when resources are scarce or under threat.[43] In Asia Pacific, land grabs for extractive projects push women subsistence farmers further into informal and unregulated labor sectors, thereby increasing their vulnerability to violence and exploitation as well as other forms of violence. Across South Asia and much of Africa, lack of secure land tenure for women compounds the economic violence of extractive industries. When land is acquired by government for development or extractive projects, women have no rights to compensation, challenge, or resettlement.



ENVIRONMENTAL VIOLENCE

Environmental violence is the human-caused direct damage to natural resources, environment, and climate to such a degree that it prevents the natural regenerative and evolutionary process that allows ecosystems to survive, adapt, and thrive. It includes secondary violence from the natural world (e.g., floods, droughts, and pollution) as a result of human activity that, in turn, negatively impacts humans. It may also refer to the violence between people over natural resources, as well as environmental policies that can be violent against people.[44]

Environmental violence jeopardizes natural resources that are necessary for human survival. Communities that depend on agriculturally productive land and clean water experience severe and lasting impacts from the damage caused by extractive industries. Water pollution and shortages arising from the intense energy and water needs of extractive industries impact food sovereignty for those engaged in subsistence agriculture. In addition to the damage to air, soil, water, and biodiversity, extractive industries often necessitate the construction of more infrastructure such as ports or roads that cause further damage to the environment. Environmental degradation also follows social inequality, meaning that it disproportionately impacts communities that are considered "disposable,"[45] and therefore less worthy of protection.

The extent of environmental degradation differs by extractive industry and region. Industrial mining and extractive agriculture have devastated peasant food production systems in Southern Africa, undermining food sovereignty for rural people, who constitute over 61% of the region.[46] Women play a major role in horticulture and small-scale agriculture that is critical for household food security and sustainable livelihoods, yet pollution from mines and other extractive projects impacts food yields in family and community gardens.

Environmental degradation increases women's caretaking burdens. In rural areas, women must work more to find potable water or travel further to find fuel sources, often putting themselves at risk of GBV. Because men tend to have access to more fertile land, women are often the first to struggle with lower crop yields due to erosion and pollution. In parts of Africa and Central Asia, open-pit mines destabilize housing and create other hazards, such as children drowning in flooded pits. In Latin America, explosions caused by mining projects damage houses, creating housing insecurity. Meanwhile, pollution creates a range of reproductive and sexual health problems that disproportionately burden women. Toxic chemicals from mines pollute food sources and water, leading to hunger and poverty. Women are often more exposed to contaminants in air and water than men due to their outsized roles in gathering water, preparing meals, bathing children, and washing clothes.[47] Reproductive health outcomes affected by environmental pollution include high-risk pregnancies, infant mortality, premature births, and congenital malformations.[48] Women not only have to manage their own health outcomes but also take responsibility for the health and care of their families. This can be especially challenging in rural areas with minimal public services and poor infrastructure, making health care inaccessible or inadequate.[49] In this way, extractivism benefits from and reinforces women's unpaid care work (caregiving for children and elders growing and preparing food, cleaning) and community management work (water management, seed saving, restoration of degraded land).

POLITICAL VIOLENCE

Political violence manifests in threats, attacks, and intimidation from the state, corporations, security forces, political actors, media, and other elites frequently working together or as part of an interconnected chain of economic and political interests. These attacks can occur when activists and organizations directly challenge power, when power is contested through democratic processes, or simply when women activists and the communities they represent are perceived as an obstacle to extractive interests. It is shaped by the intersections of identity and is highly gendered. Attacks against women, which are often sexualized and gendered, are intended not only to punish women for their political activity but also for their deviation from gender roles. Some Latin American activists refer to this as "*femicidio en vida*," or the social and psychological pressure that keeps women in the private sphere to prevent them from participating or leading in the public sphere.[50]

Forms of political violence that aim to silence or delegitimize women leaders include:

- Exclusion from decision-making spaces and institutions;
- Refusal to allow women to speak in negotiations and public forums concerning extractive projects;
- Stigmatization of women leaders, smear campaigns within local/national media or community, use of digital and other media to spread misinformation, slander, or stigmatize;
- Repression, assassination, and the menacing presence of police, military equipment, and weaponry to destroy or deter protest or opposition;
- Complicity of the state in violent attacks by nonstate actors such as paramilitary, security forces, or organized crime;
- Death threats or threats of assault against activists and their family members;
- GBV targeting activists and defenders as they travel between communities to organize groups;
- Destroying equipment, seizing property, hacking computers;
- Criminalization and harassing lawsuits against leaders and organizations (Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation, or SLAPP), cyber laws, defamation, and terrorism charges); and
- Legal restrictions on organizational funding, registration, or operation.

Political violence and repression may target individual women, women's groups and organizations, social movements, or community institutions where women play a leadership role. Women's roles in resisting or confronting extractive projects can trigger a negative reaction from within the family or community. This pressure can pull women leaders in two directions, leading many to feel pressure to choose between defending their land and territory or caretaking for their families.

The extensive network of actors behind extractive industries have learned to deliberately sow the seeds of discord in communities that show signs of resistance. Mesoamerican activists in the focus group SAGE conducted spoke of the "divide and conquer" tactics of corporations and government officials, such as refusing to negotiate with women leaders. They are designed to distract the community's attention and resources from external threats and occupy them instead with internal divisions. Tearing the social fabric can have serious implications for communities and movements.

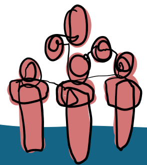
"When the land is grabbed and the majority of the population in the region is women, and large proportions of women are engaged in subsistence farming – that means women do not have any access to food nor livelihood. They don't have income sources, and they also lose their access to market because they don't have anything to sell. When large corporations such as plantation companies come to their land, the jobs are mostly not available for women. Then, women will be segregated into further informal and unregulated labor sectors. So, they are hardly paid, and it's a poverty wage if they ever get the wage. Care work burden increases as well many forms of sexual and gender-based violence. And, then when there is a land or resources dispute, because of the patriarchal values in most of the cases, there are documented cases of increasing violence against women whether it is domestic or political violence."

–MISUN WOO
REGIONAL COORDINATOR, APWLD

Women also experience backlash for challenging patriarchal community leadership structures and breaking out of gender roles that confine them. Women leaders and environmental defenders in different regions articulate a similar paradox: the more visible they become, the greater the frequency and intensity of the attacks against them. This increased visibility sits alongside the reality that in many movements women's leadership is often discounted or less visible than male forms of leadership. In recent years, due to the sustained influence of feminists and women's rights advocates, there is a greater recognition by the international human rights community of the gendered nature of attacks and violations on environmental and indigenous land defenders, and small steps forward to adapt protection and advocacy strategies accordingly.[51] However, much more remains to be done.

Finally, entrenched gender bias in the legal and judicial system makes access to justice more challenging for women defenders of land and territory. Because they are typically more impoverished than men, and women's organizations are comparably less funded,[52] women activists are less likely to be able to access and afford legal counsel than their male counterparts. Further, detention of women activists can impact a family and community in multiple ways, including separation of women and children, loss of women's productive role in food cultivation and preparation, and loss of community leadership roles from education to health care.[53] Detention of men puts added pressure on women, who bring food and medicine to their male relatives in prison, lead efforts to free them, and work to replace lost income while family members are detained and unable to work.

> "The emotional violence is the invisible wound that stays with you for all your life. You live in daily fear that you are not recognized for your identity, you're evicted from your ancestral land, and the government treats you as an ignorant, non-educated group of people. It's emotional and structural violence. It also has a strong mental health impact which can't even be measured. If you are not strong enough, and do not get proper support, then you can't fight back. It requires a lot of support: moral, emotional, physical and financial support. We have to continuously boost [Indigenous women] and be on their side and show them that we are fighting alongside them."
>
> **—EMILIE PALAMY PRADICHIT**
> *FOUNDER/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF MANUSHYA FOUNDATION, THAILAND*



SOCIOCULTURAL VIOLENCE

Extractive industries can disrupt traditional or indigenous ways of life, culture, art, economic systems, customs, beliefs, and traditions. For traditional and indigenous communities, land is more than a physical location. It is sacred ground where ancestors are buried and viewed as integral to cultural survival. The loss of land through displacement, dispossession, or environmental degradation can be experienced as emotional, psychological, or spiritual violence. In many indigenous cultures, women are often charged with guarding ancestral wisdom and knowledge, including through practices such as seed saving, cultivating plants for traditional medicine, or teaching methods for ecological restoration.[54] The loss of these roles impacts women by eroding their socially reproductive roles in the community and the networks that Indigenous women build and cultivate.[55] Yet, women are often expected to rebuild community life after a dislocation or disruption. For example, the Brazilian group Comissão Pastoral de Terra reported that women in a rural community called Racha Placa had to rebuild all community institutions and social relationships after a mining company bought and subsequently dismantled the church, school, and health clinic.

Displacement fractures social cohesion and unravels community leadership. Because women's leadership is often less visible and less formal than male leadership, it is more difficult for women to recreate the same structures, such as informal networks, that take years to grow. When women leaders are displaced, it can also create a leadership vacuum in the community. In Afro-descendent indigenous communities in Latin America, for example, women are more vulnerable to GBV at the family or community level when the group perceives them to have lost or diminished capacity to access their own resources, or when they lose the economic practices that benefit the collective.[56] But displacement has implications for cultural survival by denying future generations the transfer of place-based knowledge.

Extractivism often leads to forced migration of women from rural areas to cities, from within cities, or cross-border migration, all of which make them vulnerable to sexual assault.[57] Male migration also profoundly impacts women. In the absence of men, some women report positive changes including having more social mobility or freedom to earn an income. However, others must take on new family and community roles, which adds to their burden of care. Women are left to manage the harmful elements that accompany extractives, such as higher levels of alcoholism, drug addiction, delinquency, disturbance of peace, family violence, deterioration of citizen behavior, and the disruption of social and communal organization.[58]

Drivers of Gendered Structural Violence

In order to understand the impacts of extractivism on women and girls, it is first necessary to analyze the drivers of structural violence in the context of extractivism, as well as how they intersect to put women and girls at risk of harm. The SAGE interviews and extensive desk research identified six key drivers of gendered structural violence in the context of extractivism: (1) hyper-consumption and the race for renewable energy, (2) land and resource grabs, (3) corporate power and impunity, (4) militarization, (5) closing of civic space and violence against defenders, and (6) the rise of right wing politics and autocratic regimes. This section analyzes each of these drivers from a gender perspective, focusing on the unique ways women and girls are impacted.

1 HYPER-CONSUMPTION AND THE RACE FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY

The raw materials produced by extractive industries are rarely consumed by local peoples, as they are destined for export to satisfy an ever-increasing demand for energy and goods in the Global North. The North's hyper-consumption, combined with the revenue generated and profits to be gained, puts pressure on cash-strapped countries in the South to accelerate extractivism. For many governments and national elites (many of whom negotiate the deals and may benefit personally), the short-term economic gains from extractive projects outweigh the costs to people and the environment.

The August 2021 report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change found that climate change is "widespread, rapid, and intensifying, and some trends are now irreversible."[59] UN Secretary-General António Guterres called the report "a code red for humanity."[60] Much of the response to the increasingly dire warnings about the consequences of unchecked climate change has been to look to "clean technology" such as electric cars, solar panels, and wind turbines. That technology requires metals and minerals – copper, lithium, graphite, cobalt, nickel, and rare earths, among others—that must be mined in significant quantities. A 2021 investigation by *Der Spiegel* on the impacts of clean technology provides perspective: "In a solar park measuring 1,000 by 1,000 meters, there are fully 11 tons of silver. A single Tesla Model S contains as much lithium as around 10,000 mobile phones. An electric car requires six times as many critical raw materials as a combustion engine—mainly copper, graphite, cobalt, and nickel for the battery system. An onshore wind turbine contains around nine times as many of these substances as a gas-fired power plant of comparable capacity."[61]

Current demand for these raw materials is high and expected to quadruple by 2040, and in the case of lithium could be up to 42 times higher,[62] bringing with it the prospect of increased human rights abuses and environmental degradation if it follows the current extractive model. The International Energy Agency projects that current mining operations can meet only half of future demand for lithium and cobalt.[63] Mining for these minerals shares many of the same problems as traditional mining, including the production of environmentally toxic tailings, exploitative working conditions, and few benefits flowing to local populations.[64] Civil society has documented many of these cases. For example, Environmental Justice Atlas and MiningWatch Canada have published a map of 25 mining projects in the Americas for metals and minerals needed for the energy transition.[65] The human rights abuses, including child labor, involved in cobalt mining in the Democratic Republic of the Congo—which produces two-thirds of the world's cobalt—are well documented.[66] As demand for these minerals grows, so does the prospect of compounded human rights violations, environmental harm, and climate change.

Beyond mining, the green transition is reviving support for large hydroelectric projects, the severe human rights impacts of which were detailed over 20 years ago by the World Commission on Dams, which estimated that 40 to 80 million people were displaced by dams in the 20th century. It also found that "Among dam-affected communities, gender gaps have widened with women often bearing a greater share of the costs and discrimination in the distribution of benefits."[67] In a recent joint statement, four UN Special Rapporteurs reiterated the significant human rights impacts caused by dams, expressed concern that climate change is being used to justify continued support for large hydroelectric projects, and called on governments, business, and financial institutions to abandon plans to build new large hydropower dams.[68]

This competitive market for sources of renewable energy reproduces many of the same power dynamics, inequalities, and negative impacts as extraction of fossil fuels. Until there is a large-scale reorganizing of economic and political systems to prioritize sustainability, the financial incentives of extractive industries remain too compelling for many countries to resist.

2 LAND AND RESOURCE GRABS

Land dispossession can occur directly as a result of grabs by third parties, or indirectly due to pollution or climate change caused by extractive industries. Financialization of the agricultural sector following the global economic crisis of 2008 was one of the primary drivers of land grabs, driven largely by corporations and private investors who saw farmland as a source of investment and profit.[69] Since then, some initiatives have failed while others have intensified, such as the expansion of industrial palm oil plantations in Africa and Latin America led by mostly Asian-owned agribusiness firms.[70] GRAIN, the global NGO that has steadily documented this trend, noted in 2016 that "Increasingly, gaining access to farmland is part of a broader corporate strategy to profit from carbon markets, mineral resources, water resources, seeds, soil, and environmental services."[71] Corruption also plays a major role in land and resource grabs, as elites who stand to benefit from extractive projects are often working closely with or are themselves the very government officials making and implementing policy decisions. The resulting dispossession of land and natural resources is often violent and carried out with complete disregard for the people who depend on them for their livelihoods.[72] Moreover, the power imbalance often results in impunity for the takers of land and lack of justice or remedies for the landholders.

As discussed under "Economic Violence" below, women are disadvantaged when lands are seized because they often lack secure land tenure. Despite their significant role in natural resource–based

Photo: Rede/GRAIN

livelihoods, such as fishing and agriculture, less than 15% of landholders globally are women.[73] Even then, women reported as landowners are less likely than men to have legal documentation to assert ownership or use, access, and control over lands.[74] In most contexts, formal land and property tenure is necessary in order to access other rights and services such as access to credit, insurance, and other social protection schemes, compensation from extractive industries, or access to justice in the event of illegal land grabs.[75]

Regional differences in formal or customary law, and social norms and practices determine women's access to natural resources, land and territory. For example, in South Asia, customary law based on Hindu and Muslim religions discriminates against women's property and inheritance rights. In countries where women cannot inherit land, women often stay in abusive marriages because they lack economic resources to independently sustain themselves. Even when land is registered in the name of both the husband and wife, tradition, religion, and social norms place all decision-making power about control or possession of the land with the male head of household. In some countries, such as Bangladesh and Pakistan, many women withhold their names on land titles, certificates, leases, and contracts even when they have the legal right to do so. This is in deference to prevailing gender norms that assign men the decision-making authority over how land is used, as well as fear of retaliation for claiming their rightful property or inheritance.[76] Similarly, Nepal's 2015 reform to property and land laws has not substantially changed the situation on the ground for women. Changes to the legal framework including discounted land taxes for women and ensuring women's registration, equal ancestral inheritance, and spousal rights are not yet significantly benefiting women, especially in rural areas, due to the endurance of patriarchal norms.[77] Nevertheless, legal reform is an important step forward to diminish women's dependence on men.

In Southern Africa, where customary law limits women's land inheritance rights, women are marginalized in the access to and control of land and other productive resources although they provide most of the labor and are overrepresented among the poor. In response to the global and regional initiatives as well as lobbying at the local level, 11 countries in Southern Africa have ratified the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Gender and Development, committing to adopt gender-equitable land legislation and calling for 50% land allocation for women.[78] However, uneven implementation of commitments at the national level hinder the realization of progressive frameworks and protocols. In addition, local communities and small landholders lack knowledge of their rights as well as capacity to affirm them.

The lack of official recognition for Indigenous peoples' collective land rights is a root cause of structural violence against Indigenous peoples.[79] It is estimated that Indigenous people have legally recognized rights to 10% of the world's land even though they control as much as 65% through collectively held or customary tenure systems. Power imbalance makes community land an easy target for corporations. A recent report by the World Resources Institute showed that while it often takes decades for indigenous communities to formalize their land rights by navigating complicated state bureaucratic procedures, companies can secure land rights within days or weeks.[80] Moreover, legislation pertaining to extractive industries is rarely consistent with Indigenous people's territorial rights under international law (even where countries have ratified the relevant conventions). Free, prior, and informed consent processes are often poorly interpreted by national governments, if not disregarded outright. This lack of respect and recognition for Indigenous peoples' traditional lands leads to indigenous communities being dispossessed and treated as trespassers on their own ancestral lands, subject to prosecution for illegal occupation or forcible eviction.[81] A similar trend is happening with respect to forest-dwelling peoples in many parts of the world, as states seek to assert control over forests notwithstanding the traditional rights of forest peoples to use and manage these resources. For example, India's amended Forest Bill of 2019 revokes the rights of forest peoples to harvest forest products as guaranteed by the Forest Rights Act of 2006, thereby paving the way for private interests to commercially lease and extract timber, pulp, firewood, medicinal plants, and other resources.[82]

CORPORATE POWER AND IMPUNITY

Over the last 50 years, widespread neoliberal economic policies have produced extraordinary concentrations of wealth while facilitating outsized corporate influence over economic and political systems at all levels. Multinational corporations exert significant power over various realms of public life. In many jurisdictions, corporations hold many of the same (or greater) rights as private citizens yet are not subject to the same obligations as states to respect the rights of people and the planet. In the service of corporate power, states have reconfigured the social contract with their citizens—one that used to provide a minimal safety net and protect rights while regulating the excesses of capital.[83] Now, states are increasingly serving the interests of multinational corporations over those of their own citizens, taking a hands-off approach towards oversight of extractive industries.

Globalization has led to increased economic competition among states and created incentives for extractive corporations to establish a base in countries with the most favorable regulatory framework.[84] Spurred by national elites who stand to benefit from extractive contracts, many countries provide incentives to industries that threaten their own ability to mobilize resources for domestic use; these include tax stabilization (averaging 20 years), corporate income tax incentives, and withholding tax incentives.[85] One example is the Philippine Mining Act of 1995, which fully liberalized the mining industry in order to draw foreign investment, creating a range of incentives from full repatriation of mining profits to a tax exemption of 10 years, plus water and timber rights and tax exemption from import of materials and supplies.[86] Following passage of this law, mining accelerated in mostly indigenous-held territory, accompanied by massive land grabbing, environmental destruction, and human rights violations. Meanwhile, the Philippine government recouped less than 10% of the production value from mining and the mining industry employed less than 0.5% of workers—belying the government's rationale that this legislation would boost economic growth, employment, and development.[87]

Corporations are often able to evade public scrutiny by concealing their dealings through complex technical and financial arrangements.[88] This lack of transparency, combined in many countries with weak governance and the absence of a robust regulatory framework, create the conditions for corporate impunity. This occurred in the Philippines, where companies responsible for the worst mining disasters, including Philex, Lepanto, Marcopper, Lafayette, and Citinickel, were never held accountable and continue to operate.[89] In Honduras and other Latin American countries, governments have created Zones for Employment and Economic Development (ZEDEs), or free zones of commerce funded by foreign capital and governed by their own rules. The exercise of due diligence and corporate accountability is particularly weak where it concerns abuses that occur outside the home country, meaning at the site of the extractive project and across the supply chain. The absence of levers to hold corporations accountable for human rights and environmental harms perpetrated extraterritorially creates the conditions for structural violence.

In countries where extractive projects are located, the judicial system often favors elites, and therefore works in the interest of facilitating and insulating

> **"In the past, approaches to social capitalism or other softened forms moderated the excesses of capitalism through the creation of social protections, rights, etc. ... But with deregulation, liberalization, privatization—and the state in a complicit role with global capital—these moderations on the margins are no longer there or enough. All of life, down to our privacy and DNA, are for profit."**
>
> – **MARUSIA LOPEZ**
> *ADVISOR TO THE MESOAMERICAN WOMEN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER INITIATIVE*

extractive operations. It is not similarly equipped to enforce remedies for affected communities and the environment, for a host of reasons including a weak legal framework, lack of independence, limited enforcement of laws, and lack of accessibility and affordability for plaintiffs. In some contexts, alliances between the military, security forces, corporations, and state authorities create an environment of impunity: the absence or weak enforcement of regulations enables extractive industries to exploit land and resources; laws provide minimal protection around environmental and social harms while also criminalizing people for speaking up; and legal systems fail to investigate or punish crimes perpetrated by corporate actors or security forces. Existing accountability mechanisms are overwhelmingly nonjudicial and nonbinding. Legal accountability for the actions of corporations, especially around extraterritorial activity, remains elusive. There are some signs that the trend may be shifting, albeit slowly, with binding standards being adopted or discussed at the national and international level,[90] and new climate litigation strategies achieving some measure of success.[91] Meanwhile, since the 1990s from the national level to the UN, corporate lobbies have been displacing civil society organizations as the key partners to states in design of public policy, especially around environmental and climate policy. Corporations have occupied policy spaces and public debate at both national and global levels to a degree that, until recently, they have been able to block and undercut the science and data that might lead decisionmakers toward alternatives.[92]

> "[In Latin America] the elites have reached such a degree of state cooptation that the state serves to protect their interests... We have a coopted justice system that, on the one hand, favors the elite in their violation of rights and on the other prosecutes all those who constitute a threat to the interests of the elites. Faced with more and more criminalization, there is a lack of response from the state. Co-opted members of parliament are sold to the highest bidder, promoting laws that restrict civic space even more."
>
> —**ANABELLA SIBRIÁN**
> *PROTECTION INTERNATIONAL MESOAMERICA AND PLATAFORMA CONTRA LA IMPUNIDAD*

MILITARIZATION

Corporations engaged in the extractive sector make long-term and expensive investments to operate in areas far from cities. Investments therefore require not only building the extractive activity at the site, but also development of infrastructure in the form of roads, electricity, and transportation to produce and export raw materials. The forces behind extractive industries are highly incentivized to secure their multi-billion dollar investments over the long-term. States and corporations often work together to use security forces, private military and security companies, paramilitary groups, and illegal armed groups to secure extractive projects from perceived threats arising from local people.[93]

States invoke national security and economic interests in order to suppress dissent and protect their economic investments in extractive projects.94 But in states with a weak rule of law, companies seeking to secure their investments often contract with private security forces that take on a far greater role than guarding property. This may include mounting military-like operations against insurgencies in areas of armed conflict, or engaging in tactics resembling state counterinsurgency efforts to spy on, intimidate, and harass those leading efforts to resist extractive projects.[95] With so many different actors, overlapping responsibilities and blurred chains of command, communities face challenges in documenting abuses and accessing justice. Consequently, security actors often operate with impunity.

Women environmental and human rights defenders, and Indigenous peoples are the groups most affected by militarization related to extractivism.[96] GBV is

> “It's a sort of double role – when it comes to guaranteeing rights there is a total absence of the state, they delegate to the mining companies to do what they want without control, but at the same time, the state comes in with institutional violence as a tool to fuel the extractive processes and projects, weakening the position of the indigenous communities”
>
> **–VERONICA GOSTISSA**
> *A MEMBER OF PUEBLOS CATAMARQUEÑOS EN RESISTENCIA Y AUTODETERMINACION (PUCARÁ), PERU*

exacerbated by the presence of private military and security companies.[97] Many regions impacted by extractivism are also lands and territories once subject to military conquest for the purpose of land and natural resource acquisition. Areas rich in natural resources—including those of Indigenous peoples—are more likely to endure long conflicts associated with extraction of those materials. The EJOLT (Environmental Justice Organizations, Liabilities, and Trade) Project reported in 2016 that of 516 conflicts in Latin America, over half involved indigenous populations resisting extractivism in their territories.[98] In Peru alone between the years 2006–2014, 230 people were killed and 3,318 wounded in socio-environmental conflicts, mostly around mining projects.[99]

In the Philippines, for example, ongoing militarization connected to mining for minerals including copper, nickel, chrome, zinc, gold, and silver is the legacy of colonial subjugation over indigenous peoples, first by the Spanish, then by the U.S., and ultimately by successive Philippine governments. In the Cordillera region, human rights groups have documented many forms of violence against Indigenous women associated with militarization, including physical, psychological, and sexual violence.[100] Further, restrictions on freedom of movement due to displacement, checkpoints, and curfews impact Indigenous women's livelihoods. This compounds the structural violence they experience from land dislocation, environmental degradation and pollution, and the replacement of subsistence economies with a market-based economy.[101] Security forces make it possible for the state and extractive companies to seize land and perpetuate conflict.

The emerging presence of organized crime in the extractives sector is a new and even more dangerous factor for frontline communities. Criminal groups involved in arms, illegal drugs, and human trafficking are drawn to the profits and relative safety of extractives compared to other industries. Precious metals mining by organized crime now outpaces revenue from drug trafficking or the arms trade.[102] In Latin America, for example, alliances between state officials, oligarchs, corporations, and criminal networks collude to control territories in order to facilitate maximum profit from extractives.[103] On the South coast of Guatemala, activists with Asociación Madre Tierra reported that palm oil industries were colluding with municipal authorities and drug traffickers to terrorize and subdue local populations. The involvement of criminal groups brings high levels of violence—and presents new threats to social and economic stability for countries already reeling from the impacts of extractive industries. Organized criminal enterprises also bring their own systems of "law" and violence to enforce control over the territory they have claimed.

> **"Fundamentally, extractivism is a militarized process: it violently ruptures ecosystems and habitats. In doing so, it displaces then polices human communities with ongoing connections to the land. Relatedly, militarism is an extractive process: it depends on vast quantities of natural resources to innovate and assemble more deadly technologies of control and destruction."**
>
> —**DANIEL SELWYN**
> *LONDON MINING NETWORK,* MARTIAL MINING: RESISTING EXTRACTIVISM AND WAR TOGETHER

5 CLOSING OF CIVIC SPACE AND VIOLENCE AGAINST DEFENDERS

The human rights community has sounded the alarm about the deepening erosion of civic space, the proliferation of laws to restrict civil society activities and silence dissent, and the widespread harassment and violence against those who challenge abuses of power now prevalent around the world.[104] Environmental and land defenders—including many Indigenous peoples—face the gravest threats and danger. In 2021, Global Witness documented 227 lethal attacks against environmental defenders in a single year, making it the most dangerous year on record.[105] Since 2015, 108 women—nearly 30% of all women environmental defenders killed—were campaigning against extractive industry projects.[106] These murders occur within in a larger context of escalating criminalization, threats and intimidation, and GBV.

Across all regions, women and the movements they are part of face challenges to their organizing due to crackdowns on civil society and criminalization of human rights activity.[107] Countries in Latin America including Nicaragua, Brazil, and Mexico have high levels of criminalization against NGOs,[108] in particular legislation controlling sources of funding. The first to be targeted are often groups addressing harms caused by extractivism. In East Africa, Ethiopia has restricted the ability of civil society organizations to raise funding from foreign sources or conduct certain kinds of human rights activity.[109] In 2021, the government of Uganda shut down 54 organizations perceived as engaging in opposition political activity, including human rights groups and organizations advocating for the rights of people impacted by a crude oil production project in western Uganda.[110] Human rights activists seeking to challenge laws criminalizing their activities face an increasingly hostile court system. Judicial harassment is used to target leaders and silence communities. Judges and prosecutors allow criminal cases to proceed with insufficient or false evidence, or issue judgments that echo corporate or state-sponsored smear campaigns, reinforcing stereotypes about environmental defenders as terrorists and creating a chilling effect that prevents others from speaking up.[111]

> "[Corporate] lobbies have also been instrumental in targeting civil society groups and movements. The huge profits linked to resource extraction, infrastructure projects, and agribusiness, and the land grabs" associated with them are directly implicated in the repression and forced displacement of local communities and the killing of activists."
>
> **—BEN HAYES AND POONAM JOSHI**
> RETHINKING CIVIC SPACE (2020)

Surveillance, censorship, and restrictions on assembly and association are tactics commonly used to suppress the activities of those opposing extractivism. In 2018, President Duterte of the Philippines filed a legal petition accusing 600 indigenous leaders and environmental and human rights defenders, including Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as "terrorist and outlawed organizations, associations and/or group of persons" connected to the Communist Party.[112] The list puts them in legal jeopardy and has forced some defenders to live in exile.[113] Even while the possibilities for digital mobilization are facilitating mass mobilizations in Asia Pacific, notably in Burma/Myanmar, protesters are hobbled by state attempts to suppress dissent by shutting down the internet, or by using censorship and cyber laws to prosecute free speech.[114] These measures have a gendered effect, even if they do not specifically target women-led groups. Because women-led groups and organizations are comparatively under-resourced, laws aimed at suppressing civil society activity generally—such as NGO registration laws or restrictions on funding—disproportionately impact them.

In addition to a hostile legal environment, digital harassment is proliferating against women environmental defenders. Online threats, harassment, and defamation that are sexualized or gendered are increasing in number and intensity. These tactics stigmatize, isolate, and ultimately silence women leaders, and they create a chilling effect on other environmental defenders. They can take many forms, including incitements to sexual violence, attacks against the children of women leaders, or the dissemination of videos of attacks against women to intimidate others from speaking out.[115] Defamation campaigns portray women leaders as "whores" or bad mothers for choosing to work in the public sphere and stepping out of their domestic caretaking roles.[116] Many leaders interviewed for this report cited the psychological harm from online smear campaigns to be one of the most significant and long-term forms of structural violence.

6 RISE OF RIGHT-WING POLITICS AND AUTOCRATIC REGIMES

Several factors associated with extractivism undermine democracy and pave the way for more autocratic government regimes.[117] First and foremost is the promise of wealth that fuels corruption among national-level elites who stand to gain from engaging with extractive industries, either directly (e.g., negotiating deals) or indirectly (e.g, influencing media coverage). Other factors include the lack of rules and regulations promoting transparency and accountability, weak state institutions that fail to conduct proper due diligence or oversight, and development policies that prioritize short-term profit over longer-term sustainability.

Anti-democratic trends that are explicitly challenging the premise of liberal democracy and human rights are limiting possibilities for addressing the structural violence caused or exacerbated by extractivism. As in the vivid examples of Brazil and the Philippines, right-wing nationalist agendas, promoted by "strongman" leaders, are taking aim at Indigenous peoples and rural ethnic minorities who are often leading resistance against extractive industries.

Guided by and accountable to popular fundamentalist movements, these leaders are directly attacking hard-won gains in women's rights, gender justice, and LGBTQ rights, as well as women's representation in the public sphere.[118] While the links between ethnonationalism and patriarchy are not necessarily new, authoritarian leaders are increasingly using extractivism to consolidate their political and economic power. Right-wing nationalists and others promoting majoritarian politics fuel the coalitions that give rise to authoritarian leaders. For example, in India the rise of Hindu right-wing militants is fueling divisions that increase communal violence and attack women who dare to speak up.[119] In Latin America, evangelical churches—and to a lesser extent, the Catholic Church—have fueled a populist backlash by exploiting fears of "gender ideology," a catch-all term that articulates conservative opposition to feminist and LGBTQ priorities such as the rights to abortion and same-sex marriage.[120] Since the 1980s, populist leaders who rise to social conservatism have championed neoliberal policies focused on extractivism, pushing an anti-democratic agenda across the region.[121]

Covid-19 Pandemic

The impacts of the pandemic are exposing myriad gendered structural inequalities.[122] Because women disproportionately work in the informal sector, they are particularly affected by economic lockdowns and loss of livelihood. Social benefits and protections such as employment security or unemployment insurance are not available for workers in the informal sector. Meanwhile, women's unpaid care work has grown during the pandemic as they take on more domestic responsibilities to care for children and the elderly.[123] With restricted movement and social isolation, the pandemic has fueled GBV from the workplace to the home, which harms women's mental and emotional health.[124] The struggle to meet basic needs in both urban and rural settings exacerbates divisions within families and communities, compounding violence and gender inequality. Meanwhile, shrinking national budgets caused by the pandemic have precipitated cuts in social protection programs women depend on, affecting women's health and girls' access to education and health care.

While much of the world has been in lockdown to control infection rates, extractivism has continued and even thrived. The economic crisis threatens to make indebted countries even more beholden to extractives to produce needed revenue for social programs. In many African and Asian countries, extractive industries were considered an "essential service," meaning they were allowed to continue operating notwithstanding nationwide lockdowns.[125] Corporations in high-risk activities like mining failed to provide their workers with sufficient protective equipment, yet government officials in key mining countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo and Zimbabwe consistently prioritized economic profit over workers' welfare by failing to stop extractive activity when workers' health was on the line.[126]

Governments are using the pandemic to increase the crackdown on dissent, from banning peaceful assembly to censorship of information and criminalization of speech.[127] In Mesoamerica, for example, quarantines are being used to justify excessive surveillance on women and movements resisting extractivism, prohibit freedom of movement and assembly (travel and meetings) for women's rights organizations, and suppress information about extractive industries.[128] A report from Mexico, Nicaragua, and Peru conducted by the Regional Group on Gender and Extractives showed that during a time of heightened violence against environmental defenders, pandemic-related quarantine measures contributed to violence against women, erected new barriers to their political and social participation, and harmed their ability to maintain control over their natural resources.[129]

Even while women faced some of the most significant challenges as a result of the pandemic, they also demonstrated extraordinary resilience in responding to the needs of communities affected by the health and economic crises.[130] Rural and Indigenous women organized quickly to meet immediate needs, while also stepping up demands for more robust social protection and welfare policies, free from discrimination.[131]

Strategies to Build, Confront, and Transform Power

Across regions, communities directly impacted by extractive industries talk about their struggle as a fight for survival—one that involves using all the tools at their disposal to defend their bodies, culture, livelihoods, resources, land, and territories. The strategies women use to confront extractives are grounded in their community roles as food producers, environmental stewards, spiritual and physical healers, caretakers, educators, sustainers, organizers, and movement builders. Their approaches are highly dependent on historical context, economic opportunities, political openings, and strategic alliances. And in some contexts, strategies to confront extractives may be influenced by more tactical considerations, for example by which forms of information, technical support, or resources are available at any given time.

Notwithstanding contextual variations, some aspects are consistent across regions. First, women are grounding their approach in a power analysis that seeks to build, confront, or transform power in the context of extractives.[132] This means they are seeking to change the behavior of diverse targets, including government officials making and implementing policy, corporations spearheading extractive projects, private and public security forces, national elites, and key influencers such as the media. At the same time, women are challenging gendered power structures that constrain their participation and leadership in extractives struggles, including within community-based groups, social movements, and civil society organizations. The research identified a clear pattern of women in communities working together with allies to understand where these various forms of power reside, and how they operate, before designing their strategies. This process typically generates a multi-pronged approach that allows for work to proceed on multiple levels (local, national, regional, global) and with different goals and objectives (to resist, reform, or create alternatives).

Strategies to address gendered structural violence in the extractives context are also multi-dimensional, meaning they proceed in parallel in different domains (public and private) and follow different timelines (short-, medium-, and long-term). Women will often work simultaneously to meet urgent family needs like preparing food for a detained spouse, while mobilizing the community to take direct action against an extractive project, even as they also develop alternative livelihoods or mutual aid systems. To sustain these multiple efforts, women frequently partner with allies in social movements or civil society who bring complementary knowledge and expertise, support for long-term or costly resistance efforts, and new entry points or access to hubs of power.

This report groups strategies used by women in frontline communities, and the allies who accompany and support them, into three categories:

1

Foundational Strategies

Build women's power to confront threats and sustain their participation and leadership for the long-term

2

Site-Specific Strategies

Prevent, stop, or delay a specific extractive project, find accountability for those creating harm, and secure remedies and redress for those impacted

3

Transformational Strategies

Designed to address the root causes of gendered structural violence and create autonomous systems that build towards a sustainable future

In practice, these categories are less discrete than they appear here. For example, many strategies that may start as site-specific lead to transformational change, such as a women-led protest to stop the granting of a mining concession that turns public opinion against extractives, leading to legislation enacting a mining ban. The analysis here emphasizes the interlinkages and overlaps among these strategies, and ultimately the importance of using them in combination to address myriad forms of power behind the extractive model. Notably, women's approaches are constantly evolving as the targets themselves shift their own strategies and tactics.

The analysis of each strategy in this section seeks to answer four questions:

1. What are the goals and objectives of this strategy?
2. How are women leaders, women-led groups, and movements where women are playing key roles using this strategy, and to what effect?
3. What are the challenges, barriers, or costs for women leaders in using this strategy?
4. What are the untapped opportunities or unexplored potential with this strategy?

Foundational Strategies

Community-based power-building strategies are critical to the endurance and success of any extractive struggle. Power building is a long-term strategy to educate, organize, and mobilize communities that are often marginalized from power structures and decision-making processes that impact their daily realities. At the forefront are most often indigenous, rural, peasant, farmer, and fisher women whose land, territories, and livelihoods are on the line. In these communities, women tend to build and mobilize power differently than men—in ways that are often less formal, visible, and easily understood. The strategies in this section explore how women build leadership and power, and what forms of support they need to prepare, equip, and sustain them in their struggles against extractivism.

FOUNDATIONAL STRATEGIES INCLUDE:

- **COMMUNITY ORGANIZING**
- **LEADERSHIP BUILDING**
- **BUILDING POLITICAL POWER**
- **SHAPING COUNTERNARRATIVES TO EXTRACTIVISM**
- **COLLECTIVE CARE AND PROTECTION**

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

Community organizing strategies help people identify problems and work collectively, in their shared interests, to transform the conditions that lead to those problems. Women play a critical—though often invisible or under-recognized—role in community organizing. Women's leadership and organizing methods emerge from existing structures and networks reflective of their unique roles in the community. As the pandemic has so vividly illustrated, women's networks are often the hub for different community-organizing efforts, whether to care for the sick, use traditional medicines, or create mutual aid systems. Their spaces and structures lay the foundation for community organizing against extractivism.

When their community life is disrupted by an extractive project, women often first come together to discuss shared grievances or address survival needs. This work often includes time and space for sensitization and awareness-raising about the immediate problems, as well as analysis of the root causes that may be harder to identify. These processes may be self-led and/or supported by allies accompanying these struggles, especially feminist allies who help women generate awareness about where power is held and how it operates in the context of extractives. Such spaces build trust that allows women to reflect on, and challenge, patriarchy, racism, militarism, and other forces that constrain their daily lives. It also allows space to generate self- and collective-care practices that benefit leaders and the wellbeing of whole communities. This work sustains groups in the face of external pressures, and it lays the groundwork for effective mobilization when the timing demands it.

Women face no shortage of challenges in their organizing efforts, starting with resistance from within communities or social movements that are often male-led. Many indigenous, rural, and campesino movements ground their work in anti-

Saramanta is an informal collective of Indigenous women in Ecuador who call themselves "defenders of women and nature." Saramanta formed in 2012 to demand the right to clean water in response to pollution from mining operations. The purpose of the group is to exchange expertise and build political leadership among women living in communities affected by extractives and particularly mining. The collective provides administrative and political coordination but uses a non-hierarchical organizing structure, with decision-making residing in the women community leaders who participate from across the Amazon region.

"In the Amazon there are many threats, much persecution. Saramanta provided the chance to form the Amazon women's collective against extractivism, and this was very strong. Coming together gave us an umbrella of protection. It gave visibility to the fight. Each time we were more public, women had more presence in the national and international arenas. Creating space for connecting can facilitate our own organic organizing initiatives."

—IVONNE RAMOS
COORDINATOR OF SARAMANTA

racist, anti-capitalist, anti-colonial, and anti-caste struggles. For communities suffering from a long legacy of colonial oppression, the struggle to defend land and territory can feel all-encompassing. As such, it can divert attention from the internal forces that divide communities or marginalize certain members. In many contexts, male leaders are resistant to examining patriarchal structures and attitudes that repress women's leadership and preserve traditional gender roles. Women from within or outside the community who urge a focus on ways that women are uniquely harmed by extractive power are often accused of sowing divisions or distracting from the resistance.

Consequently, women in communities and their allies often move slowly when introducing a gender perspective or feminist power analysis. Some use feminist analysis and tools when organizing but avoid stating so publicly, instead using language that is less challenging to male power. The approach is highly context-specific and may change over time as women deepen their analysis and find openings to exert leadership or challenge patriarchal attitudes and practices. Women-only spaces are critical elements of this process. Meeting together, women feel freer to discuss how they are affected by social pressures and explore the connections between patriarchy and the external forces oppressing their communities.

In some areas of Latin America, feminism is perceived as a neocolonial framework championed by white,

Decades ago, **Dalit women in Tamil Nadu, India**, began organizing to address the pervasive problem of land grabs. They brought together women from neighboring villages to discuss the issues, then gradually organized petitions, protested local land offices, and lobbied elected officials. Recently when a corporation tried to confiscate the land of an entire village to create a "special economic zone," the women quickly mobilized and resisted the move. Within hours, thousands of women showed up to blockade a national highway with the goal of forcing the national government to intervene.

> "If I send a call to the women today, then thousands of women will come ... this is possible now only because we have been working closely with the women, holding meetings and conferences on a continuous basis on various issues over many years. The association with the women has grown and strengthened, we know each other, and trust has been built. We have strong mobilization in Tamil Nadu."

–DR. FATIMA BURNAD
LOCAL ORGANIZER

urban, or northern women and hence more reflective of their demands (e.g., bodily autonomy, equality in the workplace) than the concerns of indigenous or rural women who are more oriented around the collective (e.g., rights to access and control land and natural resources). The **Organización Nacional de Mujeres Indígenas Andinas y Amazónicas del Perú** (ONAMIAP) does not call itself feminist but integrates principles and practices into an Indigenous women's agenda that promotes "full and effective participation of women in the spaces where decisions are made." For ONAMIAP, this approach has led to constructive dialogue with male leaders around increasing women's representation in community deliberations about extractive projects.

Women's collective organizing can be triggered by changes to political economies that push women into labor in extractive industries such as mining. And yet, their exclusion from the economic benefits of these industries has led many to engage in informal, or artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM), which is a fundamentally different economic activity from large-scale capitalized mining.[135] In South Asia, where women have unequal land and property rights due to discriminatory inheritance laws, ASM may offer one of the realistic forms of income generation. In the Andes region and parts of Mesoamerica, women's artisanal mining collectives have become sites of resistance to large-scale industrial mining. These efforts are gaining visibility for women's roles in

Photo: PBI-guatemala.org

In northern Guatemala, the community of **La Puya** has engaged in ongoing resistance efforts since 2012 against the El Tambor gold mining project. After many attempts by government, corporations, and media to divide the community, women have been cautious about organizing from a feminist lens. They are careful to talk about their group as a "community organization" rather than a "women's organization," even though they meet separately from men and organize using a different model that has steadily built their collective consciousness and power. Today, women play leading roles in organizing discussions, educating communities, and supporting self-defense for nonviolent struggle.[133] Women co-lead direct action that has successfully blocked access to the mine with a barricade and community-led patrols 24 hours a day to prevent the company's machinery from entering their land. The community reports that as a result of women's leadership in this highly disciplined—and thus far successful—nonviolent resistance movement, *machismo* has diminished and the community is more unified in their collective struggle.[134]

informal mining and building women's leadership within policy-making spaces.[136] In some places, this has led to concrete economic gains for women while also challenging a singular definition of mining based on hyper-aggressive capitalism.[137]

Once women within a community reach a certain level of organization, they often seek out others within the same region who are similarly impacted by extractive industries. Dialogues and informal exchanges provide the opportunity for women leaders to share strategies, hone political analysis and agendas, and develop alternative frameworks or visions for the future. Importantly, such spaces provide the opportunity to work out differences that often impede cross-movement power-building. As illustrated in the examples below, women's exchanges across frontline communities are powerful experiences for women to break a sense of isolation. Exchanges can lay the groundwork to build a collective agenda or strengthen alliances that then can be activated around a particular issue or need when it arises. Allies can identify more opportunities to support exchanges within and across regions for women involved in extractive resistance struggles.

Women leaders interviewed for this report were clear-eyed about the need to build and deepen collaborations with allies to strengthen their leadership and support their organizing. Allies can complement community-based knowledge and expertise around organizing by bringing resources, technical knowledge (for example, about corporate structures), and skills and contacts (such as litigation or advocacy) to leverage the power of women's collective demands. Groups that successfully accompany women's efforts are those that invest in communities and movements over the long term. They build trust by responding to a variety of needs and requests for support, taking their cues from community leaders about what is needed at any given time, and leveraging the power of their own access and connections to seize critical opportunities. In the highly volatile context of extractives, and especially when working with women, allies have a heightened responsibility to remain accountable to community priorities and agendas without imposing their own. Trusted allies are often best placed to help communities coordinate various groups and strategies. For instance, the indigenous community of La Puya that is fighting a mining

> **"It's been really important to have different spaces to bring together demands. Our needs as peasant women are the same and concrete (as those of Indigenous women), but we haven't always made the connection with women in those organizations. We keep trying, but sometimes we feel alone."**
>
> **—DALILA VASQUEZ**
> *ACTIVIST WITH LA LUPITA AND MADRE TIERRA*

WoMin African Alliance is a leading regional feminist network which aims to equip rural women to understand and deal with power dynamics both inside their communities and within the broader context of extractive projects. The network brings together grassroots leaders with NGO allies to engage in movement-and leadership-building at the grassroots level. According to Samatha Hargreaves, Director of WoMin, these spaces build "connective tissue" with allies, as well as identify pressure points and cracks. An extensive two-year process of consultation with groups across the continent led to the development of a framework around the "right to say no." This became a multi-organizational campaign asserting the right of communities, and specifically women within them, to claim their development sovereignty and give or withhold consent for large-scale extractive projects.

The Indigenous Information Network, a network based in East Africa working with women in indigenous communities across the continent, brings together women from mining-affected communities and women small-scale miners from Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania to discuss common concerns, including safety in the mines and lack of government recognition for indigenous communities. Exchanges help address the key problem of lack of information about extractives and build capacity among Indigenous women to strategize around responses. The network works across regions, bringing pastoralist communities in India to share their traditional knowledge and documentation strategies regarding extractive industries with indigenous communities in Africa.

"It's very important to allow for spaces where communities from different places can meet and exchange experiences and ideas. Because it really helps a lot. I can take the success story to my community. I have seen communities look at it, like it, and learn from it."

–LUCY MULENKEI
THE INDIGENOUS INFORMATION NETWORK

project in Guatemala hosts a monthly meeting with international, regional, and national groups accompanying their struggle. Often facilitated by a partner organization, community representatives ensure that all strategies remain connected to the work on the ground and that messages are aligned with their own.

Trusted allies that are registered NGOs may serve as an effective vehicle for dispensing outside funding to communities because they sometimes have administrative capacity to handle the funds (unlike some frontline communities), understand the ways that money can divide if not handled responsibly, and can have frank conversations with community members about the benefits and pitfalls of accepting outside resources. When funds are channeled through allies, it is important to secure the agreement of communities involved, ideally in written form, and to be transparent about the source, amount, and restrictions (if any) on the funding. And while funding allies can be a way to support localized work where other funding mechanisms are not available, there is also a strong demand from grassroots, indigenous, and feminist groups to make funding accessible to them directly rather than through formal and better-resourced NGOs.

Just Associates (JASS) provides long-term accompaniment to women working on extractive struggles from their regional offices in Mesoamerica, Southern Africa, and Southeast Asia. Forms of support vary by context but may include: partnering with and equipping community trainers introducing feminist concepts and tools for power-building, leadership schools to expand women's political roles, direct initial support for women's healing processes when they face harassment or threats, or connections to ally organizations or networks at the regional and global level that offer support with research, legal defense, or advocacy. When Mesoamerican women defenders recognized a need to develop a collective protection model, JASS incubated the IM-Defensoras network with the help of other organizations. JASS continues to support indigenous and rural women in Mesoamerica in refining their analysis of and strategies for holistic care and collective protection.

Photo: JASS

Artisanal and Small-Scale Women Miners in Zimbabwe

In many parts of the world, women artisanal and small-scale miners (ASM) provide an income stream that supplements agrarian livelihoods and often enables their families and communities to preserve traditional ways of life. This way of life is increasingly under threat due to the expansion of large-scale mining and the land grabbing and environmental desecration associated with it. In the increasingly competitive informal mining sector, women engaged in ASM often organize to protect one another and preserve their livelihoods.

Artisanal and small-scale women miners in Zimbabwe formed a cooperative called the **Mthandazo Women Miner's Association**, supported by the Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association, PACT and Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCODD). They came together to respond to the violence and harassment women experience in the mining sector and to avoid the inhumane working conditions in the large-scale mines. Members of the cooperative who participated in a focus group for this report stated it was important for women to be involved in the mining sector because "It reduces dependence on men and reduces abuse against women, as women can now support their families. It helps women lead the lives they want and not to be dependent on abusive spouses. It provides women with financial stability. Women are developers and responsible in nature, and when given resources they develop their communities."

Cooperatives like this are relatively nascent and under-supported. Women miners often talk about their leadership and organizing through cooperatives as not only enabling individual change, but also transforming the mining sector from within. There is insufficient research about how such efforts are challenging the structural violence inherent to the mining industry or ensuring sustainable livelihoods for women impacted by extractivism. There is consequently a learning opportunity for civil society partners interested in supporting women's organizing in communities where ASM is an important source of income.

Photo: Mthandazo Women Miner's Association

One of the clearest needs identified through this research is support for women's organizing efforts *before* extractivism threatens to disrupt a community. Once an extractive project is imminent, efforts by the state or corporations to divide communities intensify, and internal tensions are magnified. Communities that have invested time in organizing—and specifically in understanding and analyzing power, addressing internal conflicts, and unifying around a common vision—are in a far stronger position to respond to external threats. They are also more likely to have a strong base of women in leadership who are equipped to identify myriad threats and organize collective responses that benefit the entire community. One potential opportunity to support women's organizing against extractives is to identify potential hotspots and invest in organizing efforts, however nascent, by women-led groups, feminist allies, and other social movement collaborators in those areas.

Communities impacted by extractives need ongoing and flexible forms of support to address their basic needs, protect themselves, and allow space to envision different futures. Opportunities along this spectrum are discussed further in the sections on site-specific and transformational strategies. Ultimately, the ability of frontline communities to survive in extractive contexts depends on their internal organizational strength. Community organizing is the tool that allows communities, and women organizing within them, to develop the strong base of support they need to sustain the struggle.

LEADERSHIP BUILDING

Community organizing and leadership building are complementary, and mutually reinforcing, strategies. Building and/or strengthening women's leadership, especially in patriarchal contexts where women's participation in political struggles is not the norm, is key to addressing the gendered dimensions of structural violence. While in some contexts women's leadership has always been front and center, in others their organizing and leadership has gathered strength more recently as a response to specific threats posed by extractive power.

Across regions, women create their own ways of developing and practicing leadership. In family and community roles, women exercise leadership informally through mentorship and solidarity relationships. This form of leadership is often collective, and therefore less recognizable to those accustomed to individual leadership models. For example, when women come together to organize around an income-generation activity, they may form a cooperative with a horizontal leadership structure, where each woman plays a unique and equally important role. Creating alternative livelihoods, discussed more thoroughly under

"Developing Autonomous Systems" below, is a type of transformational strategy that builds women's leadership as it moves communities towards more sustainable futures. These ways of learning leadership through the practice of organizing can be supported by long-term funding directly to women's groups in frontline communities and the allies that closely collaborate with them over time.

Women's community roles may also lead to more formal or visible leadership roles within organizations, social movements, and decision-making spaces. Numerous leadership-building strategies have evolved from these practices, and they vary greatly in terms of principles and values (individual, collective, transformational), approach (feminist, popular education, indigenous), and modality (political education schools, training institutes, workshops, mentorship programs, and informal accompaniment). Leadership training that mixes feminist, political education, and indigenous approaches shows promise as a way to nurture and sustain women leaders in extractive struggles.

Feminist leadership[138] and political education schools have been vital to building the power of indigenous and rural women. These training spaces, the product of decades of political education work and co-developing methodologies with feminists, have become hubs for women seeking to tackle the intersecting drivers of patriarchy, militarism,

In Mesoamerica, the **JASS Alquimia** school uses feminist popular methodologies and power analysis tools to equip indigenous and rural women who are part of resistance strategies to map the sources and targets of power, then build the leadership and networks to confront the intersecting forms of violence in this context. The school's processes include face-to-face and virtual workshops, and follow-up accompaniment for each participant in the context of her organization or movement to support multiplying her skills. These spaces are conceived to create the conditions for women from different organizations and movements to build alliances and collaborate around shared strategies. *Alquimistas* are involved in providing training once they have "graduated" and formed their own network.

The **Sangat network** based in South Asia runs a series of programs for women across the region, including a course in feminist leadership. The South Asian Feminist Capacity-Building Course on Gender, Sustainable Livelihoods, Human Rights, and Peace (also known as the Sangat Month-Long Course) was founded in 1984. It offers attendees a greater understanding of concepts related to gender, justice, poverty, sustainable development, peace, democracy, and human rights. Through this course, more than 650 women activists and gender trainers, women's studies teachers, journalists, media women, and others—from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, and Turkey—have sharpened or developed feminist perspectives. The courses have also strengthened regional solidarity and networking. Alumni of these courses remain connected to one another and engage in cross-border campaigns that shape the priorities of the network.

Sangat
A Feminist Network

and extractivism. Regional and global feminist organizations offer resources and access to methods and tools to support these schools.

Indigenous women leaders are generating models that focus on indigenous worldviews and practices while drawing from feminist and popular education methodologies. As formal or informal spaces, they are designed for and led by Indigenous women to practice leadership and build power within highly patriarchal contexts.

A key part of organizing and leadership development involves confronting patriarchal oppression from within—at the family, community, organizational, and movement level—and understanding the links to external forms of structural violence.[139] As an initial step, political education coupled with the practice of community organizing often prompts women to question rigid roles that give rise to GBV, discrimination, and inequality. But when women step out of their traditional caretaking roles, they may experience further violence as a form of punishment or an exercise of social control.[140] These attacks arise from various actors including corporations, governments, security forces and armed groups, employers and co-workers in extractive industries, and the community itself. In some contexts, such as Southern Africa, where a woman's respect in the community is linked to her marital status and number of children, unmarried women face extra resistance

Photo: FIMI-IIWF

The **International Indigenous Women's Forum (FIMI)**, a global leadership and activist network, supports Indigenous women from Africa, Asia, and Latin America to write proposals for small amounts of money, which builds their capacity to manage projects and be accountable for outcomes. For some groups, FIMI provides a sponsor from a different organization to work with the women throughout a two-week training phase, with the goal that women will receive their own funding to run projects. This model has grown from providing an initial grant of $500 to up to $100,000 to the same organization over a period of time as the group builds capacity to manage the funds, monitor and evaluate the program, and report on outcomes and impact.

The **Berta Cáceres International Feminist Organizing School (IFOS)** is a collaboration between Grassroots Global Justice Alliance, Grassroots International, Indigenous Environmental Network, and World March of Women. The school connects and strengthens global grassroots feminist movements and deepens solidarity among participants to grow political practices, fortify local struggles, and co-create their vision of a feminist economy. Planning for the school began in 2019 and was delayed due to the pandemic. It launched in 2021 with virtual workshops for 100 participants in 35 countries and territories, and covered seven thematic areas, from Systems of Oppression to Movement-Building. In March 2022, the school launched a popular education feminist toolkit summarizing its methodology and organizing processes.

to their leadership from within the community. Women use different tactics to protect themselves from the risk of reprisals. For example, women mine workers in Zimbabwe and South Africa reported using covert or subtle forms of resistance to deal with harassment by male supervisors, such as simply ignoring their requests rather than publicly rebuking them. Across regions, Indigenous women spoke of their resistance to taking on visible roles that single them out as a "leader" or "defender." Instead, they exercise leadership through collective care and protection models, discussed below. Supporting these community-led models, and integrating self- and collective- care practices into accompaniment models for women's leadership, provide women with the space to confront these challenges and generate supportive strategies. Collective care models that emphasize skills-building through practice are critical corollaries to the more formal learning spaces.

In addition to supporting holistic care and collective protection models, there is a need and opportunity to strengthen leadership efforts by women in frontline communities, whether formal or informal in nature. Leadership schools that build political consciousness and power can increase their impact by providing women who "graduate" from their programs with opportunities to implement what they learn at the community level. Further, creating opportunities for women to network and learn from other communities impacted by extractives can build networks critical to sustaining and nurturing leaders over the long-term.

BUILDING POLITICAL POWER

When women build their organizing and leadership capacities, they begin to link violence at the family and community level to structural violence embedded in political and economic systems. The goal of building power in the public sphere is to ensure women occupy decision-making roles with the ability to influence government development and economic policy, including negotiations and outcomes around extractive projects. Because much of the SAGE-led research focused on ways that Indigenous women are building political power in response to their exclusion from both indigenous decision-making bodies and mainstream power structures, this section emphasizes strategies led by Indigenous women.

Some Indigenous women in South America who struggled to gain power within male-led indigenous movements created their own Indigenous women-led governance structures. In women-only spaces, women are less susceptible to pressures from male leaders and are able to articulate their ideas and provide solidarity or support to others. These parallel governance structures have nurtured their leadership while raising political consciousness. They provide a platform for women leaders to gain respect and support within indigenous movements, then participate in electoral processes at the state or national level. Once elected, these Indigenous women are using their positions to shift development policy away from extractivism.

Women political leaders need support at every phase of the journey. First, as emerging leaders they need to build the resilience necessary to withstand stigma and attacks from within the family and community for daring to break out of their gender roles. In patriarchal contexts, it can take many years of educating communities and strengthening women's leadership capacity before women are able to build the confidence to lead their communities, as well as the resilience to withstand personal attacks or risk failure when running for or serving in elected office. Women leaders are belittled, insulted, bullied, and even physically and sexually abused.[143] Once elected, they often need strategic and tactical support to enact their agendas in the face of numerous actors trying to stop them.

Solidarity networks provide the kind of layered support that Indigenous women need to sustain political leadership. These networks could be strengthened at the national and regional levels in several complementary ways: providing tailored assistance to Indigenous women political leaders; educating indigenous communities about how women leaders benefit the community; and

COORDINADORA DE LAS ORGANIZACIONES INDÍGENAS DE LA CUENCA AMAZÓNICA

Sandra Tukop, from the Shuar Indigenous people of Ecuador and coordinator of **Organizaciones Indígenas de la Cuenca Amazónica**, explained that Indigenous women from across the Amazon formed their own political alliances to navigate around the *machismo* that blocked their efforts to make local change. In May 2021, an indigenous woman named Guadalupe Llori was elected president of Ecuador's national assembly. One of her first moves was to announce the creation of a commission to review mining and oil concessions.[141]

"Now we have met a group of women called Amazonian Women, defenders of the earth and the environment. We are defenders of our mother earth, we want to make our struggle and our collective work visible."

—SANDRA TUKOP
COORDINATOR OF ORGANIZACIONES INDÍGENAS DE LA CUENCA AMAZÓNICA


Photo: Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional

Feminist and indigenous organizing in Chile led to the **election of Elisa Loncon**, an indigenous Mapuche woman, as the leader of the assembly charged with drafting a new constitution to replace the country's Pinochet-era one. Loncon and other members of the assembly have vowed to reevaluate the country's extractive model in light of mining activities that have caused widespread social and environmental harm.[142]

คสช.
เครือข่ายสตรีชนเผ่าแห่งประเทศไทย

The Indigenous Women Network of Thailand, with accompaniment from national and regional organizations, has successfully cultivated Indigenous women's leadership at the local level. In the male-dominated Karen community in northern Thailand, several regional organizations have provided long-term capacity-building support and leadership development to women who are challenging rigid gender roles and building political power.

Photo: Indigenous Women Network of Thailand

"We live in patriarchal society and the Karen indigenous community is very much male-dominated. Leadership of women is not easily accepted. I tried several times to stand for election, but I was not supported and accepted because the village did not trust my capacity to lead. But after almost 9-10 years, I was elected as the head of the village. This was possible with the support from different organizations including Asia Indigenous Peoples' Pact (AIPP), IMPECT, and Manushya Foundation to build my confidence, capacity, knowledge. As a head of the village, I feel more responsible for taking care of the village and the nature around us. As Indigenous women, we have learnt to take care of the forests and nature. We have this practice that whatever we use, we must take care of it whether it's land, water, or forests. While doing rotation farming, we have to make sure that it benefits the humans and ecosystems as well. We have used the resources in balanced ways and protect them for futur e generations."

–NORAERI TUNGMUANGTONG
VICE CHAIRPERSON, INDIGENOUS WOMEN NETWORK OF THAILAND (IWNT)

expanding the base of women leaders who are poised to resist extractivism through the political process.

SHAPING COUNTERNARRATIVES TO EXTRACTIVISM

Given the stark power imbalance and shrinking public space available for women confronting extractivism, shaping discourse about their own experiences is critical to their exercise of power. Women's groups use a variety of media and platforms, ranging from traditional media to online forums, to communicate their messages, mobilize constituencies, and expand their power base. In the context of extractives, women are grossly outmatched by those seeking to silence their voices and co-opt their messages. As discussed above in "Drivers of Gendered Structural Violence," women leaders are targets of smear and defamation campaigns that seek to damage their credibility in communities and movements, personally attacked in their roles as mothers or spouses to sow divisions within the family, and labeled as threats to national security to discredit them in the public eye. Meanwhile, media stereotypes of women as victims of extractivism weaken their credibility as organizers, political leaders, and generators of solutions.

Taking control of the narrative allows women to refocus on messages that challenge the inevitability of the extractive model. Women in frontline communities are using a combination of strategies to shift stigma, tell the full story about extractives and their impact, and mobilize people around a new discourse and collective vision that centers people and planet over profit. With mainstream and/or alternative media outlets often inaccessible, and social media the site of misinformation and threats, some women are creating their own social, alternative, or community media with content that more accurately reflects their stories and struggles.

Lilak (Purple Action for Indigenous Women's Rights), formed in 2011, is an organization of Indigenous Wwomen leaders and allies across the human rights, feminist, and environmental movements who support the struggle for Indigenous women's human rights in the Philippines. Lilak convenes "resistance dialogues" with groups from six countries in Asia. According to judy a. pasimio, the group's coordinator, the dialogues help to "lend solidarity with each other, but also we learn each other's strategies, and ways of defending community rights against encroachment of corporations." It also helps build alliances with other groups that can help with specific needs, such as Forum Asia to connect with UN mechanisms, or the Indigenous Peoples Rights International network to build connections to other indigenous peoples facing similar threats.

Combining feminist practices with photography, podcasting, and documentary filmmaking has generated new forms of media—including participatory photography, photo novella, and photovoice strategies—that are being embraced by women challenging extractives.[144]

Free and widely accessible, social media in particular is a potent tool to mobilize frontline communities against extractive threats. Social campaigns can raise awareness about what is happening in communities and amplify concerns about potential or actual harm of extractive projects. As the Lamu Women Alliance illustrates (see the example on the following page), women use social platforms to tell their own stories that are often invisible within the larger community narrative. Social media can also be used to tell stories that shape the public's view of an issue and lend visibility to legal and other strategies.

Because of the ability of social media to quickly disseminate messages and mobilize, the powers behind extractive projects seek to appropriate social media for their own ends. Governments and corporations can encourage hate speech and spread defamation campaigns accusing activists of being anti-development, criminals, or even terrorists.[147] Social media poses elevated risks for women environmental defenders, especially those from indigenous, ethnic minority, or other marginalized communities. Accelerated efforts to address online threats, violence, and harassment against women leaders are needed for their urgent protection and to prevent further cooptation of an important tool for messaging and mobilization. Specifically, women defenders need support in their efforts to pressure states to collect systematic data on online violence, prosecute perpetrators, and appropriately regulate technology platforms to address violations and abuses on their platforms in ways that ensure freedom of expression.[148] One of the strongest models

Amazon Frontlines (AF) is supporting a new collective of young Indigenous women in the Amazon to become their generation's storytellers. In partnership with Ceibo Alliance, AF launched a school to train young women in the tools and techniques of sharing their stories and perspectives with their own communities and with the wider world. At its core this strategy is about strengthening leadership by equipping young women to become the first women filmmakers, photographers and journalists of their people.[145] The program is connected to a leadership school launched by and for Indigenous women of the Amazon. In the inaugural class of July 2021, 30 women from 4 indigenous nations hit hard by oil extraction, mining, and industrial agriculture explored how to weave traditional forms of community resilience and forest stewardship into new enterprises.

Leveraging Social Media to Stop a Coal Plant: The Untold Story of the Lamu Women Alliance

LAMU WOMEN ALLIANCE
THE SOVEREIGN WOMAN

The people of the Lamu Archipelago in eastern Kenya began organizing in 2013 to stop the construction of Kenya's first coal fired electricity plant, which threatened to destroy much of the mangrove forests and their rich biodiversity that sustain the area's fisherfolk. Their "deCOALonize" campaign successfully led to the divestment of financing for the project and the revoking of the license to operate. The women of Lamu played a significant role in the campaign's successful media strategy, which was pivotal in ultimately swaying public opinion against the coal plant.

The inter-generational Lamu Women Alliance registered in 2020 out of the organizing that women did around the coal plant. To date their work has focused mostly on Covid relief for the community, but a new iteration of work is addressing a broader set of issues, including climate justice, girls' education, elimination of violence against women and girls, and socio-economic empowerment.

"We mobilized women to advocate through social media, WhatsApp groups, TV and small documentaries. We saw the importance of women taking part in learning and making decisions. Lawyers told us they needed a woman to go in front of the judges and give testimony. Many were afraid. I said, "Let me come out and do this for women at the grassroots." I testified and cried as a mother, wife, and community leader from a marginalized community... the judge was moved and helped us. When he was making the ruling he mentioned me, saying all that I testified was genuine. They nullified the license (for the plant) which was already given."

—RAYA AHMED
LAMU WOMEN ALLIANCE

for protecting women defenders is collective care and protection, discussed in the following section.

Women in frontline communities face other challenges in telling their stories about the impacts of extractivism. They require support and training to produce stories about both their personal experiences and community responses to extractivism. They often lack connection to wider media outlets that can disseminate their messages to audiences far removed from the struggles on the ground. In contexts where the mainstream media is controlled by the same elites backing extractive projects, the mainstream media can be used as a tool to harass or repress those who object to them (see "Closing of Civic Space and Violence against Defenders," under Drivers of Gendered Structural Violence).

Allied organizations, which are typically less likely to experience reprisals, are in a stronger position to keep the global focus on women in frontline communities and their messages. NGOs that accompany these communities can take further steps to collaborate on messaging and—importantly—lend their platforms (which are often more secure and have a wider reach) to frontline groups to share their stories. For example, Aminata Massaquoi of Culture Radio, an independent radio station in Freetown, Sierra Leone, started a radio show to highlight how women were being impacted by land grabbing and other violence perpetrated by palm oil plantations. She discussed the ways she works: "The focus is on giving women voices. No one is talking about what's going on in their communities, no one seems to listen to them. I go to them, take their voices, bring it back, play it on the radio. I use social media platforms, belong to different WhatsApp groups, write articles, post on Facebook, attend meetings and bring women's testimonies. I work with international ally agencies like GRAIN. They make it easy for me because they use their platforms and we share stories with them." Strengthening such collaborations between communities and trusted local journalists or media platforms can help to elevate women's experiences as well as their visions and practices as alternatives to extractivism.

KARACHI URBAN LAB

Karachi Urban Lab works with young researchers to document the impacts of the massive China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) funded coal expansion in Thar, Pakistan. These local researchers, including women, have written opinion pieces in major newspapers and directed a documentary about the impacts of coal expansion on the life of the peoples and towns.[146]

Another way of addressing barriers to dissemination and visibility of women's experiences is by building institutional relationships with mainstream journalists. For example, the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD) runs an annual Feminist Media Fellowship program for 5–7 women journalists working in mainstream outlets who are in a position to write about women directly impacted by extractive projects. Some larger investigative journalism outlets periodically cover stories at the intersection of gender, structural violence, and extractives, including *Unearthed* (environmental investigative reporting hosted by Greenpeace UK*), The Narwhal* (nonprofit magazine in Canada dedicated to environmental journalism), the *South Africa Mail and Guardian's* environmental desk, and *Mongabay* (U.S. nonprofit conservation and environmental science news platform). Fossil Free Media, a U.S. nonprofit creative communications lab, supports a network of investigative journalists uncovering misinformation and industry abuses, in addition to providing research and communications support to impacted communities eager to tell their stories. These outlets provide a critical platform to elevate stories of extractive struggles to diverse audiences and could be strengthened to include a gender focus.

COLLECTIVE CARE AND PROTECTION

Resisting extractivism takes a substantial toll on women's safety, health, and wellbeing, in large part because it can destabilize their relationship to self, family, and community. Collective care and protection frameworks and practices have emerged from Indigenous women and feminist allies working together to protect and support defenders who face heightened risks. In addition to providing digital and physical security, these models center mutual support and healing, and build on community strengths that already exist.

Collective protection acknowledges that Indigenous women wage a battle on two fronts—against extractive projects and within their communities. Women's bodies are understood as a site of struggle and violence, as well as housing the keys to resistance, ancestral wisdom, and deep

> "One of the successes (of Indigenous women's organizing) was to turn into ourselves to define how we organize and our collective goals. If you listen to many Indigenous women, we're talking about our bodies and violencias against culture and territory—and who we are as women in our communities."
>
> –**MARGARITA ANTONIO,**
> *FORO INTERNACIONAL DE MUJERES INDÍGENAS*

knowledge of caring and life for both people and the land. The link between defense of bodies and defense of territories—referred to simply as "body/territory"[149]—lies at the heart of a collective protection framework. Collective protection recognizes that violence is systemic, and the need for safety for women defenders is a constant and continuous struggle demanding a new logic of organization and connection, in addition to technical and individual measures. Collective protection is a community effort, grounded in the territory that is the site of struggle. It builds on and strengthens community-based support networks, in accordance with the culture, capacities, and resources of where defenders work.[150] The practice is intended to build collective power, minimizing the burdens on any individual leader. As such, the practice extends to the community's collective decision-making about land and development processes, as well as engaging in sustainable livelihoods and other practices that restore community cohesion.

Collective protection was developed in part as a response to the flaws in traditional protection models, particularly with respect to women human rights and environmental defenders. Singling out particularly charismatic women leaders as "defenders" for the purpose of raising visibility and targeted protection measures can have unintended consequences. The attention on one individual leader may trigger resentment within the

Iniciativa Mesoamericana de Mujeres Defensoras de Derechos Humanos (IM-D) is a field leader in conceptualizing and practicing collective protection. It was founded by JASS Mesoamerica, AWID, Consorcio Oaxaca, UDEFEGUA, and Colectiva Feminista (El Salvador) in 2010 in response to the crises of violence and attacks on women defenders in the region and the failure of human rights groups to recognize or respond effectively. Built upon a system of documenting violations, the IM-D consists of five national networks comprised of indigenous and frontline women as well as journalists, labor rights organizers, and feminists working in NGOs who are at risk. They respond to attacks and provide women defenders and their family members a combination of direct assistance (legal, technical, and economic) as well as solidarity support in the form of advocacy and media campaigns, documentation using a power mapping analysis, and retreat centers for defenders and their families who are particularly burned out or in danger. Some of IM-D's most important contributions include how it has influenced the international human rights and protection community to adopt a gendered understanding of risk and to recognize women defenders who exist outside of formal structures.

Photo: IM-Defensoras

community, particularly among male leaders who are unaccustomed to women's leadership. This can make her vulnerable to critiques and lead to stigma, harassment, and in extreme cases, ostracization. It also heightens the risk of retaliation from external forces that seek to divide and weaken communities by targeting their leaders. Allies engaged in protection work can avoid these dangers by engaging with communities about the kind of protection model they need, and by involving women leaders directly in these discussions.

More recently, the concept and practice of holistic care has gained ground to supplement the framework of collective protection. It emerged from Indigenous women and feminists from Latin America, informed by feminist practices in other regions such as heart-mind-body in Africa, as a way to address the burnout, exhaustion, and stress that women in leadership and activism often experience. Holistic care centers self-care and healing, focusing on physical and emotional wellbeing of activists and communities. It calls on social movements that support grassroots struggles to develop a "holistic collective care infrastructure" that builds activists' resilience and wellbeing, ideally based on their ancestral knowledge and past experience in organizing within communities.[151] An example of how this is practiced is the "house of healing" created by the Red de Defensoras in Honduras. In addition to providing emergency shelter for activists, it functions as a retreat space in nature that promotes rest, reflection, and pleasure to guard against burnout. The Urgent Action Sister Funds (UAFs) are leading the way among funders to integrate holistic organizational care practices as a part of their rapid response grants to women's rights and environmental defenders. For example, the UAFs encourage grantee organizations to build in self and collective care practices, such as setting clear boundaries around work and personal life, encouraging mind/body practices, and ensuring sufficient holiday time to rest and restore. Several other groups are leading the way in integrating care practices with collective protection.

Indigenous-Led Security Funds (ILSF) provide funding and other critical support to indigenous defenders in high-risk situations. Founded and led by Indigenous people, ILSF's approach is grounded in the concepts of territorial defense, collective rights, direct support and gender equality. Piloted in sub-Saharan Africa, the model has since expanded to Colombia, Mesoamerica, the Philippines, and India. Each fund supports an indigenous coordinator from the region who understands the communities, as well as the particular threats and forms of structural violence they face. ILSF provides rapid response funding as well as long-term accompaniment to help communities address structural violence. Support includes legal services; relocation and social assistance; security training; community protection initiatives; and medical, psychological, and spiritual assistance.

Collective care and protection provides an alternative to traditional protection models that are aimed at high-risk and highly visible individuals, and often focused on legal protection or digital and physical security. This approach has begun to influence the human rights protection field, including leaders like Protection International, Fund for Global Human Rights, Frontline Defenders, and others.[152] Nevertheless, models that single out high-risk individuals remain dominant. To strengthen protection for women environmental defenders and their communities, there is a need to increase support for self- and collective care practices to ensure that women have the wraparound support they need.

Site-Specific Strategies

When communities face the threat of an extractive project, they use a variety of strategies to prevent, delay, or stop it. If unable to stop a project altogether, communities may use strategies to limit or ameliorate its impact, put in place human rights or environmental safeguards, or negotiate better benefits or compensation terms. They also pursue remedy when violations take place in hopes of seeking redress for victims and deterring future harm. This section explores the range of strategies used by frontline communities—with women in the lead—to address imminent threats at a specific site.

SITE-SPECIFIC STRATEGIES INCLUDE:

- **DIRECT ACTION**
- **COMMUNITY-LED DOCUMENTATION AND RESEARCH**
- **CORPORATE RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY**
- **TERRITORIAL DEFENSE AND FREE, PRIOR AND INFORMED CONSENT**
- **LEGAL AND ADVOCACY STRATEGIES**
- **INVESTOR STRATEGIES**

Because these strategies respond to threats from actors holding outsized power, they are more likely to succeed if communities have addressed internal divisions, planned for the safety and wellbeing of those at risk, and built a solid leadership base (as discussed under "Foundational Power Building Strategies"). Similarly, these strategies are more effective in stopping or preventing harm at a specific site when accompanied by long-term efforts to challenge the inevitability of extractivism and work towards sustainable solutions. Those strategies are described in the following section, "Transformational Strategies."

DIRECT ACTION

Direct action—including protests, marches, blockades, boycotts—can be an effective way of pausing or delaying an extractive project, and in some cases gaining concessions from industries. Even if the project is not stopped entirely, actions can create delays and push up costs that will trigger the attention of investors. In some cases, direct action strategies are the only viable option to respond to immediate threats or events. Where democratic institutions are weak or corrupt, the lack of transparency about extractive industries may leave affected communities uninformed about a project until the deal has already been made or the site is being prepared. And if the judiciary lacks independence, legal battles are less likely to yield positive results.

For decades, women have participated in direct action as the first line of defense to block extractive development projects from beginning or proceeding. They have denounced projects through protests, marches and blockades; engaged in property destruction, occupations, and political theater; and targeted everything from extractive project sites to supply routes to corporate offices. Direct actions led by women have the potential to influence a broader range of people than those directly impacted, often because they tap into a historical memory of colonial or other forms of oppression. The visceral impact of women confronting power can be effective at grabbing the attention of media. The stories and images of protesters standing up to the state, corporations, or elites forces issues into the public consciousness and begins to change perception of the status quo. Direct actions are ultimately effective because they erode the legitimacy of those in power.[153] Importantly, direct actions can also create delays that provide time for other strategies to take root.[154]

> "What's really worked are the collective actions that women carry out on the ground. Women lie down on the roads and streets to prevent the bulldozers from coming in for mining. It's the collective action of women putting their lives on the line ... Communities on the ground are really standing up and have actually prevented many of these projects. It's the combination of strategies: response on the ground, pressure on the companies and the state, mobilizing support, asking influential leaders to speak in defense of the communities – these are the different kind of strategies that work."
>
> —**JOAN CARLING**
> *GLOBAL DIRECTOR, INDIGENOUS PEOPLES RIGHTS INTERNATIONAL (IPRI)*

Halting the Escobal Silver Mine and Ensuring Consultation: The Xinka People's Resistance Story

Together with the Peaceful Resistance of Santa Rosa, Jalapa and Jutiapa, the Xinka people of southeastern Guatemala are using direct action in combination with legal strategies to block the Escobal silver mine, the world's second largest silver deposit. At the forefront of the struggle is the Diocesan Committee in the Defense of Nature (CODIDENA) and the Xinka Parliament, representing more than 500,000 Indigenous people across 13 communities. Operations at the mine were stalled in 2017 as a result of permanent protest camps, denouncing the impacts of the mines, and court decisions regarding the government's failure to undertake a consultation process with the Xinka communities consistent with ILO Convention No. 169, which recognizes the right to free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC).

In 2018, Guatemala's Constitutional Court upheld a Supreme Court decision suspending the mine and ordering the government to undertake a consultation with the Xinka people affected by the mine, recognizing the Xinka Parliament as the legitimate authority of the Xinka people. Initially, the government did not comply with the court order. However, in late 2020, following two years of peaceful marches, continued resistance encampments, and the international advocacy and solidarity efforts of Earthworks, Institute for Policy Studies - Global Economy Program, MiningWatch Canada, and the Maritimes Guatemala Breaking the Silence Network, the Xinka succeeded in securing a commitment to recognize all its delegates and carry out the consultation according to the Xinka's worldview and decision-making systems.[1] The pressure brought to bear on the company and government authorities by the well-organized and coordinated communities, with the support of their allies, has paved the way for an FPIC consultation process that may stop the mine altogether. Xinka women, who identify as communitarian feminists (see "Alternative Frameworks"), formed their own organization that works in collaboration with the Xinka Parliament to address factors that threaten to divide the community and weaken the resistance, including rigid gender roles and patriarchal violence.

Photo: Xinka Parliament

Direct action may bring many benefits, but it carries high risks for frontline communities, often for women specifically. Companies or governments targeted by protest will call in public or private security forces to defend their interests directly (through force against activists) or indirectly (public relations campaigns that blame activists for inciting civil unrest). These can have brutal consequences for women activists (as discussed in "Militarization" and "Closing of Civic Space and Violence against Defenders," in Drivers of Gendered Structural Violence). The severe level of repression and criminalization of protesters is intended to silence dissent. Given the imbalance of power, it more often succeeds than fails.

Governments are increasingly passing legislation that criminalizes protest and weakens organizations and individuals who engage in direct action. SLAPP (Strategic Lawsuits against Public Participation) are a tactic used to harass protesters by forcing them to defend their rights to speech and association. Backers of extractive projects know that even when accusations are baseless, these suits can be effective in silencing activist groups by tying up their time and resources in court. They also create a chilling effect for others involved in the same struggle. A 2021 report by the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre identified 355 SLAPP suits filed by business interests since 2015, with the highest numbers in Latin America and Asia.[155] Companies operating in extractive sectors—mining, agribusiness, logging, and palm oil—brought the most SLAPP suits. Civil society is mobilizing for the adoption of anti-SLAPP legislation at the national level through the development of coalitions, model legislation, key messages, and recommendations.[156] Protect the Protest, a coalition of U.S. organizations including EarthRights International and the International Corporate Accountability Roundtable, provides training and legal assistance to civil society

Photo: Nawab Afridi | CC BY-SA 4.0

Since 2018, the **Aurat March**, an annual protest in Pakistan that began in 2018 against gender discrimination, GBV, and economic exploitation, has faced increasing backlash.[160] In 2021, the women's rights march was stronger than ever and took place in six cities, all with their own manifestos. These manifestos largely touched on women's land rights and corporate and feudal land grabs. But a right-wing alliance of ultranationalists, "men's rights" activists, and extremist religious groups led a disinformation campaign against the organizers. They attacked the march on social and traditional media, filed lawsuits to block the marches, and filed complaints called First Information Report (FIRs) with the police accusing the organizers of blasphemy.[161] These tactics were intended to intimidate and silence women, distract them by diverting time and resources from their organizing, and even incite violence against them.

organizations, community leaders, and journalists to help prevent and defend against SLAPP suits.[157] The Coalition Against SLAPPs in Europe (CASE)[158] and Asina Loyiko[159]provide similar support in Europe and Africa, respectively.

Direct action may take years to achieve its goal, and it comes with a high cost of backlash and burnout for those participating in and leading the efforts. This is especially true for women leaders, who often face harassment from within the community for challenging gender roles as well as from outsiders who mount virulent gender-based attacks to silence and stigmatize them. For these reasons, direct action is more likely to succeed when there is a highly organized community that has addressed internal divisions, including patriarchal leadership structures and gender roles, and invested in collective care and protection practices. In addition to requiring strong community cohesion, direct action usually succeeds where there is substantial external support that can quickly drive resources as well as technical or logistical support to frontline communities, or help reframe narratives with communications support and media connections. Some of this support must be set up in advance, such as building networks of local lawyers who are trained to defend activists facing backlash, identifying intermediaries that are best placed to advance external communications or direct funds to specific actions, and helping communities build a supportive care and protection infrastructure that integrates a gender analysis. These efforts help ensure communities can mobilize when the moment demands.

COMMUNITY-LED DOCUMENTATION AND RESEARCH

In collaboration with research institutions and NGOs, frontline communities are increasingly leading documentation and research methods to develop tools for assessing impacts, negotiating outcomes, supporting litigation, and other accountability strategies, and engaging directly with corporations and other interests behind extractive projects.[162] These processes are also used to fill the gaps in official environmental and social impact assessments, particularly upon women and other groups who face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. Community-led research can be used to reveal corruption and other unlawful practices that often accompany large extractive projects. This documentation can be integrated into advocacy or media campaigns, storytelling, legal, and other strategies to amplify the experiences of people affected by extractive industries. It can be an effective tool to disrupt dominant narratives that tend to extol the benefits of extractive industries while minimizing the harms to people and the environment.

Arpilleras: Documenting Gender Impacts of the Córrego de Feijão Dam Collapse

In January 2019, the tailings dam at Córrego de Feijão, a Vale-owned iron ore mine near Brumadinho, Brazil, collapsed, releasing 12 million cubic meters of tailings. It was the worst socioenvironmental disaster in Brazilian history, resulting in more than 270 people killed, massive destruction to livelihoods through damage to land and livestock, and untold damage to the region's ecosystem. The almost one million people who have been impacted are still trying to recover and rebuild.

Movement of People Affected by Dams (MAB), which originated in Brazil in 1991 to mobilize rural people against the construction of hydroelectric plants, together with their partners at Christian Aid, documented the gender impacts of the disaster using participatory workshops with women, including the use of the arpillera embroidery technique. Originally used by women to document the human rights atrocities committed during the military dictatorship in Chile, it consists of burlap or canvas with scraps of fabric, sometimes from the clothes of the disappeared. This builds on a network MAB created of about 100 women in 14 dam-affected communities throughout Brazil who tell their stories through arpilleras.

As a result of the participatory workshops with women impacted by the disaster, MAB and Christian Aid agreed to focus the gender impact assessment on how the disaster affected women's incomes, health, security, and

Photo: MAB

Arpillera entitled "Women from the Rio doce in the struggle for rights"

access to clean water. MAB and Christian Aid report that women struggle even within their own households to prove that their incomes—largely in the informal sector— were curtailed because of the tailings collapse.

There has already been some progress in recognizing these impacts. In its negotiations with each affected family located near the Paraopeba River, Vale initially intended to provide compensation for the main household income, which was understood to mean only the income of the male head of household. After MAB showed the disproportional impacts of the disaster on women, the authorities required Vale to pay compensation for the loss of women's income, which often covered family expenses.

By relying on local expertise, participatory research often produces much more reliable and accurate information than assessments led by outsiders who lack a deep understanding of context. These methodologies have the capacity to bring different sectors of communities together to analyze their situation and address common problems. This collaborative work creates the conditions that strengthen local leadership and build community cohesion—essential factors to withstand the divisive tactics aimed at weakening community resistance. As the case of the *arpilleras* demonstrates, the documentation process can also generate visibility about how women are uniquely affected by extractive projects that is later translated into gender-specific remedies.

Community-led research has been a particularly important tool to help women in frontline communities in Asia Pacific engage directly in addressing the problem of land and resource grabs from extractive projects. Their rich documentation has been used for other strategies, including advocacy and narrative shifting.

Community-led research processes can be highly effective because they build long-term awareness and capacity while responding to a clear threat

Asia Pacific Forum on Women in Law and Development (APWLD) has adopted Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR) as an organizing and movement building tool. Through FPAR, women impacted by extractive projects, militarization, mega development, and land grabs are leading research, gathering data, analyzing it, and coming up with policy recommendations tailored to their context. This methodology is based on three regional-level trainings: the first focuses on taking a structural analysis and feminist lens to problems; the second focuses on data collection and analysis methodologies that are feminist and participatory; and the third builds capacity and understanding of advocacy, including regional and global mechanisms and standards as well as media advocacy. The research is revealing new insights about the gendered impacts of land dispossession, all of which are lifted up in advocacy to regional and global mechanisms such as the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. APWLD has cultivated an extensive network of members to support each other in integrating the research into the perspectives of national NGOs and allied environmental and climate movements.

Centering Women's Voices in the People's Tribunals in Thar, Pakistan

Thar, Pakistan, is a culturally rich but socio-economically marginalized region. In the 1980s, coal was discovered and now it has become a region of intense coal exploration by the government, in partnership with China through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. This is having serious social, cultural, and environmental impacts on an already marginalized population who have been suffering from drought and worsening livelihoods. In this context, the Alliance for Climate Justice and Clean Energy (ACJCE) emerged as a cross-movement organizing effort over five years ago. ACJCE organized a People's Tribunal in Thar, originally to respond to glaring gaps in the formal environmental impact assessment. The ACJCE centered women's voices and rights in the approach, but the lack of gender mobility in rural villages has proven a substantial obstacle to their meaningful participation. Organizers found that women did not come to communal spaces to engage in sessions for the People's Tribunal, so they first held sessions in individual villages, then went to women's homes. After 18 months of gathering testimonies village-by-village, there has been some success in encouraging women to participate, but women still fear the social stigma of offering testimony. Communities affected by coal have also filed several public interest litigation petitions based on the evidence collected. Although these petitions have been trapped in the courts, they have led to the greater visibility of the damage that coal development is causing. In response to the People's Tribunal and other mobilizations by the community, the National Commission on Human Rights called for a review of the entire Thar Coal project.

> "On ensuring the voice of women – that has been very much at the forefront of what we've been trying to do. But the culture in Thar is very conservative and women are not allowed their villages... We've not had as much participation from women that we'd like. It happens because the culture of gender mobilities is prevalent. During my visits I tried to overcome the issue, but we could not make the women come out to any communal space. So I went to each house to carry out sessions. They are not as aware as they have a right to be, they have not been approached by the companies, not even by NGOs or CSOs working in the areas. Whatever information they were getting had been filtered down and passed onto them by their men. Also external agencies coming in don't realise that local women don't speak Urdu, but more Sindhi and Dhatki. These sorts of dynamics—patriarchal norms and lack of awareness of women's lives—have excluded women. Also (women) not feeling that their voice really does matter."
>
> **–HANEEA ISAAD**
> *ORGANIZER WITH ACJCE*

or urgent need. In addition to gathering evidence of impacts, documentation of community land practices can demonstrate how indigenous and rural communities are effective stewards of the land and natural resources. Documentation may lead to the development of protocols around land and resource use for communities to pass on knowledge to future generations, or as an effective way to build partnerships with key actors, such as state officials overseeing natural resource management. As Diana Sipail, Leader of the Taskforce Against Kaiduan Dam (TAKAD) in Malaysia explained, "It is important for the community to document our history and the relationship with land, and generate our own data in terms of land uses and why dams are harmful for the communities."

For women and other groups who may feel powerless, the critical aspect is whether these processes also address the hierarchies *within* the community that can divide and exclude. The research demonstrates a need for a long-term commitment to these processes, not only to equip communities with knowledge and tactical skills to deepen their impact, but to provide the accompaniment to examine how power structures like patriarchy operate to silence women and strip them of agency.

Even when communities are able to organize for the purpose of documentation and research, they often need support around using the research for

The **Indigenous Women's Legal Awareness Group (INWOLAG)** is a group of Indigenous women legal experts and professionals who are focused on ending discrimination and violence against Indigenous women in Nepal. Since 2016, they have supported the Magar Indigenous people in their efforts to challenge land grabbing associated with the Tanahu Hydropower Project (THP). Communities had not been adequately consulted, and consequently nearly 70% of households had accepted compensation for land without understanding the terms. The displacement from their ancestral land resulted in loss of livelihood, access to natural resources, and cultural practices. Women were excluded from discussions and decision-making processes because male members of the household control land access and ownership. INWOLAG offered the community support to build awareness about FPIC processes and develop an advocacy plan. In that process, they helped ensure that women reached 50% representation in community discussions. They also supported the community to lead a survey that filled gaps in data about community-wide impacts of the THP. This documentation led to complaints filed with the Asian Development Bank, which was financing the project, as well as collaboration with national and international organizations (e.g., International Accountability Project and Community Empowerment and Social Justice Network/Foundation of Nepal) that can amplify the struggle in key forums.

greater impact. This includes skills such as lobbying or designing multilevel advocacy campaigns. Groups need financial and technical support to document not only the impacts they are facing, but also their own history, knowledge, and relationship to the land that can unify or mobilize communities to develop alternatives to extractives. Peer-to-peer exchanges are another way to support groups impacted by extractives, enabling them to share methodologies and strategies for using documentation as a way to advance other strategies.

CORPORATE RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY

Corporate research strategies aim to uncover the structure and financing of extractive projects in order to identify strategies that communities can use to block or change a project. Understanding how an extractive company is organized and financed is a highly complex process. The extractive company that communities first encounter will often be a subsidiary of a larger parent corporation, but typically the connections to the parent run through a complicated web of other subsidiaries, some of which may be registered in tax havens like the Cayman Islands. Financing for an extractive project may come from banks or other private financial institutions as well as sources of public financing, including development

The **Count Me In! Consortium** (comprised of AWID, CREA, JASS, Mama Cash, Red Umbrella Fund, Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights, Urgent Action Fund Africa, and WO=MEN) produced a toolkit called "Behind the Scenes of Extractives: Money, Power and Community Resistance."[163] This is one of the few tools designed with and for women environmental defenders to better understand the financial drivers behind extractive projects, and reveal potential advocacy targets. This accessible tool provides activities and case studies from different regions for women in frontline communities to share and build on the knowledge generated from the research, with the goal of uncovering the power behind extractive projects in their respective contexts.

banks and pension funds. In order for communities to identify leverage points for advocacy, it is useful to first map the corporate structure and financing to expose shareholders, financiers and buyers along the supply chain. Depending on what information is uncovered, communities can choose to combine a tailored set of strategies to leverage the greatest pressure points, including targeted campaigns and litigation, applying pressure on investors and financiers, or pursuing remedies through international complaint mechanisms.

Tools for Strategic Corporate Research: SAGE Fund Convening and Resources

In 2015, the SAGE Fund made its first round of grants to organizations developing tools to reveal the corporate and financial actors involved in global supply chains. This provided communities with key information and accompaniment to craft powerful advocacy strategies and leverage new pressure points. In 2020, SAGE convened these grantees together with other organizations that have developed research and advocacy tools for strategic corporate research, investment or supply chain mapping, and financial sector advocacy. The objectives of the convening were to bring groups together to explore and strengthen the ways in which these tools equip affected communities and civil society organizations, and to identify more powerful pathways for holding corporations and other economic actors accountable for human rights and environmental harms from their investments. The SAGE Fund crafted a resource for the field, compiling the tools discussed in that convening into a directory and creating an assessment of each, which is shared on SAGE's website.

FOLLOW THE MONEY

A research service housed at Inclusive Development International that undertakes investment and supply chain mapping on request from grassroots advocates and communities or from larger CSOs that have grassroots relationships. IDI and Equitable Cambodia also provide trainings for CSOs and have developed an English-language website that describes the Follow the Money process.

FAIR FINANCE INTERNATIONAL

A network of over 100 civil society coalitions in 15 countries, trained to use a common research methodology to investigate financial institutions in their countries, to produce an online guide that compares sectoral and operational policies for each financial institution, and to undertake related advocacy. The coalitions also realize regular in-depth reports on specific sectors and themes, which are used for engagement and/or campaigning.

JUST SHARE

Investor engagement focused on financial institutions in South Africa, which may involve advocacy groups that have shares in a given company, pension funds, banks, investment managers, development finance institutions and others. Focused on climate change to date.

TRASE

An online platform, created by Stockholm Environment Institute and Global Canopy, that presents supply chain data for commodities that put forests at risk, including soy, beef, palm oil, timber, pulp and paper, coffee, cocoa and aquaculture. It aims to inform companies, investors, governments and civil society about forest sustainability issues.

Uncovering the full architecture and financing of corporations can require specialized skills and resources such as literacy in English, technical knowledge, and access to costly proprietary financial databases. The barriers to this work are even greater for women's groups due to entrenched discrimination that prevents women from accessing educational or professional opportunities. Partnerships with often Northern-based NGOs that specialize in this kind of research can provide community-based organizations with valuable information about where corporate power resides and how it operates. For example, they can provide a list of financiers of a specific extractive project and the corporate structure of the company operating it.

These strategies often require deep, long-term investments in capacity-building and collaboration before they can demonstrate impact. Indeed, given the level of investment required, most civil society organizations using them do not aim to equip frontline communities to conduct research or use these tools themselves, but rather to provide the information that communities can use in designing and leading their strategies. Nevertheless, some initiatives are trying to switch the power back to communities by equipping them to conduct their own research and lead the advocacy redirecting funding to more sustainable solutions.

InformAcción is a guide to participatory corporate research developed by the Latin American Observatory of Environmental Conflicts (OLCA), Latin American Observatory of Mining Conflicts (OCMAL), MiningWatch Canada, and Above Ground in order to "put a face to mining companies."[164] The guide supports communities through three phases: investigation and information collection about the mining company affecting the community; analysis of the information; and development of an advocacy plan to achieve community objectives. The guide was used with the communities affected by the Escobal silver mine in Guatemala (described above under Direct Action) with the support of Earthworks and the Institute for Policy Studies. It helped the communities to uncover key information about changes to company leadership and identify multiple lines of action. As a result of the InformAcción process, communities and their allies mapped the company's track record in the Americas, which resulted in a joint shareholder advocacy strategy with other communities affected by the company's mines at the company's 2021 Annual General Meeting.[165]

InformAcción

Use of this strategy is still somewhat limited by the capacity of the relatively few CSOs that have the expertise to undertake corporate research or share their methodology. There are opportunities to support civil society organizations—and women's groups in particular—in the Global South to develop their own expertise in corporate research and raise awareness among frontline communities about how to access and use the information the CSOs can provide. There is significant untapped potential to bridge access to this range of powerful tools for women impacted by extractives and for women-led groups to leverage them in designing their own advocacy strategies.

TERRITORIAL DEFENSE AND FPIC

Indigenous peoples use the framework of territorial defense to describe a set of strategies used to defend land, territory, and resources, which may transcend geographical and national borders. This framework reflects an indigenous cosmovision based on a spiritual, cultural, social, and economic connection with the land that is distinct from dominant models of land ownership, privatization, or development.[166]

Indigenous peoples live on 20% of the earth's land that holds 80% of remaining biodiversity.[167] Despite the important role that Indigenous people—and especially Indigenous women—play in preserving biodiversity, many countries do not acknowledge this role or recognize the collective rights of Indigenous people to land and territory. And where they do, procedures such as resource mapping, demarcation, and titling are often missing, and enforcement of Indigenous peoples' territorial rights is lacking. Without recognition of collective rights to land, Indigenous peoples have historically lacked a voice in how land is used and developed by governments that lay claim to it.

Both ENDS is a group based in the Netherlands that promotes alternatives to extractivism by supporting civil society organizations to pursue sustainability and connecting these solutions to policies promoted by the Dutch government, EU, and the development finance institutions of which the Dutch government is part. Both ENDS' feminist focus is influenced by the Global Alliance for Green and Gender Action, an initiative it co-hosts. A major goal of Both ENDS is to expose and redirect financial flows. They educate groups on how extractive projects are funded, then leverage their access to decision-making spaces to support frontline groups to attend and advocate with governments.

See the text box on the Fisherwomen and Sendou Power Plant in Senegal, in "Investor Strategies," below for an example of how Both ENDS applies its approach on the ground.)

Photo: Both ENDS

Indigenous people have fought for and secured international recognition of the right to give or withhold their consent regarding projects or development that affects their land, territories, or natural resources. This right, derived from the right to self-determination and collective property rights and protected by international human rights standards,[168] is commonly referred to as the right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). The degree to which this right is recognized and enforced, and enables indigenous communities to stop a project that does not have their consent varies greatly by context. Key factors in whether FPIC processes are followed include the national legal framework and the particular policies and commitments of the corporations and financiers involved in extractive projects.[169] Where the right is recognized in national laws and there is an independent judicial system, FPIC can be used by Indigenous Peoples as part of a legal strategy to halt a project—at least until another consultation process can be undertaken—allowing communities to develop additional or complementary strategies, as exemplified in the Unión Hidalgo case (see text box).

Indigenous women's participation in FPIC processes is deeply impacted by cultural norms, laws, and practices. Women have critical and unique knowledge about natural resources and land governance, but gender norms involving land and livelihoods, patriarchal inheritance laws, and joint ownership of family land and resources, limit their access to and control over such resources. These structural barriers are compounded by gender norms within some communities that confine women to caretaking roles in the home and preclude both their participation in decision-making processes and their economic independence from male family members.

For these reasons, many Indigenous women report that FPIC processes do not always reflect their perspectives or respond to their realities. Indigenous women are organizing to ensure their concerns are integrated into feminist policy agendas. For example, in 2022 the Working Group on Gender Justice and Extractive Industries, a coalition of feminist, human rights, and development organizations, released a statement called "Activating Feminist Natural Resource Governance to Herald a Just Transition: 18-Policy Imperatives."[170] The first point calls for a gender-inclusive FPIC process that starts with a "robust gender power analysis of the local context." Other demands include increasing representation and leadership of Indigenous women in decision-making processes around extractives, independent and intersectional gender impact assessments of extractive projects, and compensation programs that account for women's land and resource usage.

Instead of waiting to be asked for their consent or to engage in a lengthy FPIC process, communities throughout Latin America, the Philippines, and

Using FPIC to Challenge Wind Farms in Unión Hidalgo, Mexico

Development of large-scale wind farms has surged over the past 15 years on the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, Mexico, despite the widespread protests of indigenous communities who are encircled by them, cutting off their access to land and natural resources. The communities accuse the government and corporations of failing to obtain their consent, entering into illegal land contracts, and creating conflict. The Zapotec community of Unión Hidalgo, with support from the Proyecto de Derechos Económicos, Sociales y Culturales (ProDESC) fought back and won.

In April 2015, Électricité de France (EDF), a French energy company, announced plans to build a large-scale wind farm in Union Hidalgo, called Gunaa Sicarú. In October 2018, a Mexican court ruled that the state had failed to respect the community's right to free, prior and informed consent (FPIC), ordered it to undertake a consultation process consistent with international standards, and conditioned the development of EDF's project on the consent of the community. The new consultation process, however, was marred with irregularities, including lack of prior notice, undue influence in voting, and violence, and was suspended in March 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the interim, the community, with the support of their CSO allies, ProDESC and the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights, developed additional legal strategies. In October 2020, the community, with the support of their allies, filed a lawsuit in France against EDF under the Duty of Vigilance Law, which requires that large, French companies prepare and implement a plan that assesses and prevents the environmental and human rights risks of its operations. The case, which is still pending, was only the third case filed under the law and the first from Latin America.

The winning move came in April 2022, when Mexico's Federal Electricity Commission, at the community's request, cancelled the energy supply contracts with EDF due to non-compliance with their terms, effectively terminating the project and rendering the consultation process unnecessary. In order to prevent future wind farms from being developed in violation of Mexican law and without community consent, ProDESC represented community leaders in a successful lawsuit that ruled that the land in the region is owned collectively and, as a result, the Agrarian Assembly—and not any individual—is the only entity with the authority to sign lease contracts with developers.

The successful outcome in this case would not have happened without the leadership of the women in Unión Hidalgo who created collective organizing spaces, such as the communitarian kitchen where they could develop strategies to defend their rights. Women were also the leading voice in neighborhood meetings, rallies and with the public.

Source: ProDESC (2020), Wind farm in Mexico: French energy firm EDF disregards indigenous rights elsewhere are leveraging governance processes through popular referendums and local ordinances to create mining bans as well as organizing to proactively declare "territories free of mining." Across Latin America, a number of national bans on the most environmentally destructive extractive activities have been put in place, potentially heralding an emergent approach. Partial bans have been enacted in Argentina, Costa Rica, and Colombia. In 2017, El Salvador became the first country to pass a blanket ban on mining to protect the country's dwindling water supply from mining projects that had already polluted over 90% of it.[171] Activists successfully used democratic referenda at the local government level to declare territories free of mining as they built federal support. The campaign to pass the national ban gathered steam once it received support from the Catholic Church, and after the World Bank's International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes dismissed a seven-year-old claim from the mining company OceanaGold for $250 million.[172] The mining company had claimed these were lost profits stemming from El Salvador's refusal to grant a mining concession after the company had undertaken costly mineral exploration.

Communities are using creative territorial defense strategies to deter extractive projects from entering their territory. One example is issuing a declaration announcing a ban on extractive activity. Although these lack the legal enforcement of national bans, they have a powerful mobilizing effect for communities that may be imminently impacted. Another territorial defense strategy used by women includes demarcating indigenous land. In Thailand, Indigenous women's groups are using tools such as Geographical Information System (GIS) mapping software to help demarcate their lands and forest territories so they can manage resources effectively and use the knowledge in advocacy. In Honduras and Guatemala, Indigenous women in some communities traditionally walked the perimeter of the territory as a way to monitor external threats to land, but this is only recently being recognized as a form of territorial defense. Support for these participatory and community-led strategies can build women's power and commitment to the larger effort of territorial defense.

LEGAL AND ADVOCACY STRATEGIES

Communities use legal and advocacy strategies to challenge the legality of an extractive project, seek redress for harms that the project caused, or defend themselves against criminalization that is increasingly targeting individuals, groups, and entire communities involved in resistance. Because of a dearth of lawyers from frontline communities, legal strategies are usually led by allies with relevant skills working in collaboration with those directly impacted.

The goal of legal strategies is usually to stop or halt the extractive project, thus few if any take an explicitly gender focus. But women in frontline communities work closely with legal allies by providing documentation, serving as community spokespeople or liaisons between lawyers and communities, or working to secure compensation and remedies for women impacted. Litigation may target the company operating the project or the state for granting concessions or permits. These cases are often brought in the host country in which the project is occurring, but increasingly, cases are being filed in the home country where the parent company is located, seeking to hold it accountable for the actions of its subsidiary.

International and regional legal organizations are key allies in challenging extractive cases. EarthRights International[173] is an international leader in the effort to hold multinational corporations accountable for their environmental and human rights abuses through lawsuits in home and host countries, and legal defense for environmental defenders in the U.S., and Amazon and Mekong regions. EarthRights is a trusted organizational partner for frontline communities because of its long-term commitment to ending corporate power and its deep connections to social movements and impacted communities, especially in the regions where it works. Very few private law firms take on cases against transnational corporations. One notable example is the UK firm Leigh Day, which offers legal support on a contingency basis. [174]

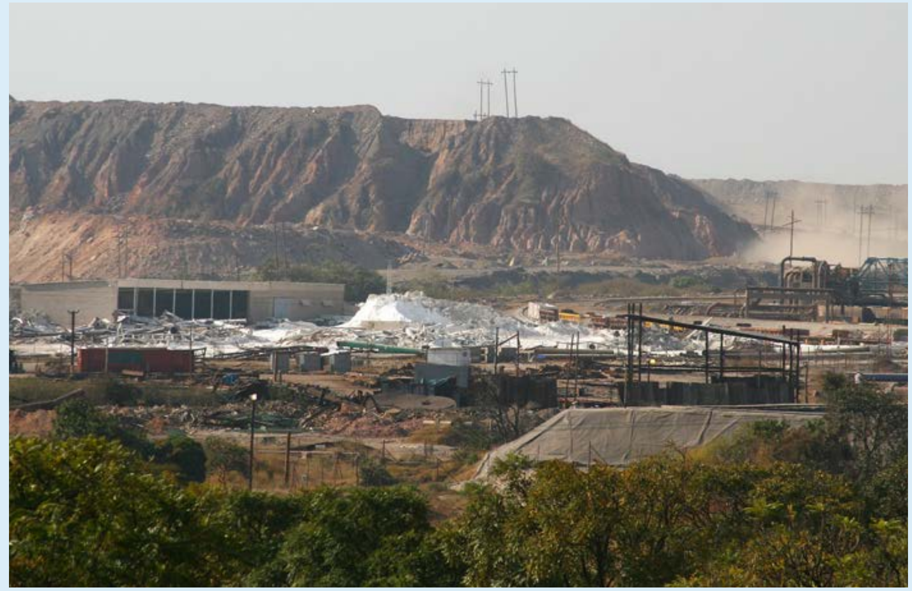


Photo: BlueSalo, CC BY-SA 3.0

The **communities in Chingola**, in Zambia's copperbelt, have been fighting the effects of the Nchanga Copper Mine for decades, including health impacts caused by toxic run-off and damage to homes caused by blasting at the mine. The mine is operated by Konkola Copper Mines, a subsidiary of UK-based Vedanta. With the help of ActionAid Zambia and the Catholic Diocese of Ndola, the communities contacted British law firm Leigh Day, who represented them in a lawsuit against Vedanta. In 2019, the UK Supreme Court ruled that the case could be heard in English courts, overcoming the company's efforts to move the case to Zambia and claims that it was not responsible for the actions of its subsidiaries. In January 2021, the parties announced a settlement benefiting over 2,500 community members. However, some members are dissatisfied with the compensation and feel abandoned by their civil society allies.

The **Amadiba Crisis Committee** was created in 2007 by the Xolobeni communities on South Africa's Wild Coast, whose culture and livelihoods were threatened by a planned open-pit titanium mine.[175] Sikhosiphi "Bazooka" Rhadebe, the leader of community resistance to the mine, was murdered in retaliation for his activism, and Nonhle Mbuthuma, who assumed leadership after his death has since faced harassment and death threats.[176] The Committee was represented by private lawyers at Richard Spoor Attorneys, who filed suit against the government for its decision to grant a mining license to Australian company Transworld Energy and Mineral Resources. The legal and community expenses for the case were covered by civil society allies including the Environmental Defenders Collaborative and Environmental Defender Law Center. In 2018, the court ruled that government must first obtain consent of the community before granting mining rights—a precedent-setting first judgment on customary land rights in the country. In 2021, with the support of the Legal Resources Centre, Amadiba Crisis Committee won another legal challenge, this time obtaining an order to stop Shell Oil from undertaking seismic blasting plans along the Wild Coast for failure to consult with communities who hold customary fishing rights there.[177]

Photo: Amandla/AIDC

Litigation can target the financiers of extractive projects, as in the case against the UK's export credit agency, UK Export Finance, brought by the UK chapter of Friends of the Earth in close collaboration with **Justiça Ambiental (JA! Friends of the Earth Mozambique)**, for its decision to approve $1.15 billion to support the natural gas project in Cabo Delgado, Mozambique.[178] Gas projects in Mozambique have resulted in the displacement of communities, deprived them of their livelihoods, and contributed to conflict in the region including mass abduction and gender-based violence targeting women and girls.[179] Friends of the Earth estimates that the project would emit more than the combined annual emissions of all 27 EU member states during its lifetime and is inconsistent with commitments made by the UK and Mozambique under the Paris Climate Agreement.[180] If successful, the lawsuit would cut off financing for the project and hold the British government accountable to its climate commitments. In addition to pursuing litigation against the export credit agencies involved, JA! and its allies have also targeted the corporations and financiers involved, including Eni, ExxonMobil, Total, Standard Bank, and HSBC. The litigation and the global advocacy are made possible through JA!'s deep and longstanding connections with the communities.

say NO to GAS! in Mozambique

There is no doubt that litigation is a critical tool to stop or prevent extractive projects. But obtaining justice for communities, and especially for women, is often a more complicated and protracted process. For example, compensation distributed to communities from a legal judgment or settlement may not integrate a gender lens, and therefore magnify existing power imbalances at the family or community level. Legal allies can help guard against the possibility of division or tension by improving coordination with community leaders. This can include frank discussions about benefits and risks of legal strategies so that communities are informed and can prepare for challenges if they decide to move forward. Importantly, legal groups and civil society allies can encourage integration with other strategies to pursue alongside litigation in order to encourage unity and sustain engagement for the many years it may take to obtain resolution.

A key challenge communities encounter when engaged in legal battles against extractives is increased retaliation. Corporations and states also use legal strategies against communities and individuals to drain resources and attention from the long-term fight. Frontline communities need extensive legal support to defend themselves against this kind of retaliation, but finding qualified local counsel who are willing to represent defenders can be a huge challenge. Networks of local indigenous, women, and movement-based lawyers who provide urgent legal support are few and far between, and often under-funded. Nonprofit law firms, especially those located near extractive struggles, can also help fill gaps in support. Strengthening local lawyer networks is a key untapped opportunity.

The barriers to accessing justice are well known. Litigation, especially transnational litigation, often requires significant resources as well as finding a

RIGHTS ACTION

In 2011, eleven **Mayan Q'eqchi' women from Guatemala**, with the support of Canadian CSOs including **Rights Action**, filed a suit in Canada against Hudbay Minerals, a Toronto-based mining company. The women allege that they were raped in 2007 by the military, police, and company security guards who were sent to forcibly evict five indigenous villages to make way for the company's nickel mine.[181] The case has survived several challenges but has yet to proceed to the merits,[182] and in the interim one of the original plaintiffs has passed away. The case is one of three pending against the company in Canada. The other two lawsuits relate to a 2009 incident in the same community in which the company's security personnel killed one leader who opposed the mine and left another man paralyzed.[183] These incidents occurred in an area of intense conflict surrounding extractives, where women defenders are still routinely criminalized and persecuted, and the government has declared a state of emergency to limit dissent. With the support of allies, women are using indigenous healing processes and developing collective care and protection strategies to sustain the struggle.

The Environmental Defenders Collaborative (EDC) supports environmental defenders and their allies and advocates in the face of rising levels of intimidation, criminalization, and attack. The fund, which pools the resources of a growing group of funders and donors (17 active contributors), offers flexible and responsive support to activists, groups, and networks engaged in frontline defense of land, water, territory, and environmental rights. To date, EDC has finalized nearly US $3 million in grants, with an average grant size of $29,000 to partners in more than 35 countries for security and protection, legal defense against criminalization, and national court actions targeting the industries behind violence against defenders.

ALLRISE
Attorneys for climate and environmental justice

All Rise is a nonprofit environmental and climate law firm located in KwaZulu Natal, South Africa.[185] Founded and led by women, All Rise partners with communities to provide pro-bono services in legal challenges to mega-development projects that threaten the environment or climate. Services include advocacy and rights training in local languages. They partner with other organizations to provide support for communities experiencing criminalization, such as trauma counseling and physical and digital security.

The **Environmental Defender Law Center (EDLC)** provides frontline communities and defenders with legal services by connecting them to private lawyers, funding legal defense, and providing strategic legal advice and other resources. EDLC supports community leaders who are targeted or criminalized for their environmental activism, as well as litigation efforts to delay or stop extractive projects.[184] EDLC is a leader in connecting top lawyers and firms to leverage their expertise and resources for communities facing extractive threats.

Photo: Manuela Picq

lawyer to take the case. Legal proceedings often take place far from frontline communities, limiting their ability to access courts. Language barriers and bias in the legal system prevent many communities—and especially women—from participating in legal action. The proceedings can be slow, draining the energy and commitment of plaintiffs, and even when lawsuits are resolved in favor of plaintiffs, there can be significant challenges in enforcing judgments. These challenges demand continued effort and creativity to overcome.

Communities may elect to make use of regional or international complaint mechanisms as an alternative or complementary strategy to litigation. These mechanisms vary in availability, accessibility, and scope, and it is most strategic to engage them where the state is sensitive to political pressure from human rights bodies. At the United Nations, there are treaty-monitoring bodies and thematic Special Rapporteurs who receive submissions and documentation from people whose rights have been harmed, and can make recommendations to improve respect for human rights. Regional commissions, such as the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) and the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights (ACHPR), can also accept petitions regarding state conduct, usually only after petitioners have sought redress through their national judicial system. Although some groups have found success on the merits, barriers to enforcement limit the effectiveness of these strategies.

In 2012, the **Kichwa community of Sarayaku**, represented by the **Center for Justice and International Law** (CEJIL), won a case at the Inter-American Court on Human Rights against the Ecuadorian government for allowing an oil company to encroach on its territory without consulting them.[186] The case set an important precedent for all the states that have ratified the American Convention on Human Rights. In response to the decision, the government has provided the monetary compensation ordered by the Court, but did not immediately remove the 1,400 kg of explosives stored by the company on the Sarayaku's territory, nor did it amend its national legislation to enshrine indigenous rights.[187] As commonly occurs in the Inter-American System for Human Rights, the ruling came much later—12 years—after the harm.

Photo: CEJIL

In some regions, advocacy strategies crafted around the use of international or regional human rights system mechanisms can be powerful in pressuring governments to mitigate harm from extractive projects or protect activists who are especially at risk. For countries concerned about their human rights or environmental record, condemnation by rights experts and bodies may open doors to negotiation. This kind of advocacy is often facilitated by civil society groups and networks at the regional and global level. It is also most effective when accompanied by robust communications strategies that can mobilize constituencies to apply pressure from below to complement the pressure from above, and when integrated with collective care and protection models (see above under "Foundational Power Building Strategies").

Advocates are pursuing other opportunities to hold corporate actors accountable for rights abuses or environmental harm resulting from extractive projects. These are fewer in number, but one is the system established under the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. Corporations based in OECD member or acceding countries are meant to follow the Guidelines on labor, environment, human rights, and tax, among other provisions, throughout their operations and investments at home and abroad. OECD members are required to establish a national contact point (NCP) to receive complaints from labor unions, CSOs, or communities about companies based in their countries that have fallen short of the Guidelines. While they vary in effectiveness, NCPs are meant to resolve conflict between the affected community filing the complaint and the company. If mediation fails, some NCPs will undertake an investigation to determine if

The **Manushya Foundation**, a feminist women's human rights group that works in Thailand and Laos, has led several successful advocacy campaigns centered around women defenders who have been targeted for their resistance to land grabbing. In the case of , an indigenous woman detained for challenging the state's confiscation of forest peoples' land in Kaeng Krachan National Park, the group elevated the case to the UN Special Rapporteurs just before a Supreme Court verdict on Nittaya's case. Placing the case in the global spotlight served as a kind of "protection" from government retaliation and catalyzed public attention. In under two weeks, Manushya mobilized the public via a petition and large social media campaign, culminating in a protest in front of the Supreme Court. The combination of these strategies applied pressure that led to Nittaya's release, although the threats to forest peoples' land remain ongoing.

the company has violated the Guidelines and issue recommendations to ensure compliance. Even when the complaint does not lead to a favorable outcome, the process can be used to raise the profile of the issue and secure media attention.

The SAGE research identified few examples of using the OECD complaint mechanism to address gendered structural violence, although the Rio Tinto advocacy (spotlighted in the text box below) is a notable exception. An analysis by OECD Watch, a network of 130 human rights, environmental, and development organizations, has shown that only 13 of the 350 community/CSO-led complaints submitted under the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises have explicitly addressed impacts on women and few, if any, have resulted in redress. In 2021, OECD Watch produced a guide to help civil society evaluate the extent to which a company has included gender in its due diligence processes.[188] By strengthening the capacity of NGOs to include gender-related concerns in their complaints, and by supporting NGOs working on improving gender-based provisions in the Guidelines, the OECD complaint process could become a more effective tool for addressing gendered structural violence resulting from extractivism.

In summary, legal and advocacy strategies are a critical tool for frontline communities to achieve a range of goals: preventing or halting extractive projects causing human rights and environmental harm, protecting activists from retaliation, and pressuring both corporations and states to comply with international and domestic law. Allies and funders can strengthen connections and facilitate ongoing coordination between lawyers and frontline communities so that legal approaches are timely, accessible, and gender responsive. Recognizing that legal strategies best serve communities when they complement (rather than supplant) other approaches, more transparency and coordination with communities and women activists is needed.

Indigenous Peoples Rights International
Championing Indigenous Peoples Rights

Indigenous Peoples Rights International (IPRI), a group working to protect indigenous environmental defenders worldwide, frequently files cases with UN Special Procedures and leverages their connections with human rights experts and leading organizations. They partner with organizations such as Amnesty International or Frontline Defenders, which have the ability to generate global pressure on hostile governments.

"We combine different approaches to create pressure. One is using the UN system for whatever it can do. We know it is limited, but at least it will keep the government aware that we are watching. And secondly, drawing public support."

—**JOAN CARLING**
CO-DIRECTOR OF IPRI AND INDIGENOUS FILIPINA ACTIVIST

INVESTOR STRATEGIES

Pressuring an extractive corporation's investors and financiers, uncovered through the investment chain and strategic corporate research, is one of the few powerful leverage points communities can use to stop or change an extractive project, especially in combination with on-the-ground resistance. This section provides examples of communities targeting different types of investors: shareholders of extractive companies, private banks, and development finance institutions.

Global networks are playing a key role in building the capacity of frontline and Indigenous women leaders to engage in advocacy strategies targeting investors and financiers of extractive projects. There is, for example, a growing field of groups advocating for private sector banks to adopt strong climate commitments. *Banking on Climate Crisis*, a report published by Rainforest Action Network (RAN), BankTrack, Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN), Oil Change International (OCI), Reclaim Finance, and the Sierra Club, and endorsed by 312 organizations in 50 countries, scores private sector banks on the basis of their investments in fossil fuel companies and the quality of their policy commitments to address climate change.[189] It found that "In the 5 years since the Paris Agreement was adopted, the world's 60 largest private sector banks financed fossil fuels with $3.8 trillion." In addition to advocating for policy commitments, CSOs also target investors to divest from particular projects.

The **Women's Earth and Climate Action Network International (WECAN)** uses numerous strategies as part of the global Fossil Fuel Divestment movement, including bringing delegations of Indigenous women to meet with financial institutions, insurance companies, governments, policy makers, and others to call on them to shift their investments from fossil fuels to renewable and regenerative energy for all.[190] WECAN assesses the gender impacts of fossil fuel projects and identifies the institutions—Vanguard, BlackRock, Capital Group, JPMorgan Chase, Royal Bank of Canada, Bank of America, and Liberty Mutual—that finance them.[191] WECAN was one of many groups that fought the construction of the Keystone XL pipeline to transport oil from Canada's tar sands across indigenous territory in the United States. They identified the Norwegian Pension Fund as one of the shareholders in the tar sand companies that would supply the pipeline, and their advocacy played a role in convincing the pension fund to divest from those companies in 2020.[192] The following year, the Keystone pipeline was canceled.[193]

Photo: WECAN

Leveraging Complaint Mechanism to Address Legacy Impacts of Bougainville Mine, PNG

Photo: Human Rights Law Center

From 1972-1989, Rio Tinto operated the Panguna copper mine on Bougainville, Papua New Guinea (PNG) via its subsidiary, Bougainville Copper Limited (BCL), dumping a billion tons of mine tailings into local river systems and generating conflict amongst local landowners. In 1988-89, an insurrection by local people against these practices forced the company to abandon the mine. Rio Tinto subsequently pressured the PNG Government into a military intervention, triggering a decade-long civil war that killed up to 20,000 Bougainvilleans. Pollution from the mine site continues to flow unabated into local rivers, impacting livelihoods and food security with unknown health consequences for local communities. Chemical storage facilities are deteriorating, and levies built to contain the massive volume of mine tailings are at risk of collapse. These and other impacts were documented in the 2020 report by the Human Rights Law Centre (HRLC) in Australia, After the Mine: Living with Rio Tinto's Deadly Legacy. Neither the Bougainville nor PNG Governments have the resources or expertise to clean up the site.

The communities are seeking to hold Rio Tinto responsible for the damage to their health, livelihoods and the environment. With support from HRLC, they initially sought to engage with Rio Tinto directly about these impacts, including at its Annual General Meeting in April 2020. Having received no commitments from the company, in September 2020, the community filed a complaint with the newly reformed Australian OECD National Contact Point (NCP). Among other impacts, the complaint alleges that the "health of women and girls is distinctly and additionally compromised by the contamination and inaccessibility of safe water sources which has, according to local communities and health professionals, harmed maternal health and led to pregnancy complications."

In July 2021, as a result of a multi-pronged campaign and the NCP process, Rio Tinto publicly committed to fund an independent environmental and human rights impact assessment of the mine to assess actual and potential impacts and develop recommendations for what needs to be done to address them. The impact assessment is being undertaken by an independent company and overseen by a multi-stakeholder committee comprising landowner, community representatives, local women's groups, the Autonomous Bougainville Government (ABG), PNG Government, Bougainville Copper Ltd (BCL), Rio Tinto, and the Human Rights Law Centre.

Source: Human Rights Law Centre, Rio Tinto, Joint Statement by Parties

Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) are banks with one or more government shareholders that finance public and private sector projects in a range of sectors, including agribusiness, energy, and infrastructure, either through loans or equity investment. The financing agreement between the DFI and the company will often require that the project comply with a range of environmental and social standards—which rarely include specific provisions on women's rights. Most DFIs also have a complaints mechanism—often called an independent accountability mechanism—that receives complaints from people harmed by a project financed by that DFI, and offers to resolve them through mediation or an investigation to determine if its standards were violated. While most DFIs disclose information about their investments to some degree, communities affected by the projects they support are rarely aware of the DFI involvement. CSO networks monitor DFI investments to alert communities about potentially harmful projects and support them to engage DFIs and their government shareholders to change the project or cancel the investment.

Increasingly, civil society organizations are investing in training frontline communities to leverage DFI involvement to address gender-related harms from extractive projects. Across Latin America, for example, civil society networks are training women activists to engage with DFIs, with particular emphasis on the actions of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

The International Accountability Project (IAP) and the Center for International Environmental Law developed the Early Warning System (EWS) in 2013 to monitor DFI investments, flag potentially harmful projects, and alert affected communities, ideally before the investment is approved by the DFI.[194] The Chilean CSO Sustentarse is one of the co-administrators of the EWS, disseminating information to communities in Latin America and training them how to use it. One such project was an IDB-financed, billion-dollar mega-desalination plant to supply industrial water to mining activities in northern Chile. Sustentarse supported Asopesca Tocopilla, a traditional fisherfolk organization, to file a complaint with the IDB's independent accountability mechanism in January 2020. While their complaint was dismissed, their advocacy contributed to financing for the project being put on hold.[195] During the process, Sustentarse encouraged the fisherwomen to form their own association, the Mujeres Changas de Tocopilla, to support each other and defend the resources they depend on for their livelihoods and indigenous culture.[196] The organization has since formalized, grown its membership, and assumed leadership among Changas indigenous groups. Paty Páez, the leader of the Mujeres Changas de Tocopilla, participated in the First International Meeting of Communities Impacted by DFIs that took place in Brazil and was organized by the Early Warning System.

Supporting Fisherwomen to Challenge Investors of the Sendou Power Plant, Senegal

The Association of Women Fish Processors of Bargny Guedj "Khelcom" worked together with local environmental NGO Takkom Jerry, national organization Lumiere Synergie pour le Developpement (LSD) and regional feminist organization WoMin to stop a proposed coal-fired power plant that threatened their health and livelihoods. The coal-fired power plant, which would displace the women from the land they used to process fish, was co-financed by the African Development Bank (AfDB), the West African Development Bank (BOAD), the Dutch Development Bank (FMO), and Compagnie Bancaire de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (CBAO).

With support from LSD and two Dutch CSOs, SOMO and BothENDS, Takkom Jerry and community members filed a complaint with the independent accountability mechanisms of the three public financiers. In order to ensure their full participation in the complaint process, LSD supported the women's group to engage directly with the banks and their complaints mechanisms, as well as provided training on how to document the impacts of the project and disseminate their demands via social media. WoMin provided capacity building on their rights and connected Khelcom with women's movements confronting extractives projects in other countries. WoMin also supported a solidarity fund to allow the women to continue to meet their basic needs when their income from fish processing declined as a result of the construction of the power plant. The women held protests and undertook an ecofeminist impact assessment of the project with support from WoMin, LSD and GenderAction. he power plant and AfDB some improvements in how it assesses and addresses gender impacts. LSD claims that the decision to target the financiers of the project and center women's rights were the deciding factors in the success of the campaign.

Perhaps the greatest success, however, is that the women of Khelcom are now emboldened and confident in asserting their rights and have achieved recognition by members of parliament and the president. When a Turkish company proposed to build an iron ore facility on the same site, the women used their social media and organizing skills to alert the village of the proposed project and livestreamed a conversation with the company. LSD reports that the company has abandoned the idea of evicting the women from their fish processing site and is negotiating with them to provide additional land and facilities.

Sources: WoMin, LSD, GenderAction, Women stand their ground against BIG coal: The AfDB Sendou power plant impacts on women in a time of climate crisis.

"Women were discouraged because the message was that the plan was already there, that they can't do anything about it, that they have to accept it. [But after the training and networking,] the women changed completely – and said 'we have to fight for our rights, we can't stand back anymore.'"

—GEORGINE KENGNEOF
WOMIN

Beyond advocacy on individual extractive projects, CSOs are also putting pressure on DFIs to adopt strong climate commitments, arguing that the impacts of climate change will fall disproportionately on communities that those institutions are trying to benefit. Under growing political pressure from its largest shareholders to end fossil fuel financing, the World Bank has drafted a new policy in line with the Paris Agreement (although it has been criticized for falling short of this objective).[197] The European Investment Bank pledged to end fossil fuel financing by the end of 2021, with the Biden Administration reportedly drafting a similar plan.[198] This trend opens the door to other state-owned financiers that are less responsive to public pressure and lack domestic regulations requiring information disclosure. Further research is needed to inform entry points for women to influence this new and growing sector of financiers that fund the most climate-polluting industries.

Transformational Strategies

The final set of strategies identified in the research work to transform the power backing extractive industries and enabling the dominance of the extractive model. These long-term efforts proceed in parallel with power building and site-specific strategies, and are designed to sustain communities in the long-term struggle by creating, and collectively working towards, alternatives to extractivism. Women are agitating for transformative change from the local to global level. Supported by cross-movement coalitions and allies, women in frontline communities are articulating new conceptual frameworks that reflect their visions for the future.

TRANSFORMATIONAL STRATEGIES INCLUDE:

- **DEVELOPING ALTERNATIVE FRAMEWORKS TO EXTRACTIVISM**
- **SETTING POLICY AGENDAS**
- **NEW RULES FOR CORPORATE CONDUCT**
- **SECURING WOMEN'S LAND TENURE**
- **CREATING AUTONOMOUS SYSTEMS**

These are being translated into bold policy agendas that meet the planet's most urgent demands, such as climate change and biodiversity loss, while addressing the structural root of the problem, such as corporate impunity or insecure land tenure. Often led by women, communities in every region are developing new—or reviving traditional—autonomous systems for re-organizing economic, social, and political life. This section lifts up how women are creating new realities while they also agitate for structural transformation.

DEVELOPING ALTERNATIVE FRAMEWORKS TO EXTRACTIVISM

As women in frontline communities come together to discuss the problems they face from extractive industries, they develop new language and concepts to describe their experiences. They also challenge dominant narratives and articulate their own collective visions for the future. Through organizing and support from others, women then formulate these visions into conceptual frameworks. These become tools to mobilize communities by speaking directly to their concerns, while simultaneously influencing social movements to tackle the drivers (in addition to the effects) of extractivism.

Women and feminists are playing a significantly more visible and influential leadership role in transnational initiatives and movements that are shaping economic, climate, human rights and environmental debates related to extractives. Over the last few decades, Indigenous women, rural women, women of color in the Global North and South, and feminists in all regions have collaborated to develop a deeper political analysis that challenges dominant frameworks grounded in patriarchy, capitalism, colonialism, and extractivism.

> "We need alternatives with a distinct logic that doesn't depend on the capitalist model of competition and violence. We need to stop and to think more about what that looks like. It's difficult to propose alternatives in the middle of a process of resistance. You can think better about alternatives – an alternative market, alternative energy, alternative healthcare – if you do it beforehand. If you do it later, they put you in jail because you are standing in the way of a project."
>
> —GUSTAVO CASTRO
> *OTROS MUNDOS*

EXAMPLES OF SUCH FRAMEWORKS INCLUDE:

BUEN VIVIR

The concept of "good living" emerged from indigenous communities in South America envisioning humans living collectively and in harmony with nature. Indigenous women have built on the model to emphasize the role of Pachamama, or Mother Earth, in protecting nature and fertility.[199] Meanwhile Latin American feminists have contributed an analysis around patriarchy[200] to challenge the neoliberal development model and envision alternative, post-extractive economies.[201]

ECOFEMINISM

This "new term for an ancient wisdom" was coined by Vandana Shiva and Maria Mies in the 1970s, but is being revived by women's groups in Africa and to a certain extent in Latin America as a framework to examine the interconnected gender, ecological, and climate impacts of extractive and mega-development projects on women.[202]

POST-COLONIAL/DECOLONIAL FEMINISM/ COMMUNITARIAN FEMINISM

Communitarian feminism, popular among rural women in Latin America, is a response to colonial, racist, and antidemocratic approaches and prioritizes collective power,[203] whereas decolonial feminism decenters Western, white, and elite feminism to prioritize knowledge and perspectives of women of color, Indigenous women, and women in the Global South.[204]

FEMINIST GREEN NEW DEAL

A connected set of frameworks emanating from feminists in every region, and now working together transnationally, argue that the extractive economy is subsidized by women's unpaid labor and call for structural solutions.[205]

FEMINIST JUST TRANSITION

A framework emerging from collaborations between feminists and environmental justice, climate justice, and indigenous and workers' rights movements that exposes the patriarchal and colonial roots of the extractive model and calls for a radical transformation of the fossil fuel-based economy.[206]

GENDER JUSTICE

A framework developed in response to white northern feminism and rooted in an analysis of anti-colonialism and anti-capitalism. Gender justice movements tackle multiple and intersecting oppressions of patriarchy, transphobia, and homophobia and are community-led, multi-issue, and feminist, queer, and trans-inclusive.[207]

Feminists bring to each of these frameworks an analysis of patriarchy as a key driver of extractive capitalism, including the personal and public continuum of violence. Meanwhile, women farmers, rural women, and Indigenous women propose forward-thinking solutions such as sustainable livelihoods and alternative economies that are grounded in women's traditional knowledge of food systems and natural resource management. Early on in climate change discussions, this collaboration between rural and Indigenous women focused on the issue of food sovereignty. This agenda has shaped both global debates and local initiatives around reclaiming food systems in the face of climate change. For example, of the 134 projects supported by the Indigenous Peoples Resilience Fund (an indigenous-led effort to respond to urgent needs around Covid-19 while building long-term community resilience), 55% were food-related and mostly led by Indigenous women. [208]

Developing and advancing an alternative framework requires time and space to surface and debate ideas with a diverse range of civil society actors. Ideas evolve over time as movements engage with frameworks in practice, testing which ideas "land" and which ones fade, and adapting to reflect new challenges or trends. This maturation process requires years and even decades of research, organizing, and collaborating within and across social movements. Because the impact of such efforts is not easily measurable in the short-term, and therefore harder to raise funds to support, smaller women-led groups often lack the resources or capacity to sustain these efforts over the long-term. Women in frontline communities contribute unique insights about the gendered dimensions of extractive violence as well as a range of solutions to tackle the drivers and root causes. Supporting their participation in these cross-movement processes will ensure their ability to shape discourse, and in turn to build larger agendas for change and the power base and alliances to realize them.

SETTING POLICY AGENDAS

The research revealed several key strategies women and feminists are using to set policy agendas and mobilize transnationally, across social movements and sectors, for broader impact. These include partnering with bridge-building organizations that can socialize and disseminate alternative frameworks; coalition-building, especially with environmental and climate groups, to leverage collective power; and advocating for feminist leadership in decision-making spaces. Through these strategies, women are changing the structures of power around who participates in key discussions, the terms of the debate, and ultimately the decisions themselves.

Until recently, policymakers have embraced the terminology of gender equality while resisting systemic change. Calls to transform the structures that give rise to inequality and violence are perceived as either too disruptive of the status quo or too difficult or expensive to achieve. For these reasons, other social movements have also held feminists at arm's length for fear of diluting their own movement's goals or being delegitimized by skeptical decision-makers. Feminist and women's rights groups have invested deeply over the past several decades in building expertise around economic policy, trade, investment, and development, and using this expertise to gain access to coalition and decision-making spaces that were historically closed to them. This work is happening at the regional and global level through these and many other networks and organizations:

Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN) is a network of activists, researchers, and scholars from the Global South that has paved the way in integrating feminist perspectives on development issues and linking macro-economic policies to the experience of poor women living in the Global South.

The **Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO)** coordinates with women's rights and feminist organizations around the world to lead a gender justice approach through the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UN-FCCC).

International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific (IWRAW Asia Pacific) is a feminist organization that links gender to themes such as macro-economic policy and business and human rights, and uses this research and analysis to advocate with international human rights mechanisms.

The **Association of Women in Rights in Development (AWID)** is a global feminist membership organization that challenges extractivism through amplifying the voices of women defenders across regions; advancing feminist agendas of economic justice and corporate accountability in policy spaces; mobilizing solidarity actions around tax justice and illicit financial flows; building knowledge and creating practical tools for women defenders to challenge corporate power; and creating and amplifying alternative, community-based, and feminist economies.

The African Gender and Extractive Alliance (WoMin) is a network of 23 partners in 13 countries on the African continent collaborating with regional and international allies on research, analysis, and campaigns to challenge an extractive development model.

Once marginalized from global policy spaces, feminists are gaining more influence. This is largely due to years-long efforts to build coalitions at the intersections of the environment, climate change, and extractivism. Some examples include:

Feminist Action for Climate Justice (FACJ) - Formed as part of the UN Women Generation Equality Forum, this multi-stakeholder coalition is focused on ensuring meaningful participation of women and girls in key climate policy decision-making spaces and holding the donor community accountable to funding women-led and gender-just climate solutions.

Foro Internacional de Mujeres Indígenas (FIMI), WECAN International, and the **Indigenous Environmental Network—**Indigenous networks influencing global frameworks linking women and gender, Indigenous peoples, extractives, environment and climate, and advocating for Indigenous peoples' rights to control their development.

Pan African Climate Justice Alliance–A consortium of more than 1,000 organizations from 48 African countries advancing a people-centered, rights-based, just, and inclusive approach to climate change is advancing feminist approaches to climate change.

Women4Biodiversity – Network advocating for the inclusion of gender justice and gender responsive policies in the global biodiversity framework as set out in the three Rio Conventions, international human rights instruments, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Women and Gender Constituency (WGC)– Established in 2009, the WGC is comprised of 33 women's rights and environmental organizations advocating for the inclusion of women and a women's rights and gender justice approach in discussions involving the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UN-FCCC).

A recent study of data from a large sample of countries concluded that increased political representation of women leads to the adoption of more ambitious climate policies.[209] Yet, as of 2018, women represented on average below 30% of those participating in national and global climate negotiating bodies.[210] Women from grassroots organizations as well as rural and Indigenous women are particularly underrepresented, and their perspectives are often marginalized in decision-making spaces for lacking technical, policy-making, or language expertise.[211]

There is growing recognition of the barriers to representation and some commitments to change,[212] but progress towards the equal and meaningful participation of women in agenda-setting spaces remains slow. Women are organizing to address these imbalances, with some recent success. The coalition SHE Changes Climate, whose mission is to ensure 50% representation of diverse women at top levels of climate negotiations, called for greater gender parity on the UK COP26 leadership team.[213] This advocacy led to more women being appointed to leadership positions and a more meaningful focus on gender at COP26 (the 26th Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change held in November 2021).

Despite pandemic-related travel barriers that limited women's participation, the first-ever "Gender Day" at COP generated novel commitments on gender climate financing. Canada, for example, pledged to ensure that 80% of its CAD $5.3 billion climate investments over the next five years target gender equality outcomes.[214] These promises arose from the demands of feminists and the leadership of Indigenous women, young women, and women from the Global South who insisted on direct funding for women's groups, equal representation in decision-making spaces, and the integration of a gender approach in national plans to address climate change. Meanwhile, feminists working within influential organizations helped pressure decision-makers to "walk the talk" of women's rights. For example, ActionAid International, a strong feminist ally among development groups, successfully shifted the policy positions of the governments of the UK and Canada with respect to gender equality financing for climate.

Though gaining influence, feminists continue to face a massive power imbalance in favor of extractive industries. For example, Global Witness found that the cumulative number of delegates at COP26 representing the fossil fuel industry exceeded that of any national delegation.[215] Another recent example is the attempt to insert a discussion during the Gender Equality Forum about moving away from fossil fuels, a difficult struggle that advocates attributed to the Forum being funded by corporations directly involved in or benefiting from extractive industries. Corporate capture of the UN and other global norm-setting spaces has led to weak or vague standards, as well as endless negotiations that can stall meaningful progress. Stacked against this kind of corporate power, feminists admit to feeling disillusioned and daunted about how to translate their agendas into concrete policy gains. And even if strong standards are secured at the global level, advocates point to the lack of enforcement mechanisms at the international and national levels, and weak political will to hold either states or corporate actors accountable.

A new convergence of intersectional agendas among indigenous, rural, campesino, environmental, climate, racial justice, and feminist movements offers opportunities to mobilize people power to meet the challenge of extractivism. The next challenge for

> "There are international platforms like COP and UN-FCCC, but it is difficult for Indigenous women to take up the space and speak and be heard. There is also CBD - but it's always very disappointing seeing the lack of space for women and particularly for Indigenous women. There are international platforms and forums, but their usefulness is questionable. These are international bodies which [issue] recommend[ations to] governments, but I do not know how effective it is. But in relation to extractive industries, recommendations are very generic and not very concrete and progressive. It is all about how much we can influence these bodies, which is extremely hard."
>
> —SHANTI UPRETI AND MARISA HUTCHINSON
> *IWRAW ASIA PACIFIC*

social movements is learning how to operationalize these intersectional agendas, showing how and why these solutions offer a better alternative for development. Some of this work is already happening. The Women4Biodiversity network, for example, is documenting good practices in Asia, Africa, and Latin America to highlight women-led solutions in global spaces. Conversely, indigenous-led networks are working hard to translate the progress made in the international policy arena so that indigenous communities can understand what rights have been secured and where they have leverage at the national level. These networks are best positioned to translate global standards for local implementation while lifting up community needs and demands to the global level. More can be done to support networks and coalitions that are making these critical connections.

NEW RULES FOR CORPORATE CONDUCT

Spurred by a long record of human rights, labor, and environmental violations in the extractive industry among other sectors, the past two decades have witnessed renewed efforts to change corporate behavior. In 2011, the UN Human Rights Council endorsed the voluntary and nonbinding UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs). Under the UNGPs, corporations should adopt a policy commitment to respect human rights, undertake due diligence to identify and prevent human rights impacts of their activities, and establish a process to remediate any impacts that occur.[216] While the UNGPs successfully put business and human rights on the global agenda, many in civil society criticized the nonbinding standards for falling short of what was needed to change corporate conduct and ensure rights protection.

In order to fill the critical gap around binding enforcement, there was a renewed push for an international treaty and mandatory national due-diligence policies. Due diligence in an extractive project would involve, for example, a company that manufactures wind turbines assessing the human rights impacts associated with the mine where it sources copper. Integrating a gender perspective would involve assessing the risk to women's security from an influx of male workers, or the impact of land loss on women's livelihoods, and taking measures to prevent those risks.

In June 2014, the UN Human Rights Council adopted a resolution, proposed by Ecuador and South Africa, to establish an intergovernmental working group (IGWG) to develop a treaty on business and human rights. The IGWG has met seven times since then, most recently in October 2021, to consider a third draft of the treaty.[217] The draft includes provisions that would have states require corporations within their jurisdiction to conduct human rights due diligence and ensure that victims have access to remedy.[218] It also includes provisions that would eliminate some of the barriers to transnational litigation against corporations. While initially the treaty negotiations only attracted Southern states and civil society, the United States and EU member states—in whose jurisdictions many multinational corporations are headquartered—have become more engaged.[219] Once viewed as a promising development, their engagement to date has pushed for voluntary rather than binding tools for corporate accountability, revealing the powerful influence of corporate interests and private sector lobbying.

While the treaty negotiations are underway, civil society advocacy has led to new laws in France, Germany, and Norway, among others, that require companies to undertake human rights due diligence. The laws vary in scope and enforcement mechanisms. In France, the Duty of Vigilance law, adopted in 2017, is a major step forward because it applies to large companies with over 5,000 employees and can be enforced by any injured party in court. It is still being tested in implementation, and is therefore too new to assess whether it offers opportunities to address gendered structural violence. To date, there have been four lawsuits brought under the Duty of Vigilance law, all of them against extractive industries.[221] Under the German law on Corporate Due Diligence in Supply Chains, adopted in 2021, the public regulator is tasked with enforcing the due diligence requirements. There is no private cause of action established.[222] The

Photo: Womankind Worldwide

Feminists for a Binding Treaty (F4BT) is a coalition of over 30 organizations formed in 2016 to advocate for the inclusion of an intersectional gender analysis and feminist approach in the UN business and human rights treaty. The group has consistently urged drafters to move beyond the mere inclusion of women and adopt a "gender responsive treaty that tackles structural barriers to corporate accountability."[220] These may include mandatory gender impact assessments of business activities and gender-sensitive remedy mechanisms.

European Commission recently published a legislative proposal for sustainable corporate governance, which includes a requirement for mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence for EU businesses.[223] While many in civil society hailed it as an important step forward, they also criticized its many loopholes that they believe will weaken its effectiveness.[224]

There have been some efforts to incorporate a gender perspective in human rights due diligence. In 2019, the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights published guidance on how to implement the UNGPs with a gender lens.[225] As these laws are still relatively new, it is not yet clear whether they will be successful in identifying and addressing risks to women from extractive activities. There is an opportunity to support women's groups in testing these new legal frameworks, though with realistic expectations about the potential outcomes.

SECURING WOMEN'S LAND TENURE

Most extractive projects are inherently place-based—the mine must be developed on top of the mineral deposit—and that is their vulnerability. As a defensive strategy, asserting a legal right to land may successfully block an extractive project laying claim to it. Women's lack of secure title and land tenure is an enormous barrier to defending against land grabs and dispossession. Across all regions, women are working to protect access to and use of land—whether held by individuals or communally—as well as access to natural resources and water that ensure the food sovereignty of whole communities.

In addition to defending against imminent threats, securing land tenure can be a proactive strategy to advance women's autonomy, economic security, and other fundamental rights. Secure land tenure is important for women because it is strongly linked to an increase in economic empowerment overall, which in turn accounts for more gender equality at the family and community level. Research on the benefits of women securing rights to land and property show an increase in women's participation in household decision-making, a reduction in domestic violence, an increase in net household income, and increased expenditures on food and education for children.[226] Land tenure establishes a base of security, allowing women to build sustainable practices that give more control over their own lives and family wellbeing.

Because women are critical stewards of natural resources, securing women's land rights can have benefits not only for the woman and her family, but also for the entire community in terms of ensuring sustainability of resources necessary for survival. Women's environmental stewardship also realigns the ruptured relationship between humans and nature, promoting biodiversity and the healthy regeneration of land that has been degraded or polluted from human activity. Although they produce 60–80% of food in developing countries, women represent less than 20% of land holders worldwide and only 13% of land users who make the major decisions on agricultural land.[227] Gender discrimination in inheritance law and in local customary law and practice prevent women from owning or leasing land, as well as from securing loans to purchase land or buy insurance. (These barriers are

Women-led Movements for Land Reform

ZAMBIA

In Zambia, a new land law passed in May 2021 shows promise for women's rights. The law, which was the result of intense advocacy by civil society, includes an allocation of 50% of land to women in line with Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Gender and Development, which Zambia has ratified. The law establishes a Land Court that aims to strengthen land dispute management mechanisms and lowers the age for land acquisition from 21 to 18 years of age. Importantly, the law contains measures to address discriminatory gender norms, including sustained campaigns to raise awareness and work with tribal chiefs to ensure the allocation of land to women, young people, people living with disabilities, and marginalized communities. According to Masuka Matenda from the We Effect Regional Office in Zambia, the new law "increases the security of land tenure for all Zambians and especially women, youth, and people with disabilities."[228]

INDIA

In India, the 1956 Hindu Succession Act has been interpreted to ensure daughters receive equal rights to Hindu family property. This change happened due to dedicated and decades-long activism and scholarship from Indian women like Bina Agarwal, who wrote about women's land rights in South Asia (*A Field of One's Own: Gender and Land Rights in South Asia*, 1994) and led a successful civil society campaign to amend the Hindu succession law in 2005.[229] In November 2020, India's Supreme Court clarified that daughters have equal rights to Hindu ancestral family property dating back to 1956, when the law was first codified. This ruling gives hope that the remaining discriminatory aspects of the Act that still favor male heirs will be amended.[230]

LATIN AMERICA

In Latin America, rural movements for women's land rights have made important policy gains, even if implementation remains challenging. For example, Nicaraguan women whose legacy of cooperatives from the Sandinista movement successfully organized in 2010 for the Fund for the Purchase of Land with Gender Equity for Rural Women Law, known as Law 717. The gender equity fund has yet to be included in the country's general budget, delaying implementation. Yet, in the face of tremendous government repression, women continue to mobilize and grow their political power to enforce the law.[231] Meanwhile, Mexico reformed its agrarian law in 2020 in favor of equality between women and men in the *ejidos*, or areas of communal land used for farming. In that context also, many barriers remain for women to equally access land.[232]

discussed in more depth under "Land and Resource Grabs" in the Drivers section.) Policy efforts to secure formal equality for land rights are therefore a major focus of women's movements in all regions surveyed for this report. In Latin America especially, these efforts are led by women involved in rural, peasant, and campesino movements who are advancing broader land reform agendas around communally held lands that are threatened by neoliberal and extractivist agendas.

Legal strategies are a critical tool to fight land grabbing or contest discriminatory inheritance laws. However, barriers including lack of access to counsel and lengthy delays in securing judgments hinder the ability of many women to obtain timely relief. Consequently, legal allies are using creative approaches such as directing more efforts into preparing communities to resist extractives and integrating media and communication strategies.

In addition to land reform efforts at the national level, women from landless peoples' movements are forming coalitions to create a global agenda on women's land rights. One example is the Feminist Land Platform launched in 2019.[233] This agenda, developed by 12 constituency-based organizations around the world, links feminist movements that lack a focus on land and territories with landless movements that may have a gender focus but do

The **Copperbelt Indigenous Peoples Land Rights Network (CIPLRN)** works with communities in Zambia's Copperbelt region that have been displaced by land grabs related to extractive industries. Women are disproportionately impacted because they maintain gardens and engage in small-scale agriculture to feed their families, and dislocation or pollution threatens their ability to grow and produce. CIPLRN uses litigation and advocacy, but because of the power differential between communities and extractive companies, their preferred tool is a traditional form of mediation. CIPLRN acknowledges that mediation secures modest victories for families. However, the impact is boosted through lobbying the government for land reform, rights-based education with communities affected, and media campaigns to expose land grabbing and pressure companies to stop.

In Pakistan, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is being built to facilitate the transfer of coal, resulting in the construction of motorways across privately held land. These lands are being seized, and people who were promised compensation have yet to receive it. Lawyers working for these communities are filing constitutional challenges and civil cases, but the delays are formidable and complicated by the lack of legal documents showing ownership. Feminist lawyers through networks such as the **Women in Law Project** and **Feminist Law Project** are advancing creative solutions focused on building awareness and advocacy around the need for localized laws and approaches. For example, some feminist lawyers are raising awareness of women's land rights in communities yet to be affected by land grabbing, in order to help design preventative strategies.

not ground their work in feminism. The coalition is generating research to identify gaps around women's insecure land tenure as well as analysis of barriers and response strategies. There are opportunities to increase support for these cross-movement coalitions linking work on gender and land at the local level to key discussions in global policy spaces.

CREATING AUTONOMOUS SYSTEMS

Across regions, women are creating new ways of living that reflect a value system counter to extractivism. These realities are grounded in harmony and healing with the natural world, intergenerational knowledge and learning, feminist values, community solidarity, sustainable development, and environmental stewardship. Women interviewed emphasized the importance of developing autonomous systems–including food, livelihoods, markets, media, health, and education – as critical to their survival. Through these practices, women use their ancestral knowledge to guard the environment while they work to realize alternative futures.

Women often build autonomous political, social, and economic systems as part of their community organizing work. Sometimes these systems are deliberate responses to external disruptions such as COVID-19 or environmental degradation. In

In many indigenous communities, women's response to the Covid-19 pandemic highlighted the power of women-led mutual aid efforts to address needs more efficiently than dominant systems. When the pandemic hit Honduras, Garifuna community-based organizations led by women stepped up to feed and provide assistance to their people faster than the government-led response. The organization **OFRANEH** established a safe and socially distanced version of the *olla communitaria*, an indigenous tradition of communal eating where people share food and resources. This operation was established within days in dozens of communities. The success soon led to a coordinated public health response with members sewing masks and educating others—especially vulnerable populations like the elderly - how to protect themselves, including using traditional herbs and medicines.

Photo: OFRANEH

ecoton
Ecological Observation and Wetlands Conservation

The **ECOTON Foundation** in East Java, Indonesia, supports women in fisher communities impacted by palm oil plantations. In Sambas Regency, West Kalimantan, pesticides from the plantations have polluted the water, not only jeopardizing clean drinking water but impacting fish supplies and harming villagers' health. ECOTON trained a women-led group called Kelompok Umak Peduli Air (KUMPAI, translated as "Women Water Keeper") to monitor water quality once or twice per month with user-friendly equipment. KUMPAI then trained other women in their villages. The information they collected was displayed on water-quality information boards in public spaces. In one incident where pesticide pollution led to severe skin irritation, women documented 300 cases to provide to government agencies. ECOTON also supports local NGOs such as GEMAWAN that are assisting women to explore alternative livelihoods that draw on their traditional knowledge of medicinal plants and fish, such as organic black rice paddy farming and fish farming.

Photo: Amandla/AIDC

The **Amadiba Crisis Committee** was formed in 2007 by villagers of Xolobeni in Pondoland on South Africa's Wild Coast. The women-led group organized villagers whose land was threatened by a titanium mine. Because they resisted the mine through the legal system (discussed above under "Legal and Advocacy Strategies"), the government labeled the villagers "anti-development" and refused to provide for their basic needs as part of a campaign to pressure them to relocate. Working together, the community built their own homes, repaired roads, and installed renewable energy sources such as solar panels. This collective work helped build unity in the community as the government and mining companies sought to divide them.

others, the systems emerge more organically from traditional community-based practices such as collaborative farming on community-held land. For women, autonomous community systems often emerge from and reinforce their knowledge of natural resources, traditional practices like seed-saving, or ancestral wisdom around harvesting forest products or medicinal plants. In most cases, the practice of creating or reviving community-based systems builds trust and collaboration that can be critical for community survival.

Because women are more likely to be impacted by land dislocation and environmental devastation resulting from extractivism, often their first priority is to develop new income streams to meet basic needs. Yet, women face greater difficulties than men in switching livelihoods due to cultural, language, and educational barriers. Economic empowerment activities, often designed and implemented with the help of allies, provide training in financial resilience, identifying new markets, and other skills. As women earn income for the family, they gain confidence in making decisions apart from male family members. They also build support structures with other women in the community that will help them sustain individual business enterprises or build the foundation for collective formations. In this way, economic empowerment activities designed by and with women in frontline communities may serve as an entry point for long-term organizing efforts, rights education, leadership development, and political formation.

> "Women feel valued when they succeed in selling their products. They feel empowered in the economic system, and they have some money to buy what they want without having to negotiate with men."
>
> —**ROSEMAYRE BEZERRA**
> *COMISSÃO PASTORAL DA TERRA, BRAZIL*

Women Advancing Toward Economic Development organizes Tanzanian women in areas impacted by development projects. The group provides income generation activities accompanied by trainings on GBV, confronting gender norms, accessing legal support, and building women's movements. After receiving one training, participants become trainers for other women in the community. Crediting the confidence they've received, several women have run for office and two have secured elected positions in the community.

Women's efforts to create autonomous systems are often under-recognized because they are small-scale and implemented locally. They are misunderstood as low-impact initiatives that benefit a few, rather than bold or radical proposals to reimagine society according to a different set of values. But it is often these small projects that lay the foundation for community resistance to extractivism. They can restore hope, reclaim values, and re-orient communities around a shared vision for a sustainable future. But community-based systems do not emerge overnight; they are nurtured over years through the hard work of community members, sometimes helped by long-term capacity building and technical support from trusted allies. There is an opportunity and need to strengthen support for these transformative efforts as complementary initiatives to short-term and site-specific strategies. Women-led efforts to create autonomous community systems can be a powerful prevention strategy to resist the myth that extractive industries provide the only path to development. They can also sustain communities engaged in extractive struggles with a vision of a better alternative future.

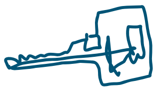
CooperAcción, an NGO working in mining-affected indigenous communities in Peru, runs a political training school for women that includes advocacy skills and technical education related to mining. The goal is to strengthen the capacities to understand and engage directly with mining industries rather than defer to male community leaders to negotiate. CooperAcción provides income generation activities that strengthen local economies and reduce reliance on the extractive sector. The combination of strategies allows women to build political power simultaneously with economic autonomy.

Photo: CooperAcción

Summary of Key Findings

This section analyzes trends, gaps, and opportunities that surfaced from the SAGE-led field research and sustained engagement with a wide array of groups, activists, and leaders. Rather than presenting conclusions or recommendations, SAGE offers these findings as entry points for civil society and the philanthropic community to support the next stages of work at the intersections of women, natural resources, and extractivism. Our expectation is that these findings will spark further dialogue and inquiry, and evolve over time as groups experiment and adapt to changing circumstances and emergent threats.

Operationalize a framework for addressing gendered structural violence



This research surfaces key drivers of structural violence and makes visible the many dimensions of gendered violence created and reinforced by extractivism. This layered analysis of drivers and impacts provides a more robust framework for understanding how extractivism operates to marginalize and exclude women as it also devastates communities and the environment.

Gendered structural violence in the context of extractivism is underexplored and poorly understood. The narrow conceptual focus on GBV obscures the full extent of political, economic, environmental, sociocultural, and spiritual violence that women in frontline communities experience when extractivism disrupts their relationship to natural resources. By contrast, a more comprehensive analysis of both the dimensions and drivers of gendered structural violence points towards strategies that address the root causes and hold the full range of state and nonstate actors to account. It also builds understanding and reveals points of connection across sectors, approaches, and expertise that must be harnessed to address the complexity of this problem.

This landscape analysis recognizes that extractivism must be understood as a neoliberal economic model grounded in the pattern and logic of colonialism. By deepening understanding of this model—and how it uses gendered and racialized violence to enable elites to accumulate wealth and power—civil society may be able to anticipate where gendered structural violence is likely to intensify and take measures to prevent or mitigate harm. For example, this research identifies emerging extractive threats, such as the increasing presence of organized crime as a key powerbroker, or rising concern that the growing renewable energy sector replicates harms posed by nonrenewable resource extraction. As such, the research can guide analysis in regions where extractivism is newer or its impacts less studied (including regions not covered by this report such as West Africa, Middle East and North Africa, the Pacific, and Central Asia). The analysis may also facilitate learning across contexts and movements, for example opening new opportunities for North-South and cross-movement alliances to challenge the dominance of a neoliberal model that drives both extractivism and climate change.

Catalyze and strengthen cross-movement alliances

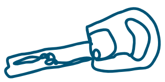
Because extractive power is so expansive and entrenched, confronting it requires new approaches to meet the urgency and magnitude of the problem. Frontline communities, social movements, and civil society allies need the time and space to build alliances that lay the groundwork for the development of a shared political agenda and strategies to build collective power. The moment calls for deeper investment in these cross-movement alliances.

Frontline communities face an uphill challenge against extractive power, which is growing ever more asymmetrical as governments continue to criminalize dissent and legal systems are leveraged to serve corporate and elite interests over the public interest. These conditions breed impunity, which escalates violence and elevates risks for women environmental defenders and their communities and movements. More effort is required to fight the erosion of democracy and rule of law, concentration of corporate power, closing of civic space, and rise of authoritarianism fueled by right-wing popular movements. These trends are both driving extractive violence and diminishing the tools available for communities to seek justice . Finding solutions to these multiple crises will require long-term political accompaniment to frontline communities by allies in multiple spheres including social movements, NGOs, media, and academic and research institutions.

Resistance strategies often target the most visible set of actors and the most urgent threats. Tackling extractive power will require a shift in orientation to support long-term preventative strategies that transform the conditions giving rise to violence alongside strategies designed to tackle imminent crises. Systemic approaches do not emerge overnight; they are nurtured over many years of cross-movement collaboration through organizing, political dialogues to build shared agendas, and the testing and refining of ideas in practice.

Over the past several decades, cross-movement coalitions and networks comprised of feminists and women's rights activists working with indigenous, rural, peasant and campesino movements; racial justice movements; human rights and corporate accountability groups; labor movements; and climate and environmental groups have articulated their visions into intersectional frameworks and agendas. These provide a clear roadmap for cross-movement work on extractives. With long-term support, the coalitions that produced them are well positioned to drive implementation in the next phase.

Address patriarchy from within to equip women and communities to withstand external threats



The SAGE landscape analysis exposes how patriarchy constrains women's roles in family and community, compounding the violence they experience from extractivism and limiting their ability to respond. In order to confront external threats, women need support, including long-term political accompaniment by trusted allies, to address power and patriarchy from within.

Much research about the impact of extractivism addresses the numerous and pressing harms directed against the community by external actors. But for women, the violence and discrimination triggered by extractivism often begins with patriarchal attitudes and practices within the family and community. There is a need for increased resources and support to help women identify connections between internal and external forms of patriarchal violence, from the ways that gender roles limit women's formal leadership in community to state targeting of women leading extractive struggles. Strengthening the foundational power-building strategies identified in this research—especially women-led community organizing and leadership building practices—will help women build the resilience, leadership, and structures they need to challenge patriarchal violence over the long-term and develop robust responses to extractivism.

With support from trusted allies, women in frontline communities have developed promising practices for simultaneously addressing internal and external threats. For example, collective care and protection strategies safeguard women leaders at imminent risk while educating families and communities about how women are differently targeted. These holistic practices respond to the ways power operates to divide and weaken communities' resolve to engage in struggles against extractivism. Civil society and social movement allies can learn from and amplify these collective approaches in their human rights work to ensure that strategies designed to protect women defenders do not have unintended consequences.

Leverage across three integrated sets of strategies: foundational, site-specific, and transformational

This research surfaced three categories of interdependent strategies–foundational power-building, site-specific, and transformational–led by women in frontline communities with the support of their allies. Starting with the understanding that strategies are interconnected and mutually reinforcing, funders and civil society can support women leaders and groups for the full spectrum of strategies this crisis demands.

FOUNDATIONAL POWER-BUILDING STRATEGIES

Foundational power-building strategies are the women-led organizing structures and leadership practices that not only encourage women's participation in extractive struggles but also sustain community-wide efforts over the long term. Frontline women and the allies that support them have long understood that tackling extractive power demands layered solutions, which address multiple hubs of power and operate on different time horizons. Women's organizing often includes healing internal community conflicts, improving security and wellbeing of defenders, and creating systems not reliant on extractive development. In this way, nurturing women-led organizing helps build and preserve unity that sustains communities in the face of persistent efforts to divide them. Women's power-building strategies are foundational to the success of other strategies and require support both prior to and throughout the duration of the struggle.

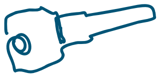
SITE-SPECIFIC STRATEGIES

Designed to prevent, stop, or delay a specific extractive project—are often siloed, led by diverse civil society actors and movements often working in loose coordination with one another and not necessarily centering the communities most impacted. The research identified opportunities to bring these groups together to better leverage responses for heightened impact, and to minimize harm that can happen when groups work independently without clearly communicating with frontline communities and women in particular. Although site-specific strategies often receive more support or attention than power-building or transformational strategies, SAGE's research shows it is the combination of all three sets of strategies that facilitates the strongest and most enduring resistance.

TRANSFORMATIONAL STRATEGIES

Transformational strategies include women's efforts to create autonomous political, social and economic systems that heal communities impacted by extractivism, provide livelihood support and income generation, and create alternatives to the extractive development model. These strategies sustain women themselves and their communities for the long-term struggle against extractives. Often overlooked as small-scale efforts to address localized problems, in practice these efforts tackle structures and root causes that lead to gendered violence, such as lack of access to natural resources, polluted land, and diminished livelihoods. These practices deserve greater recognition and support as ways to counter threats and build towards futures not reliant on extractive activity.

Proactively identify, engage and support women's organizing structures



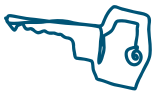
Women's organizing is often informal and less visible than male-led efforts. Consequently, civil society and movement allies have a heightened responsibility to identify where women's leadership resides and find entry points for engaging with their practices and forms of organizing. Challenging gendered structural violence in the context of extractivism requires long-term, sustained support for women's leadership.

Women's leadership often looks different from that of male-led community organizations or social movement structures. Depending on context, the language women use to describe their formations or values may not fully reflect their approach. For example, some may not draw attention to the fact that they are women-led or grounded in a feminist analysis because doing so can place them further at risk of violence or community ostracization. In some contexts, identifying as a feminist, environmentalist, or women's rights defender can trigger new threats to safety and credibility. Allies supporting frontline women's groups and leaders can deepen trust by educating themselves about the myriad constraints and pressures women face, and respecting however they choose to identify.

The SAGE research highlights some allies who have built longstanding, trust-based relationships with women leaders and groups. These allies provide a model of long-term accompaniment with several critical components: taking time to understand the context and constraints women face, responding to requests for support with agility and flexibility, supporting women to organize at their own pace and in formations that work best for them, deferring to women's priorities rather than pressing their own agendas, and transparently sharing knowledge and information. These relationships lead to more holistic and rigorous approaches that leverage different knowledge bases. More can be done to share this rich body of stories, strategies, and analysis both horizontally (among women facing extractive struggles across contexts), and vertically (across movements and civil society sectors approaching this work from differing vantage points).

Another critical role allies play is facilitating connections to power and resources. Specifically, they can open doors to policy spaces for frontline women to advance alternative agendas, connect to media and communications platforms to expand narratives of their experiences, and link to decision-makers who are often difficult to access. Allies can connect women leaders and groups to critical forms of support, analysis, or skills to complement community-led strategies. Examples include rapid response funding to protect women defenders and their families or brokering connections to lawyers' networks to provide criminal defense or assistance in securing land title. Trusted allies can also help women facilitate difficult community conversations about a sudden influx of attention or resources, or defuse tensions around women's leadership structures that male leaders perceive as divisive.

Nurture and scale autonomous, women-led community systems of support



In all regions, women in frontline communities are leading efforts to create autonomous community systems for resource management, sustainable livelihoods, media production, and more. Strengthening these long-term transformative efforts will help sustain women's organizing and leadership practices while benefiting entire communities fighting for an extractive-free future.

Women's efforts to create autonomous economic, political, or social systems are often misunderstood as low-impact initiatives that benefit a few instead of radical proposals to reimagine society according to a different set of values. But it is often these small projects that lay the foundation for community resistance to extractivism and sustain communities over the long-term. They can restore hope, reclaim values, and reorient communities around a shared vision for a sustainable future. Funders and civil society allies can help reinforce the role of women as agents of change—leaders of organizations, communities, and movements whose bold visions and pragmatic solutions disrupt the myth of extractivism as the only path towards development.

Community-based systems do not emerge overnight; they are nurtured through years of community members' hard work, often assisted by allies. Documenting and disseminating the ways women are developing autonomous systems—from creating mutual aid to using ancestral knowledge for agroecology—can make visible women's contributions to community wellbeing in the present while demonstrating their capacity for future leadership.

These processes need sustained support to allow women the space and time to develop proposals on their own, work collaboratively with others to test and share ideas, and adjust to changing circumstances and challenges.

Methodology

WRITING AND EDITING TEAM

Research guided and supervised by: Daria Caliguire

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Contributors to the draft: Kris Genovese and Lisa VeneKlasen

Editors: Daria Caliguire and Kris Genovese

Project support and data management: Bela Garces

Copy Editor: Laura Brahm

PRODUCTION TEAM

Translator: Carlota Fluxá

Design: HOUSEOFCAKES

Illustrations: Ian Sklarsky

RESEARCH TEAM

SAGE engaged a team of seven consultants with diverse regional and thematic expertise to co-design the research process and conduct semi-structured interviews with stakeholders from a cross-section of regions and fields. Research was guided by Daria Caliguire, Director of the SAGE Fund, and coordinated by Katrina Anderson, Gender Advisor to the SAGE Fund.

Gretchen Gordon
Regions: Global, Latin America
Thematic: human rights, economic globalization, development, development finance, corporate accountability, and indigenous rights.

Sian Morgan
Regions: Southern and East Africa
Thematic: GBV, land rights for women and indigenous communities, and climate justice.

Beatriz Olivera
Regions: Mexico and South America
Thematic: extractivism from a gender perspective, climate justice, natural resources, and public policy.

Amiera Sawas
Regions: South Asia, East Africa *Thematic*: climate justice, development, land rights, gender and social norms, violence against women and girls, girls' rights

Chanda Thapa
Regions: South Asia, Southeast Asia
Thematic: Indigenous peoples' rights, women's rights, environmental rights, natural resources, and climate justice

Cecilia Toledo
Regions: Mesoamerica
Thematic: violence against women and girls, gender and public policy

Lisa VeneKlasen
Regions: Mesoamerica; East, West, and Southern Africa; Southeast Asia
Thematic: feminist cross-movement strategies, popular education, women's rights, economic justice, land rights, climate justice, extractivism from a gender perspective.

RESEARCH PROCESS

From January to June 2021, consultants generated the following source material for the report:

- 96 qualitative interviews with members of civil society and women in frontline communities;
- 2 focus groups, one with Indigenous women's rights activists in Mesoamerica and another with artisanal and small-scale women miners in Zimbabwe;
- Literature review of civil society documentation and publications, as well as academic literature on gender and extractives;
- Written analysis of trends, accompanied by examples and case studies, for each region surveyed in this report.

Mindful of the security risk to interviewees in particularly dangerous contexts, the research team adhered to the principle of continuous consent. All interviewees received information about how the content from the interviews would be used. They consented to each use of their data (such as name, affiliation, and country) could opt out at any time.

REVIEW PROCESS

After an initial draft was completed, SAGE conducted an extensive review process to seek feedback from the consultant team, external reviewers recommended by the researchers, and research participants. The five external reviewers who commented on this report are:

Dr. Natesan Fatima Burnad
Founder and Executive Director, Society for Rural Education and Development, India

Dr. Chantelle Moyo
South African Research Chair in Cities, Law and Environmental Sustainability, North-West University (Potchefstroom), South Africa

María Patricia Ardón Quezada
Mesoamerica Regional Director, JASS Mesoamerica, Guatemala

Mary Jane Real
Independent Consultant, Philippines

Allison Wright
Director, Environmental Defenders Collaborative, U.S.A.

The report analysis and key findings were generated in workshops with consultants and in conversations with external reviewers, drafted by the SAGE team, and reviewed again by both consultants and reviewers. Accordingly, the findings are a synthesis of perspectives and do not necessarily reflect the views of individual consultants, interviewees, or reviewers. Following the external review process in March 2022, a draft was circulated in Spanish and English to all interviewees for a final review of the content and confirmation of consent to use their data.

Research Participants

The SAGE research team conducted interviews with nearly 100 people working in diverse contexts, sectors, and levels of the field. This list includes the interviewees who consented to be included with their name and/or organizational affiliation.

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