

# **'Too little too late'**

## **Women's participation in the Misima mining project**

**Dr Julia Byford  
Consultant**

### **Introduction**

This paper explores the challenges of incorporating women's voices in the mining process on Misima Island PNG. It is based on an extended period of sixteen months anthropological fieldwork in 1990 and 1991 when I was concerned primarily with women's health and childbirth. More notably in 2000 on behalf of Oxfam Community Aid Abroad I spent three weeks investigating the community perceptions of the impact of the mine. In addition to these visits I have returned to Misima on several occasions as a member of the Sustainable Planning Advisory Committee (SPAC), an initiative of Misima Mines Limited (MML). This paper draws on my final report to Oxfam Community Aid Abroad (Byford 2001).

The different perceptions of Misiman women and the mining company about how to include women will be discussed and the results in terms of harm/benefit and exclusion/participation. Highlighting some of the difficulties experienced by Misiman women may assist in creating more inclusive and positive experiences for other women affected by mining developments.

The concept of 'community' needs to be clarified at the outset. A 'community' is often viewed as a harmonious, internally cohesive collective although this is rarely the case as local contexts are complex, diverse and dynamic. Misima is no exception and there are many divisions and differences within the communities, including amongst various women's organisations and groups.

In order to protect the identity of individuals who contributed to the research people are not named in this paper.

### ***Misima Island***

Misima Island is situated in the Louisiade Archipelago in Milne Bay Province, Papua New Guinea. The island is approximately forty kilometres long, east to west, and ten kilometres north to south at the widest point. A steep mountain range runs down the length of the island. There is a road at the eastern end of the island that joins the mine to the township of Bwagaoia and the villages between Bwagaoia and Liak on the northern side of the island.

The population on the island is approximately 14,000 and the twenty or so villages are situated on the coast. Geographical constraints mean that people living at the western end of the island are more isolated from the eastern end of the island where the township and mine are located. This has meant that they had less opportunity for employment and thus less cash has flowed into their communities. Whilst this has

created some difficulties it has also meant that they were less affected by many of the negative impacts of the mine.

The main township of Bwagaoia is located at the eastern tip of the island and is the centre for the District Administration of the Samurai-Murua district. Along with local and district government offices the township has a residential area, a guest house, a bakery, several trade stores, several tea shops (fast food outlets), a fuel outlet, two second-hand clothing shops, the district hospital, community and high schools.

The mineral deposit is located five kilometres north west of Bwagaoia and surfaces near the top of a hill four hundred metres above sea level. Production in this open pit mine began in 1989 and after a 14-year mine life, MML will soon commence the process of dismantling the mine.

### *Misima society*

Misiman society is divided into clans and membership of clans is matrilineal. Women enjoy a relatively high status as they are central to land ownership and food production. Land is central to the life and well being of the Misiman community. The description of what land means in Melanesian culture and thus to the people of Misima was outlined by the Misima Resource Owners Association (MROA);

Land is our life. Land is our physical life, food and sustenance. Land is our social life; it is marriage, status, security, and politics, in fact it is our world. (Misima Resource Owners Association 1994:1)

Misiman people are subsistence farmers. They cultivate their staple food (yams) and other starchy root vegetables in gardens tended by the women. Some gardens are planted with mixed crops including taro, sweet potato, tapioca, bananas, pawpaw, pumpkin, pineapple, *abika*, watermelon, sugarcane and snake beans. Special gardens for planned mortuary feasts are exclusively planted with yams (*Dioscorea esculenta*). They slash-and-burn the jungle to clear land for gardens. After harvesting the year's crops the cleared land is left fallow and allowed to regenerate for some years until the land is needed for gardens once more. Along with the vegetable crops Misimans rely on food trees such as breadfruit and nut trees to supplement their diet. Traditionally male and female subsistence work is viewed as complementary.

### *Gold mining on Misima*

Misima Island is no stranger to gold mining. Gold mining reached its peak in 1889-90 when more than 400 Europeans and 1,200 Papuans were working on gold fields in Misima and Sudest Islands (Nelson 1976).

However past gold mining operations were smaller and mostly confined to alluvial gold mining methods that have less impact on the environment and the community than the present open pit operations. Any underground mining that did occur was short lived due to tough underground conditions and did not create the disturbance of the current open cut mine. As suggested by the (now former) Landowners' Association:

Although the Misima people were acquainted with small-scale gold mining operations from the past, we had very little experience with large-scale mining

operation in order to understand the changes that were to come to our island. (Misima Resource Owners Association 1994: 2)

Whether or not people wanted a large-scale mining venture to take place on the island they had little say in the matter as one Misiman told me;

Even as landowners we had no power to stop the mining. They [the government] told us that we only owned the earth down to six feet and under that it was state land.

In some places 'six feet under' is also the depth to bury someone and in many ways a particular way of life has been buried by this mining operation. This is not to suggest a total resistance on the part of every, or indeed any, Misiman to the mining operation or that they have not benefited. Indeed as noted by the anthropologist involved in conducting the Social Impact Study (SIS), there was no voiced opposition to the mine at the time of the study (personal communication Macintyre, March 2001). Generally Misimans were enthusiastic about the mining project as it would provide employment, business development opportunities and improve the quality and standard of living. My investigations some ten years after mining operations had begun revealed that the lived experience of this venture has tempered the early enthusiasm.

Whilst there have been clear winners, most notably landowners in receipt of royalties and compensation payments and the flow-ons from this, there are many more losers. It is pertinent to keep in mind that the *majority* of Misimans are not owners of land affected by the mine, and as such are not entitled to royalties or compensation. The main focus of MML has been, and continues to be, on the areas most affected by its operations, namely the villages of Narian and Gaibobo. People from these villages are over represented on committees relating to mining issues, as employees in the mining company and have received more assistance in small business ventures. The rest of the community resents this, asserting that the overall impact has been just as great on them and that, unlike the Narian and Gaibobo communities, they have not received any compensation. Whilst they may have enjoyed indirect benefits they have no negotiating platform with MML and rely on the goodwill of the company for various goods and services. This large group of Misimans feels powerless to affect the course of events that seem determined, either directly or indirectly, by the mine.

### *Changes for Misiman women*

Historically, Misiman women have held a complementary role to men in subsistence farming, Misima's major source of food production. Men were responsible for the clearing of land for gardens, which were then developed and managed by women. This role gave women control over yam production and distribution, which involves prestigious exchanges enabling women to assert their high status independently of men. This had already started to change before the advent of the mine as rice entered the prestige economy as a substitute for yams. While yams remain essential and are the preferred presentations, the use of bags of rice as prestige gifts means that, as wage-earners, men now had access to a sphere of exchange that was formerly exclusively female. The erosion of women's status was exacerbated by the mining project when there was a dramatic increase in the number of wage earning men.

The introduction of large scale gold mining by Placer Dome, operated by Misima Mining Limited, in 1989 also fundamentally altered women's relationship with the land, undermining their status, independence and role within the community. In

addition, social values have rapidly changed since 1989, facilitating the breakdown of traditional social structures and the growth of a prominent generation gap, both of which negatively impact on women.

### *The differential impact of mining on women*

As with mining companies throughout PNG the injection of large amounts of cash and rapid social change associated with mine development widens the gap between the 'haves' and 'have-nots' and leads to a decline in women's economic and social status relative to that of men.

The attached summaries of community perceptions (Attachment A) provide insight into how mining has effected the Misiman community. These summaries reveal that although there are perceived benefits, overall mining has had a profound negative impact on women in Misima. The adverse impacts of mining on women in other places in PNG as suggested by Bonnell (1998:2) are shared by women of Misima and include:

- Increased workload due to male absenteeism
- Increased workload due to male wage earners neglecting traditional tasks
- Increase in divorce which has led to abandoned wives and children
- Increase in prostitution
- Increase in domestic violence, or wife bashing as it is known on Misima, as a result of alcohol abuse
- Increase in rape
- Increase in unmarried mothers

### **To what extent did women feel their voices and concerns were heard and properly expressed by those who represented the communities to the company?**

Misiman women have a relatively prominent role in public life, are prominent in village affairs and women's groups continue to be an active part of every community. However they are reluctant to take on any public government office or to push for inclusion in groups even though the decisions of these groups may affect them as the following quote, about their exclusion from negotiations about landownership, reveals.

The Women's Association was catering for the men at the meetings but was never asked to be part of the group.

In village-based community affairs women have ways of negotiating that are quite effective. In church based affairs once more their voices are strong and effective. However in dealing with the issues of mining they have been less effective and their concerns about family and community stability have been lost among the more dominant concerns of men - namely power, prestige and economic gain.

As previously mentioned, Misima society is a matrilineal society with land inherited through women although authority over some land rests with senior men. Despite this negotiation about land ownership, compensation payments and royalties associated with the mining project have been channelled through men. Women were excluded from this process but have been greatly affected by it.

The MOA [Memorandum of Agreement] has been a stumbling block from the beginning. The Agreement was written up by men in Australia and Moresby, not by us. Landowner representatives just picked [randomly] without proper respect for lines of authority. Women are the landowners as this is a matrilineal society but the compensation money and the royalties all go to men and no women see that money.

Genealogy studies and *tumbuna* stories undertaken in 1999 (10 years *after* mining began) by a team comprising government, MML, and community representatives in an attempt to settle ongoing land disputes have reinforced accounts some women gave of the random nature of arriving at land boundaries. Women, who are joint owners of land, rightly feel they should have been included in discussions and negotiations about land. MMLs belief that it was appropriate to negotiate land ownership compensation with men exemplified a failure on their part to appreciate and value the central importance of women in land ownership.

How well individuals or groups represent the concerns of the community they serve is never easy to assess. In this case it appears that women's concerns were represented to MML either by community representatives (predominantly men) or through the work of Macintyre and Gerritsen in the Social Impact Study which was completed before mining commenced. Relatively few of the concerns of women have been taken into account nor have they been the focus of sustained efforts by MML or government agencies. Moreover, after the information gathering and consultation for the initial SIS study women's views were not as effectively solicited.

### **To what extent did the company recognise the particular impacts it was having on women, and what specific measures did they use to overcome this?**

The mine site, and until the last few years of operation all mining personnel, is located some kilometres from the township of Bwagaoia and, not unusually, is fenced off and has security guards at the entrance. These barriers presented enormous difficulty for community representatives, including women, in accessing MML personnel and characterise the relationship between MML and Misiman women.

From the outset MML was aware that its operations were going to impact on women. The initial response was to employ a limited number of women in secretarial, administrative, clerical and cleaning work. The company also responded by supporting local women's groups and businesses and ensuring women were represented on committees such as village liaison groups and the SIS Status Review Committee. Women's presence on the SIS Status Review Committee had little impact for two main reasons. First MML left the social monitoring to its own community affairs staff rather than culturally sensitive, impartial third parties; and second rather than this committee facilitating a two-way dialogue, it appears it was more a forum for MML to showcase its achievement. As noted by Filer,

[T]he reports to DEC [Department of Environment and Conservation] consisted primarily of a record of the benefits which the company had provided to the local community, and the minutes of meetings between the authors and various community representatives. (Filer 1998:4)

These mechanisms were not conducive to women's participation beyond their attendance at meetings because they failed to take into account the cultural issues which precluded or discouraged women from participating. Having a position on a

committee did not mean that women felt able to speak, be heard or to affect outcomes. There were many reasons why Misima women did not feel able to participate and these are discussed later in this paper. The result was that women may have been present at committee meetings but this did not equate to their participation. Also, participation is only as inclusive as those who are driving the process choose it to be, or as those involved demand it to be. In many cases, Misiman women felt that their active participation was not being sought.

Over the life of the mining venture MML has responded in various ways to women's concerns with minimal successes. MML sees the lack of capacity in various women's organisations as a major hindrance for these organisations in getting better assistance, be it from MML, government agencies or NGOs. Part of the difficulty for the women is knowing how to work with these various agencies. The issue of management capacity of community and government organisations is one of the greatest challenges for projects in PNG and can affect a company's work at local, district, provincial and national levels. There is an urgent need for institutional strengthening and capacity building to be addressed in collaboration with key stakeholders by any company concerned with the social and economic impacts of mining operations. In terms of working with the mine the following quote encapsulates the community perception of how this is best achieved.

If you know how to work with the mine, then they help you really easily. It's like this, if you want the mine to help you, you must first show them you are doing something and then you can ask for their help. You ask someone at the mine and then write a letter asking for help and you have to say what you have done and what you want the mine to do. When they have helped you must write to them straight away and thank them for their support. If you don't do these things they won't help you easily.

This insight accurately reflects MMLs own stated position. They say they are very happy to assist in community activities and have supported many such activities. However the requirement of a letter of request is not something that all sections of the community feel confident to do. The reluctance of the women to write business letters is partly that they have little experience or confidence in doing so and it is an unfamiliar way of dealing with people. Moreover they cannot understand why verbally requesting assistance from the Women's Officer does not count as a formal request. The insistence of the mine that people write an official letter is perceived to be pedantic and did not improve MMLs relationship with women.

The first time women felt able to connect with the mining company in any meaningful way was in 1997, eight years after the operation began, when MML set up an office in the township of Bwagaoia which provided much easier and less daunting access to its space and personnel. The appointment of a women's officer in 1998 also increased the possibility for women to engage with mining personnel but would have been more beneficial had the appointment been made earlier.

Until the appointment of the Women's Officer in 1998, doing business with the mine meant doing business with the male employees and women found it difficult to approach these men, particularly non-Misiman men. The appointment of the Women's Officer was seen as an acknowledgment of the inadequacies of MMLs previous efforts and was welcomed by Misiman women as positive move by MML.

However many women think it was too little too late as indicated by the following quote.

The women's officer came about after a visit by Meg Taylor with our LWA [Louisiane Women's Association] groups. It has been a good thing but should have happened earlier and worked closely with the women's association and other groups from the beginning.

Although there were substantial efforts on the part of MMLs business development officer to assist the Women's Association with the management of their guest house this was not without problems – some problems related to the internal structure and management of the Women's Association and some related to the relationship between the Women's Association and the mine.

In summary it appears that the company did not fully consider how it might go about establishing a good working relationship with Misiman women. Moreover establishing an effective and inclusive relationship with women was not a central concern of mining management.

## **Discussion**

### *Cultural context*

In order to understand how some of the problems have come about it is crucial to understand the social rules of communication in Misiman society. These rules of communication determine the way Misimans relate to one another as well as how they relate to people in the broader community including local, district and provincial government personnel and senior mine employees.

Their colonial and missionary past means that all Europeans are treated with deference regardless of their position or any other attribute (negative or positive) the particular European may have. From childhood, Misimans are taught to respect other human beings and this respect is expressed by adherence to certain etiquette requirements, word taboos and avoidance customs. Although there are always exceptions to the rule, consensus is what Misimans strive for and the process of achieving this is another means of showing respect. At meetings any person who wants to contribute must be allowed the opportunity to speak. Opinions will be offered in a respectful manner and generally prefaced with expressed admiration for the opposite point of view.

Respect for a person is exemplified in an attitude of obedience to authority, and deference for the position that person holds, whether elected or appointed. Even in situations where the authority vested in an individual is being abused or neglected it is offensive to attempt to take over anyone else's job or usurp their authority.

To confront someone in a position of authority shows disrespect for the person, the position and the authority that goes with it. Rather than confronting someone directly Misimans take a more subtle approach by going through other people, knowing that the information will eventually get back to the person for whom it is intended. Confronting people directly may generate anger, an emotion that is seen as personally disrespectful and socially disruptive. Anger is not conducive to a harmonious society

and is avoided. The fear of witchcraft or sorcery is another powerful sanction that militates against personal confrontations. As most sicknesses, accidents and deaths are attributed to witchcraft and sorcery everyone has a vested interest in the maintenance of harmonious relationships.

The election of a leader or representative rarely depends on an objective weighing of respective merits or an estimation of the abilities best suited for the position. Considerations such as educational standard, fluency in English, an ability to deal with Europeans and government officials are often given priority. A person may be elected on these grounds rather than the perception that the person would make a good representative.

### *Ramifications of communication rules*

For Misiman women, and indeed some Misiman men, these customs made it difficult to engage in any meaningful way with expatriate company personnel. The language and style of communication of expatriate mining personnel were influenced by their own culture as well as the language and culture of the mining company. This demonstrates the need for companies to understand and respond to the cultural context in which they operate. This is not an easy task not least because there will inevitably be changes resulting from the dynamic interaction of communities with the mining process. In the case of Misima the Social Impact Study identified social and cultural issues that needed to be taken into account by MML. In response to this MML developed and conducted formal induction programs for new expatriate employees to make them aware of proper conduct, with the central concept being that they were guests of the Misiman people and had to respect their culture and customs. Despite intentions to the contrary, the company failed to fully grasp the ramifications of the cultural context in which they were operating and was often unwittingly disrespectful of the culture.

### *Gender equity*

Clearly gender *inequity* contributed to the situation whereby women were not heard, and no concerted or sustained effort made to address their concerns. In this instance gender inequity is not confined to the mining company but found within the Misiman community and within government agencies that also failed to represent the interests and concerns of women, thus compounding the discrimination against them.

In the absence of strategies addressing issues of gender equity in the broader community at local, district and provincial levels, it is not surprising that a mining company makes little progress in this area. Furthermore as Macintyre (2002:29) suggests one has to question the right of a mining company to impose a system of political representation that insists on female participation in decision making that is alien or 'against custom'. I agree with Macintyre that mining companies already have a great deal of control of people's lives and that we must pressure governments to protect the rights of all citizens. However, there is still a strong case for encouraging mining companies to pursue gender equality especially if we think of it in the broader context of human rights. In this context it is incumbent on companies to develop and implement strategies that protect the rights of women and pursue gender equality. Indeed there is a need to promote understanding of gender issues within mining companies.



But there are other issues involved that may have assisted MML to ameliorate some of the negative impacts on women and to increase their participation in the mining process.

### *Participatory development*

Despite MMLs stated commitment to ‘comprehensive involvement of all stakeholders in mine operations and sustainability planning’ (Placer Dome Asia Pacific 1999:4) and its efforts to achieve this, the company has had limited success in fulfilling its commitment. As Ballard notes ‘the rhetoric of participation is considerably more advanced than its implementation in the mining relationship’ (Ballard nd). Participatory development initiatives in general and MMLs in particular have not always dealt well with the complexity of community differences, including age, economic status, socio-cultural issues and in particular gender issues. There is often only a minimal consideration of gender issues and inadequate involvement of women who are often marginalised. Again and again women were excluded from meetings by factors like time and place of meeting, composition of groups and conventions that only men speak in public. While a handful of women may sometimes be consulted, rarely does a thorough understanding of the complexity of gender relations help structure the process, the analysis and any resulting community plans. This situation has undermined the relationship between MML and the women of Misima.

The cutting edge of current development practice can be described in terms of participation, community driven action and empowerment. The broad aim of participatory development is to increase the involvement of socially and economically marginalised people in decision making over their own lives. The assumption is that participatory approaches empower local people with the skills and confidence to analyse their situation, reach consensus, make decisions and take action, so as to improve their circumstances. The ultimate goal is more equitable and sustainable development.

Expectations that social change can be accomplished speedily often compromise the empowering potential of participatory development. As MML is aware, it takes time for people and groups to decide what they want to see changed, and why, and then to act. It is difficult to anticipate which conflicts such processes of change may provoke or reveal. Participatory development is also compromised when it is used as a tool for mobilisation without a clear strategy for negotiating conflicting interests that arise between participants, and between participants and development agencies. This seems to characterise some of the efforts of MML.

Effective work that utilises participatory development principles is challenging, time consuming and labour intensive but Placer Dome have amply demonstrated their commitment to participatory development in the Misima mining project and need only to be encouraged to increase their understanding and application of this approach. A better participatory development approach by MML in partnership with the Misiman community would have undoubtedly contributed the most to improve the interaction between the company and the community and to improve the situation for women. As previously stated MML did make considerable efforts and any recommendations and strategies developed to increase the effective participation of women should be directed not just to the mining company but also to the relevant state agencies and community organisations.

Misiman women do not blame MML entirely for their voices not being heard as effectively as they might have been. Male dominance within the mining company, the local and national governments and of the Misimans representing the community in dealings with the mine all contributed to effectively deny women their rights as landowners in this matrilineal society and to have their voices heard on a range of important issues.

## **Concluding comments**

One way of increasing women's effective participation is for *all* stakeholders to engage with three major barriers identified in this paper – cultural context, gender equity and participatory development. The mining sector together with other key players such as government, non-government organisations, local communities and women's organisations, need to address the issues of gender equity in order to increase the effective participation of women and decrease the negative impacts on them. Equitable participatory development requires explicit attention to gender relations and, as suggested by Guijt and Shah (1998:13), needs to be grounded in an understanding of the 'dynamics of power, the nature of conflicts and conflict resolution, and the process of social change'.

Participation is not just the mechanical act of being invited to take part in discussions. Rather participation must be developed through a process of mutual respect; a genuine commitment to include *all* stakeholders and a willingness to work out how this can be best achieved. Mining companies, government agencies, NGOs and local communities need to work together to ensure that women have a meaningful place in the process, a place where women are able to speak, to be heard and to affect the outcomes.

## References

- Ballard, C 1998 Roles for the state and mining communities in Indonesia and Papua New Guinea, unpublished paper
- Bonnell, S 1998 Impact of mining on women, in conference proceedings from the Mining and the community conference for Asian and Pacific nations, Madang, Papua New Guinea
- Byford, J 2001 One day rich: community perceptions of the impact of the Placer Dome gold mine, Misima Island, Papua New Guinea, Report commissioned by Oxfam/CAA
- Filer, C 1998 Social monitoring program and the management of social risk in PNG, in conference proceedings from the Mining and the community conference for Asian and Pacific nations, Madang, Papua New Guinea
- Gerritsen, R and Macintyre, M 1986 Social impact study of the Misima gold mine (Volume 1) Institute of Applied Social and Economic Research, Boroko
- Guijt, I and Shah, M.K 1998 The myth of community: gender issues in participatory development, Intermediate Technology Publications, London
- Macintyre, M 2002 Women and mining projects in Papua New Guinea: problems of consultation, representation and women's rights as citizens in Tunnel vision: women, mining and communities, Macdonald, I and Rowland, C (Eds), Oxfam Community Aid Abroad, Melbourne, Australia
- Misima Resource Owners Association 1994 Papua New Guinea landowners' concerns in resource projects: a landowners perspective, unpublished paper presented to PNG mining and petroleum conference, Sydney, Australia
- Nelson, H 1976 Black, white and gold: gold mining in Papua New Guinea, 1878-1930, Australian National University Press, Canberra
- Placer Dome Asia Pacific 1999 Misima Mines 1999 sustainability report: caring for the future

### **Community perceptions of the impact of Misima Mining Project**

The following summaries give an overview of the perception of people on Misima about the environemntal, economic and socio-cultural impacts of the mine and allow us to see the various ways that the mining operation affects the lives of everybody in the community.

Despite acknowledgment of the many benefits related to mining on Misima, local communities are distressed by the negative social, cultural, and environmental consequences. Although many of these can be attributed to the presence and operation of the mine it must be noted that the some are the result of the provincial and national governments failure to fulfil their respective responsibilities.

*Summary of the positive and negative perceptions of Misimans about the impact of the mine*

**Environmental issues**

Negative community perceptions	Positive community perceptions	Concerns specifically of women
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pressure on land for food gardens because of additional people on the island</li> <li>• Loss of food trees because of increased clearing for food gardens</li> <li>• Shortage of building materials for houses because of increased clearing of bush</li> <li>• Decreasing in soil fertility because of shorter fallow periods</li> <li>• Pressure on land because of need for larger gardens to produce same yield</li> <li>• African snail devastating food crops</li> <li>• Poor air quality because of burning of rubbish, chemicals and dust</li> <li>• Noise pollution from trucks</li> <li>• Pollution of sea and fresh water</li> <li>• Lower water levels affecting fish breeding</li> <li>• Pollution of fish</li> <li>• Reduction in numbers of fish</li> <li>• Poorer town water supply</li> </ul>	<p>Nil</p>	<p><i>Negative</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pollution of sea water in some areas so that women can not use it after giving</li> </ul> <p><i>Positive</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reticulated water to villages</li> </ul>

## Economic issues

Negative community perceptions	Positive community perceptions	Concerns specifically of women
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cash causing a breakdown in socio-cultural norms</li> <li>• Cash creating disruption to the communities</li> <li>• Less attention to cash crops</li> <li>• Failure of business ventures</li> <li>• Limited promotional opportunities for Misimans employed by MML</li> <li>• Future employment opportunities restricted because of restricted licences</li> <li>• Less opportunities offered to Misimans in comparison with other mining ventures</li> <li>• Inferior materials used in work done by MML in the communities</li> <li>• Long term consequences for the inadequate and unsatisfactory process for establishing landownership</li> <li>• Dividing the community between the haves and the have nots</li> <li>• Inadequate training and development to handle large resource transfers</li> <li>• Inadequate landowner organisation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to cash</li> <li>• Improved business opportunities for Misimans</li> <li>• Assistance from MML in some business matters</li> <li>• Increase in job skills</li> <li>• Small business training</li> <li>• More goods and services to buy</li> <li>• More fundraising possibilities for communities</li> <li>• Standard of clothing improved</li> <li>• More boats, particularly good for medical emergencies</li> <li>• Infrastructure and utility improvements – phones in schools, roads at the eastern end of the island, water supply to each village, limited electrification to some houses</li> <li>• MML has sponsored or assisted with local infrastructure development such as teachers houses and new classrooms</li> </ul>	<p><i>Positive</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More money from marketing because of increased demand for local food</li> <li>• Assistance from MML with some women's business ventures</li> <li>• Opportunities for small business training</li> <li>• Improved roads and more boats gives women means to transport goods to market</li> <li>• Hospital improvements positive</li> </ul> <p><i>Negative</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less access to money than men</li> <li>• Fewer business opportunities</li> <li>• Small business training conducted in English not Misiman</li> <li>• 'No development, just buildings'</li> </ul>

## Socio-cultural issues

Negative community perceptions	Positive community perceptions	Concerns specifically of women
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Severe disruption to socio-cultural norms</li> <li>• Challenge by money to customary basis for leadership and standing in the community</li> <li>• Problems between individuals, families, subclan and clan levels over money earned in wages and its distribution</li> <li>• Resentments over inappropriate distribution of royalty payments</li> <li>• Inequalities brought about between those who have cash and those who do not</li> <li>• Less respect for older people</li> <li>• Money has changed the nature of mortuary feasts which are now more lavish</li> <li>• Customary gift and reciprocity severely disrupted</li> <li>• Men drinking excessive amounts of beer</li> <li>• Fraternisation between young Misiman women and mine workers</li> <li>• Changed nutritional patterns with increased reliance on store bought food</li> <li>• Problems with law and order, mostly brought about by alcohol</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sponsorship by MML of community, school and women's activities</li> <li>• Increased educational opportunities for young men and women</li> </ul>	<p><i>Negative</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall increase in violence against women</li> <li>• Increase in rape</li> <li>• Increase in wife bashing</li> <li>• Increase in prostitution</li> <li>• Difficulties associated with a male dominated workplace</li> <li>• Loss of status and influence for women</li> <li>• Less value given to women's contribution to feasts</li> </ul>



# Too little, too late

Women's participation in  
the Misima mining project

**Dr Julia Byford**





# Women's concerns

To what extent did women feel their voices and concerns were heard and properly expressed by those who represented the communities to the company?



# Mining company and women's concerns

To what extent did the company recognise the particular impacts it was having on women, and what specific measures they used to overcome this?



# Barriers to women's participation

- Literal barrier to mining personnel
- Gender inequity
- Exclusion from initial negotiations
- Socio-cultural issues
- Language
- Living with the negative impacts



# Failure to represent women's concerns

- Local, district, provincial and national governments
- Community organisations



# Main issues

- Cultural context
- Gender equity
- Participatory development



# Equitable participatory development ...

... requires explicit attention to gender relations, grounded in an understanding of the dynamics of power, the nature of conflicts and conflict resolution, and the process of social change.



# Developing effective participation

- process of mutual respect
- genuine commitment to include *all* stakeholders
- willingness to work out how this can be best achieved



# Women's effective participation

Mining companies, government agencies, NGOs and local communities need to work together to ensure that women have a meaningful place in the process, where women are able to speak, be heard and affect the outcomes.