



CASE STUDIES



Sierra Rutile and IFC partnership community gender program, Sierra Leone

SRL AND IFC PARTNERSHIP FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

In 2019 Sierra Rutile partnered with IFC on a three-year, USD\$1.5 million programme aimed at benefiting communities where Sierra Rutile is present in Sierra Leone. Programme goals include improving agricultural practices and household incomes, increasing procurement from local communities, improving the utilisation of mining-generated revenue flows into communities, improving the economic outlook for women in the communities, and increasing the percentage of female employees at Sierra Rutile.

Programme activities are being designed with gender considerations in mind to ensure men and women are able to benefit. In its first year, the programme commenced with specialist studies to identify issues and opportunities. Participatory planning is now underway with local communities to design specific initiatives across four key areas:

1. Local content

The local content initiative is employing a train-the-trainer approach to ensure long-term local access to capacity building services. Sierra Rutile and IFC are working together to ensure that as more opportunities are open to local suppliers, these businesses are given the tools to meet this demand.

2. Agriculture

The agricultural programme intends to support and train 150 households. The programme will improve agricultural and commercialisation practices, while also addressing broader inequities (social, financial, violence-related) between men and women that can act as barriers to healthy and productive families.

3. Women and youth socio-economic empowerment

For young people in the local community, a series of empowerment programmes will combine livelihood, mentorship and recreational activities with curriculum on life skills, sexual health, gender-based violence and gender equality. Numeracy and literacy development is also planned.

In October 2019, Sierra Rutile established an internal Gender Task Force with support from the programme. This task force is chaired by Theuns de Bruyn, Sierra Rutile's Chief Operating Officer, and provides a platform for employees to provide feedback to Sierra Rutile management as the company develops and implements a gender action plan. Speaking in support of the programme, Mr de Bruyn shared the following comment:

"I am really excited about the possibilities to enhance Sierra Rutile's ability to recruit a more diverse workforce and create an environment that enables Sierra Rutile to leverage the full wealth of talent."

4. Transparency

The transparency component will help the Community Development Committee (CDC) - which receives US\$100,000 per year from Sierra Rutile - be responsive to community needs and effectively manage its resources. This initiative will also work with local stakeholders to ensure improved understanding of mining and related revenue flows - such as the CDC funds - into communities.

The programme is being implemented by IFC and Sierra Rutile community specialists and a number of Sierra Leonean experts. It will be monitored and reported on regularly and is expected to benefit both local stakeholders and Sierra Rutile.