

Leveling the Playing Field for Women in the Mining Sector

The head of Nangarhar's provincial directorate, Nasratullah Akrami, stated, 'Fifty per cent of the population is deprived of the right to work in the mining sector because of the perception that mining is a purely male profession. At last, we have a workshop, which will help increase awareness and promote female workers in the sector.'

At present, there are no women employed amongst the 45 staff in the provincial directorate. Women face educational limitations, which reinforces the misconception that they do not belong in professional roles. This is especially true in the mining sector, which is generally male-dominated and tends to overlook gender equality at the workplace. At the same time, women do not have the same opportunities and access to resources as men.

To promote female participation in the sector, continuous awareness building amongst administrations, key industry stakeholders, educational institutions and the public is needed. This will help increase gender balance in the mining industry, enable women to realise their professional potential and contribute to the national economy.

A participant said, 'I totally believe that having female staff in the mining sector – whether it's in administrative roles or conducting geological surveys, community assessments and sample analyses – will bring a very positive impact in the sector's development. We fully trust their quality of work.'

Workshop attendees addressed topics such as suitable roles for women in the sector, the importance of women's empowerment and participation in the sector, and the role of gender in the mining law and the Afghan constitution. Furthermore, participants explored the challenges of the rural mining industry on women in terms of access to healthcare and family relocation.

Participants also considered the sources of organisational discrimination, gender equity and equality in a working environment, communication and mutual respect, gender integration in ministerial policies and the role of women in the mining sector's future development. It was noted that the government is aiming to have 30 per cent female employment in its governmental structures.

Since 2015, the Afghan-German Cooperation has supported around 20 gender-related workshops for the mining sector in Kabul as well as Herat, Balkh, Parwan, Badakhshan and Kandahar provinces. The sector has already seen an overall improvement from 10 per cent female employment to 14 per cent.

The programme Promoting Good Governance in the Extractive Sector in Afghanistan is implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH on behalf of the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). To fully leverage the Afghan mining sector's potential, the programme aims at increasing state revenues, promoting investment and fighting corruption in the sector. The project trains stakeholders to ensure that mining activities are carried out transparently and according to law as well as international health and environmental standards. Among other activities, the project has organised 21 training courses on topics such as mine planning, mining economics and mining supervision for more than 310 mining inspectors and other employees at the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum (MoMP) and provincial authorities since 2013.

Teaser text:

Jalalabad, Nangarhar, 4th September 2019 – Twenty staff members of the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum's (MoMP) Nangarhar provincial directorate participated in a three-day workshop in Jalalabad. The MoMP conducted the workshop to promote an understanding of gender equality. The attendees discussed gender issues in the mining sector, the role of gender in the future of the mining sector, and women's rights. The Afghan-German Cooperation supported the event.

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