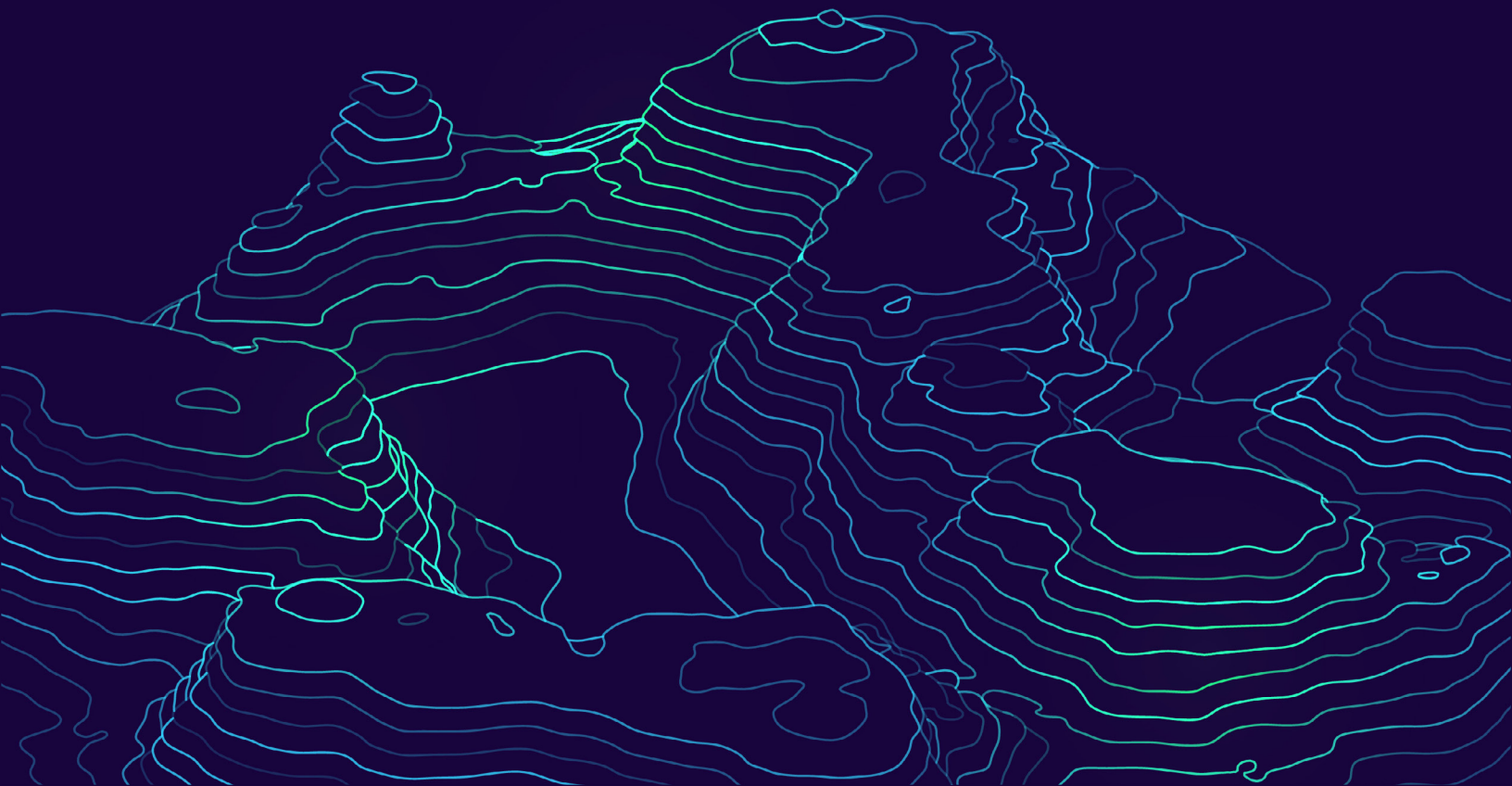


Catholic Approaches to Mining:

A Framework for Reflection, Planning, and Action

Caesar A. Monteverchio and Séverine Deneulin



Catholic Approaches to Mining: A Framework for Reflection, Planning, and Action

Caesar A. Montevecchio and Séverine Deneulin

October 21, 2025

Sponsored by:



Laudato Si'
RESEARCH INSTITUTE
CAMPION HALL, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD



KROC INSTITUTE
FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE STUDIES
KEOUGH SCHOOL OF GLOBAL AFFAIRS



UNIVERSITY OF
NOTRE DAME

In Collaboration with:



Caritas
INTERNATIONALIS

Recommended citation:

Montevecchio, Caesar A. and Deneulin, Séverine (2025). Catholic Approaches to Mining: A Framework for Reflection, Planning, and Action. University of Notre Dame. Report. <https://doi.org/10.7274/29941550>

Summary

The global demand for mineral extraction is increasing, fuelled by energy demand, including the transition to renewable energy, consumer electronics, military expansion, and many other factors. Across all continents, mining leads to environmental degradation, and in many contexts, it can also contribute to human rights violations, forced displacement, violent conflict, loss of livelihoods, and other harms. In many parts of the world, the Catholic Church is at the forefront of accompanying affected communities, and involved in linking local and global responses. How can it accompany and respond more effectively, how can it be a peace-builder and witness of hope, and how can others learn from that experience?

A Framework for Reflection, Planning, and Action intends to help Church leadership, especially bishops and those in pastoral ministry, and Catholic organizations harness their capacity to respond to problems associated with mining and bring hope to affected communities. It offers a synthesis of good practices and lessons learned for how Catholic actors and their allies can have a positive impact and address the many dimensions of the socio-environmental injustices related to mining. The document is organized along the “See, Judge, Act” model. Its focus is on mineral and metal mining but the guidelines provided may also apply in the context of oil and gas as the sectors share many similar problems. The document is the result of a year-long consultative process with Catholic actors and others defending communities and the environment in mining contexts across all continents.

Part I “Mining Industry Outline” provides an overview of some important aspects of the business of mining, including some key aspects of the industry as well as common legal and economic terminology. Knowing where the products from a mine fall in legal and policy classifications will frame the field of possible actions. Another important aspect is to understand the stage of a mine’s lifecycle. Each of three primary phases can be the focal point of action: exploration (including consultation), exploitation, and closure. A critical step is insisting on a right to information, which is essential for the free, prior, and informed consent of local communities. Familiarity with legal and regulatory frameworks helps monitor compliance by companies and inform advocacy. Finally, understanding mining company dynamics, such as distinctions between Major or Minor companies and the place of artisanal or illegal mining, is essential to engage effectively with mining actors.

Part II “See: Some Key Problems of Mining” identifies some of the major problems associated with mining. Mining is difficult and hazardous work and workers are often exploited. It also impacts gender and family relations. Mining can have many different negative ecological impacts: deforestation, desertification, increased climate vulnerability, biodiversity loss, pollution, and contamination. These can have a range of consequences, from loss of livelihoods and increased migration to increased violence and social protest which can be unduly criminalized. Many of the ecological impacts constitute permanent changes in the landscape, which introduce a new set of risks and vulnerabilities for mine-affected communities who are often already confronting more extreme weather events induced by climate change. Mining can have serious impacts on the health of local communities, and especially on children and women’s reproductive health. Mining also risks damaging the social fabric of local communities, including their cultural identity. Mining can lead to forced displacement, with women particularly at risk of trafficking, and youth of joining criminal gangs. Mining activities often generate unjust economic relations and deepen poverty dynamics, and mining companies frequently take the place of the state as providers of public services, encouraging short-term thinking and acceptance of illusory benefits, disregarding long term negative consequences of mining. The economic, legal, and political power of mining firms dwarfs that of impacted communities. Given these large power inequalities, it is critical for Church actors to build large coalitions to defend the rights of local communities, promote their integral human development, and protect ecosystems.

Part III “Judge: The Catholic Social Tradition” briefly examines what the Catholic Church has said about mining and its consequences. Integral human development has been a cornerstone concept for guiding Church engagement on mining, with

many documents denouncing the development models influencing extractive activity and questioning the narrative that mining brings development. Pope Francis emphasized mining-related ecological and social issues in *Laudato Si'*, which singled out mining as a driver of global inequality, with contamination, deforestation, and land dispossession in the Global South resulting from the need to satisfy market demands from the industrialized North (§51).¹ The Church should do its part to ensure that mining does not destroy our common home and undermine human dignity. It must not rupture our relationships with God, neighbor, and the earth itself. The “[Annotated Bibliography on the Catholic Social Tradition and Mining](#)” provides more in-depth resources on Church teaching and scholarship in relation to mining. In the context of synodality, there is room for rethinking current ecclesial structures to respond to the ecological and human devastation that mining activities leave in their wake.

Part IV “Act: Modes of Engagement” gives some examples of mining engagement to help Church actors and their collaborators make an informed decision about the most prudential way forward. All modes of engagement need to start with and are rooted in pastoral closeness, or what Catholic organizations call accompaniment. This means living with the affected communities, sharing their joys and sorrows, and listening to their grievances with respect and empathy. From deep knowledge of the experiences of affected communities, in trustful relation, the Church can walk with people on a path of discernment, action, reconciliation, and justice towards a hope-filled future. The main modes of engagement we identify are: documentation and communications (such as data collection, case studies, and communication campaigns); training and capacity building (such as legal literacy, mediation and advocacy skills, scientific understanding, land management, and alternative livelihoods); advocacy (such as legal prosecution, legislative reform, and disinvestment campaigns); and nonviolent civil resistance (including the use of symbolic and liturgical resources to accompany protest marches and road blocks). For each mode, we include some examples, describe the circumstances and assets required for success, and discuss some key challenges and cautions. We also identify some cross-cutting modes of action: subsidiarity; coalition building and promoting dialogue and social cohesion among affected communities; seeking out expertise; leveraging symbolic and sacramental images and practices; debunking the myth of unlimited material progress and developing an alternative economic model based on joyful sobriety and low consumption lifestyles; and education and formation in ethical values and the formation of conscience around the respect of human dignity and care for our common home.

1 Francis, *Laudato Si'*, 24 May 2015, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	6
PART I—CONTEXT: MINING INDUSTRY OUTLINE	8
Mineral types and uses	8
The lifecycle of a mine	10
Law and regulation	13
Majors, Juniors, and company dynamics.....	14
Artisanal and informal mining.....	15
PART II—SEE: SOME KEY PROBLEMS OF MINING	16
Workers' rights and safety	16
Ecological impacts	16
Health and socio-cultural fabric of local communities.....	17
Displacement.....	17
Economic imbalances.....	18
Power inequalities	18
Corruption	19
Short-term thinking.....	19
Criminalized protest and danger for defenders	20
Illicit armed groups and organized crime	20
PART III—JUDGE: THE CATHOLIC SOCIAL TRADITION	20
PART IV—ACT: MODES OF ENGAGEMENT	24
Documentation and communications	26
Training and capacity-building.....	28
Advocacy.....	30
Nonviolent civil resistance	33
Cross-cutting strategies	35
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	38

Introduction

Across all continents, mining leads to environmental degradation, and in many contexts, it can also contribute to human rights violations, forced displacement, violent conflict, loss of livelihoods, and other harms. Mining generates questions about economic, political, social, ethical, gender, and ecological concerns across localities, nations, regions, and the globe. Millions of affected people, thousands of animal and plant species, and countless rivers and forests are suffering in the face of mineral extraction. To echo [Gaudium et Spes](#), “The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the women and men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ” (§1). Pope Francis talked of the suffering caused by mining as “provoking a cry that rises up to heaven” ([Querida Amazonia](#) §8).



Photo: Michael Turner/Wirestock

In many places, the Catholic Church is already engaged. It responds to the challenges arising from mining as part of its preferential option for the poor and vulnerable and its pastoral closeness to those who suffer, and as an expression of solidarity bonds which spring from our inherent relationality. As Pope Benedict XVI observed in [Spe Salvi](#), life is fundamentally relational, rooted ultimately in relationship with God the Creator (§27). Responding to suffering is a major component of the Church’s mission of reconciliation and hope amidst accelerating climate change, and the urgency of the clean energy transition away from fossil fuels. The Church is also responding by leveraging its distinct assets, including its vast community-level presence, its global reach and influence, and its moral voice and authority, to bring about more socially and environmentally just outcomes. Given the scale of the problems that mining can cause, and the entrenched power inequalities that are involved, it is often wise and meaningful to establish alliances and partnerships. Coalitions with a large array of organizations and actors who are similarly responding to the sufferings of communities, human and non-human, are essential. But the Catholic community, through its social tradition and organizational structures, has real capacity for impact. How can the Catholic Church accompany mining-affected communities more effectively and be a peace-builder and witness of hope, and how can areas of the Church not yet engaged on the problem learn from the experiences of others?

A Framework for Reflection, Planning, and Action is written for those working at the international, regional, national, and local levels. It is intended to help bishops and bishops’ conferences, other Church leaders, and Catholic organizations to harness their capacity and build coalitions to respond. In times of rising authoritarian regimes worldwide, the Church can play a crucial role in strengthening civil society to uphold human rights, promote peace, and protect ecosystems. The document has been developed in consultation with many people and organizations. Consultative online workshops were held in November 2024 (Latin America), December 2024 (Africa), January 2025 (Asia), and March 2025 (global), and a [conference](#) was held at the Pontificia Javeriana University in Bogotá, Colombia from 9-13 June 2025 (a list of contributors is included at the end of the document). The idea of drafting such a document originated in part from a seminar on “Conflicts in Africa in the Context of the Exploitation of Natural and Mining Resources” convened by the Symposium of the Episcopal Conference of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) in March 2024 in Accra, Ghana.

The document aims to offer a synthesis of good practices and lessons learned for how Catholic actors and their allies can have a positive impact on the many dimensions of the socio-environmental injustices related to mining. It provides some background for discerning what forms of engagement would be relevant for particular situations and circumstances. It is not a how-to

manual, nor is it a full picture of all possible mining-related problems and Church responses. Individual cases of mining, while sharing some overarching patterns, are too different to allow a definitive set of guidelines. What the document does is provide a background sketch of the mining industry and key related concepts, analyze negative consequences that mining can create from the perspective of the social teachings of the Catholic Church, and provide a range of possible actions, as well as discuss the financial, human, and organizational resources they involve. The overarching goal is to provide a tool for applying the “See, Judge, Act” method to the problems that mining-affected communities often face, and to help Catholic leaders and organizations and their allies navigate the unique social, legal, economic, political, cultural, historical, and environmental circumstances they face when accompanying those communities and trying to respond to their sufferings in a way that remains distinctly Catholic. We hope that the document can be a starting point and a means to inspire action, collaboration, and mutual learning in relation to peacebuilding, mining, and integral human development. We encourage groups and organizations working at a diocesan or local level to develop companion pieces to this document, such as formation booklets or advocacy guides, for local Christian communities according to their own contexts and needs.²

The first part of the document outlines the mining industry and describes its global reach. We have concentrated on large-scale mining and invite countries or territories affected more by artisanal and illegal mining to outline their own contexts when they design companion pieces to apply this *Framework* to their situations. The second part, “See”, assesses some of the consequences of mining. We are aware that some important consequences will be left out, and that some are more marked than others depending on contexts. One common consequence that was highlighted by participants across all the consultative workshops is the impact that mining often has on ecological and social relations, and especially gender relations. Women suffer disproportionately from mining, but they are also often assuming a strong leadership role in defending human rights at the local level. The third part, “Judge”, briefly explains the theological rationale as to why Catholic actors globally need to respond to what they see in territories affected by mining. The fourth part, “Act”, categorizes different ways in which the Catholic Church has already taken action across the globe, highlighting some successful actions in given areas and from diverse contexts. For example, Church actors, working in collaboration with universities and other civil society organizations, have conducted alternative social and environmental impact assessments, and demonstrate with solid evidence the biases of the assessments conducted by governments and mining companies. Another example is actions taken in the area of education and formation. Many initiatives are taking place across a large number of Catholic schools, universities, parishes, and other groups to value our common home. The teachings of *Laudato Si'*, that our social and ecological crisis is a profound moral crisis which requires a renewal of our humanity and our relationships with each other and the earth, are underpinning these efforts. Spearheaded by groups like the *Laudato Si'* Movement, such actions include a global campaign to disinvest from fossil fuels, the invitation to joyful sobriety, and the [ecumenical initiative of a liturgical Season of Creation](#) to deepen our awareness of our common belonging. Some churches, especially those in the Amazon region and in the Philippines, are setting policies to disinvest from mining companies and refuse any donation from them. We invite each reader to reflect on what part they can play given their expertise, situation, and level of responsibility.

This document is specifically focused on mineral and metal mining and does not address other forms of extraction, such as oil and gas, and does not provide guidance tailored to these other contexts. Even if these other forms of material extraction present distinct challenges and operate in different global networks, given the many shared social and ecological consequences of all extractive activities, the document provides some principles that may translate to different extractive contexts. As highlighted above, pastoral closeness to extractive industries-affected communities and walking with them on a path of reconciliation, justice, and hope constitutes the *modus operandi* of the Catholic Church and the foundation of all its actions.

² One participant suggested a country or diocese specific action guide around the following questions: Why should the Church get involved in mining?; How to get involved?; When to act?; With whom to act?; For whom or against whom to act?; What means/resources are needed to act (financial, human, material resources, etc.)?; What results are being sought?; What are the risks and how to overcome them?

Taking action can, sadly, cost lives. Environmental and human rights defenders often have their lives put in jeopardy over work on mining. According to the civil society organization [Global Witness](#), 196 people were killed in 2023, though this number is likely to be vastly under-reported. Most of those killings happened in the Catholic-majority countries of Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, the Philippines, and Honduras, and most of the murders occurred in relation to mining. Therefore, the safety of local activists, practitioners, researchers, or investigators, many of whom are women and at even greater risk for that reason, should always remain a paramount concern in the forms of action that are taken in response to mining issues.

We would like to dedicate this document to one invitee for our Latin America-focused consultative workshop who was murdered before he could share his insights—[Juan López](#), associated with the [Centro ERIC](#) (Equipo de Reflexión Investigación y Comunicación) in Honduras, and who led the campaign against an open-pit iron mine in the Carlos Escaleras National Park. May the witness of his life, and that of many others who are working tirelessly to defend human dignity and our common home, guide us.

PART I—CONTEXT: MINING INDUSTRY OUTLINE

Mining concessions occur in nearly every country, but there is no global data on the extent of mining activities. There are, however, some regional and country-level data that give some indication of the scale of mining. In 2020, the [World Resource Institute](#) estimated mining to cover 18% of the Amazon territory. In 2023, the [International Working Group on Indigenous Affairs](#) estimated that 20% of Peru was under mining concessions. In the Philippines, the civil society organization [Alyansa Tigil Mina](#) estimates that at least 9 million of the country's total land area of 30 million hectares contain minerals, with an estimated wealth of \$9 trillion. In July 2021, 764,000 hectares were covered by mining concessions, and this figure is likely to be higher in 2024 with the opening of the largest copper and gold mine in Southeast Asia. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, there is no data on the coverage of mining concessions, but according to [World Bank estimates](#), 70% of the country's economic growth in 2023 could be attributed to the mining sector. In July 2023, the DRC government and the United Arab Emirates signed a [\\$1.9 billion mining investment](#) deal. The scale of mining operations also mirrors the scale of mining conflicts. The [Environmental Justice Atlas](#), which provides a database of environmental conflicts worldwide, has reported, as of the time of publication, 240 conflicts associated with copper extraction, 347 with gold, 144 with uranium, 56 with aluminium/bauxite, 40 with lithium, and 27 with rare earth minerals.

A first step in effective engagement on mining issues is to have a good understanding of the scale of mining exploration and activity in one's region, how the mining industry works, how it is placed within national and global economies, the different sizes of operations, kinds of ownership (state or privately owned), the types of minerals mined, the different phases of mining, and the social and political contexts in which mining occurs. All this will impact the dynamics of what is happening in local territories. This section provides an overview of some important aspects of the business of mining, including some key aspects of the industry as well as common legal and economic terminology. Given the diversity of mining activities across regions, with some territories affected more by large-scale industrial mining and others by artisanal mining, or with some regions benefiting from protective legal frameworks and others not, we invite readers to deepen knowledge of their own contexts.

A. Mineral types and uses

Minerals are used in virtually every material dimension of modern life, including construction, energy production, communications technologies, medical equipment, and hosts of consumer goods. It is important to know what materials are being mined before beginning any engagement, and it is also important to understand how they fit into global supply chains and international designations and strategies.

Conflict minerals are defined by legal statutes in the [United States](#) and the [European Union](#). According to the EU definition, they are minerals whose trade “can be used to finance armed groups, fuel forced labor and other human rights abuses, and support corruption and money laundering.” These statutes consider tin (cassiterite), tantalum (coltan or columbite), tungsten (wolframite), and gold to be conflict minerals. When using this terminology, it is important to remember that it has this legal specificity and does not include other important minerals, such as cobalt or copper. However, the [OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas](#) has a broader purview and covers any mineral that is used to finance armed groups.

Critical minerals are those designated by individual countries as ones with particular strategic importance for national policy objectives. For example, according to the [International Energy Agency](#), “The global clean energy transitions will have far-reaching consequences for mineral demand over the next 20 years.” These minerals related to renewable energy are also known as [transition minerals](#) and are major components of critical mineral lists. But transportation, communications, and military and defense are also significant factors for minerals being considered critical. These minerals, like nickel, lithium, cobalt, and many others are typically not governed by legal statutes in the way that conflict minerals are. But they influence national policies and actions in several ways. For example, in November 2024, the International Energy Agency signed a [Memorandum Of Understanding](#) (MOU) with the Ministry of Mines of India to strengthen cooperation on critical minerals. And in 2023, the EU signed an [MOU](#) with the government of Kazakhstan on raw materials and battery value chains. In China, the 2016-2020 [National Plan for Mineral Resources](#) identified 24 “strategic minerals”. It is valuable to be familiar with the critical mineral lists and policies of specific countries involved in mining in a given area (see, for example, current critical mineral lists from the [US](#), the [EU](#), [India](#), [Australia](#), and [Canada](#)), as well as the way that the current geopolitical situation includes an outsized share of control over most critical minerals by [China](#).

Critical for Whom?

We have used the term **critical minerals** to refer specifically to lists formulated by governments to identify minerals they consider critical for their policies and priorities. This is in order to help orient readers to this technical language and its meaning in global markets. But there is an important ethical critique to be made. The benefits for which these minerals are “critical” are rarely ever enjoyed by the people and communities where they are mined. Additionally, these minerals are often irrelevant to the forms of life of the rural and indigenous communities disrupted by the mines where they are extracted. Which is to say, they are **NOT** critical to the integral human development of those peoples. Often, they are critical for the sake of increasing military strength for already powerful countries at the expense of other development needs and at risk of provoking more conflict. The relationship between critical minerals and alternative energy is particularly fraught. The climate impact of fossil fuel-driven economies is planetary, endangering human and ecological communities everywhere. This threat is particularly acute for societies whose “means of subsistence are largely dependent on natural reserves and ecosystemic services such as agriculture, fishing and forestry” (*Laudato Si'*, 25). Yet some of these communities face new disruption from mining required for transition to a sustainable energy system. Each organization will need to navigate these complex questions of justice, inequality, and the pressing need to address fossil fuel driven climate change.

In addition to the “critical” minerals required for the energy transition, there are also “critical” minerals driven by the arms industry and military conflicts. The wars in [Ukraine](#) and the Middle East, and a new race to modernize nuclear and other weapons arsenals, have increased demand for these minerals. In December 2024, NATO published [a list of 12 minerals](#) of strategic priority for defense. One must therefore keep in mind the close connections between peacebuilding and addressing the

challenges that arise from mining, not only at the level of conflicts generated by extraction itself but how conflicts, as much as energy consumption and electronic technologies, are driving extractive pressure.

Many mined products that are not included as conflict minerals or are missing from some or all critical mineral lists can still have significant social, economic, and environmental impacts, such as potash, coal, salt, and sand – the latter being critical for the construction sector and already scarce in some places.

When engaging with social and ecological challenges arising from a mining site, knowing where the products from that mine fall in these legal and policy classifications is a very important piece of context that will frame the field of possible actions.

B. The lifecycle of a mine

Specific national laws will yield different particulars for determining a mine's lifecycle. But in general, there are three primary phases to mining projects, all of which can be the focal point of action and advocacy. But at whatever stage of a mine's lifecycle engagement might occur, it is helpful to keep the full long-term process in mind. We have inserted the consultation phase as part of the exploration phase as it is mixed with a company's intention to explore, and a legal requirement in some countries before passing from intention to action.

Different terms, different perspectives for mine lifecycles

Mining companies tend to refer to five stages of a mine's lifecycle: 1) exploration and prospecting, 2) discovery, 3) development, 4) production, and 5) decommissioning and rehabilitation. This document is adhering to terms preferred by many who have engaged on mining issues and who find them more representative of the dynamics and impacts that actually take place: 1) exploration (for exploration and prospecting, and discovery, and in which we also consider licensing), 2) exploitation (development and production), and 3) closure (decommissioning and rehabilitation). These terms better reflect the realities experienced by many communities, such as the exploitative way in which the environment is destroyed or communities are uprooted, or the way that mines often are simply closed without anyone taking responsibility for or following through on rehabilitation plans.

Exploration

Minerals are usually considered the property of the state. And in most cases, countries have separate licensing and permitting statutes for mine exploration and exploitation. Exploration licensing, including preliminary geological surveying, is, therefore, a consideration prior to the exploration process. Licensing can conflict with other land designations, like nature preserves or Indigenous lands, with governments finding rationales for mining licenses to outweigh other claims. Knowledge of national licensing for mining, and how it compares to other land designations, is an important foundation.

Once companies have licenses for exploration, a large amount of time and resources are put into the search for viable mine sites. This includes geological and seismic surveys and assessments of water and transport availability. These exploratory studies are costly and take a long time (an exploration phase can take 20-25 years). And combined with the fact that most mines will operate for several years before mining companies see a profit after their capital investment, this means that mining companies are typically very determined to move from the exploration stage to the next stage of exploitation to avoid sunk costs. As a result, it is very important for affected communities to be alert and informed about mine exploration endeavors in their areas so that they can substantively engage before too much momentum builds up behind the project, and preferably as soon as the intention to explore is made public by a government or company.

A critical step in the move from intention to exploration is obtaining the **free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC)** of local communities for mining activities to take place in their territories. It is crucial that FPIC include the right to say “no” to mining activity. FPIC has been articulated by several international agencies (e.g., [OECD](#), [UN-REDD](#), [SIRGE Coalition](#)), and was adopted into international law by [ILO Convention 169](#) in 1989, and reinforced in Latin America in 2018 with the “Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters,” known as the [Escazú Agreement](#). The agreement makes access to information a precondition for being able to provide consent. Only 23 countries have ratified the ILO Convention, mainly in Latin America. Even in countries where it has been ratified, the right to FPIC is routinely violated. FPIC requirements may vary depending on the type of community that is most closely connected to a proposed mine location; for example, Indigenous Peoples may have stronger consultation protections under the [UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#). There are also national legal frameworks such as the Forest Rights Act of 2006 in India, which recognizes the rights of Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers. Regardless of how strong regulations may be, the legal and political power of mining companies is capable of weakening the effect of international regulations at the national level. Catholic organizations and their allies can have an important role to play in strengthening the right to information, which in turn strengthens other rights. Though they do not solve all problems, stakeholder consultation and FPIC are invaluable foundations on which more effective advocacy and action can be built. Maintaining unity and social cohesion among local communities, and debunking false narratives about “sustainable mining” and local social and economic benefits, will be important aspects of action as dividing communities is a common tactic employed by mining companies to diffuse opposition and manufacture consent.



Photo: Caritas Philippines

Another important aspect of the exploration phase is social and environmental impact assessments. Like differences in licensing and permitting regulations, **impact assessment** rules and standards will vary from country to country. Simply put, the more robust an impact assessment is, the more useful it will be. Good impact assessments will look at a full range of dimensions, including the environment, economic development, social consequences, and conflict history. Good impact assessments will also include independent experts and careful research and modeling. Unfortunately, it is not uncommon for impact assessments to be boilerplate forms that companies can push through lax, or even complicit, government regulators. But when done correctly and independently, impact assessments are vital sources of information and platforms for dialogue. They also need to be accessible and communicated clearly to local communities so that they can become more aware of and understand better the social and environmental impacts of mining on their lives. These are key areas of action, as will be discussed in greater detail in part IV.

When adopted by national legislations, FPIC, stakeholder consultations, and social and environmental impact assessments can be important tools for leverage at the local level. They can also strengthen action or advocacy where mining companies have their headquarters and can be subject to shareholder pressure or legal standards for human rights and environmental protection.

An additional dynamic to be aware of is that frequently smaller mining firms will carry out exploration processes before selling the license a major company (see point D). These smaller companies are often less bound by or attached to trade standards for ethics that are agreed upon by Major companies or outlined in international guidelines. In cases where international financial institutions are involved in financing the exploration phase, these constitute another area of leverage as international financial institutions are likely to withdraw funding if violations of international and national legislations are demonstrated.

Consent vs. Consultation

The language applied to stakeholder engagement before a mining project begins is important. Most standards seeking to protect community rights maintain the language of **consent** for that which is being sought in a “free, prior, and informed” process. To state that consent is required implies that communities maintain the extremely important and powerful **right to say “no”** if they decide they do not want a mining project on their lands. As Pope Francis noted in *Querida Amazonia* following the Amazon Synod, local communities “have a right to receive thorough and straight-forward information about projects, their extent, and their consequences and risks, in order to be able to relate that information to their own interests and their own knowledge of the place, and thus to give or withhold their consent, or to propose alternatives” (§51). And he calls businesses which fail to respect the right to prior consent “injustice and crime” (§14). The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace has also emphasized the necessity that communities impacted by major projects like mining be engaged in participation and dialogue, based on prior consent, and given fair compensation and opportunities to maintain their ways of life and socio-economic structures (*Land and Food*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vatican City 2015, §115). In a similar vein, after his election, Pope Leo XIV saluted “the courage of those who defend dignity, justice and the right of people to be informed, because only informed individuals can make free choices” (*Address to the representatives of the Media*, 12 May 2025).

However, industry language has preferred to replace consent with **consultation**. This term removes the right to say “no” and creates a lower standard for companies to follow, implying they need only to consult the community without obligation to honor its will. Those attempting to defend community rights should always emphasize the language of **consent** over the language of **consultation**, but be aware of the different language used within the industry, as well as its legal implications, and the ways that national legislation can be utilized to negate the right to say “no.” Given the current reality and the complications present for achieving truly informed and free prior consent or consultation, FPIC should be viewed as one important and limited tool for change in the mining industry and not be relied on as a panacea.

Exploitation

Once a mine begins operation, other concerns become highlighted, like worker protections, militarized security, environmental and health hazards, tailings dam integrity, water depletion, human trafficking, gender violence, or revenue sharing, to name a few. The mix of specific problems and, therefore, where the most attention needs to be paid, will vary from location to location and require careful discernment and analysis. A sudden fall or rise in the price of the mineral being mined will affect mining activities – a participant at the Bogotá event noted that in 2000 it was more profitable to cultivate coffee than mine gold in Colombia, which is no longer the case, leading to a surge of often illegal gold mining in the country. There are also concerns about global commodity chains, as minerals are shipped to and transformed into products on other continents, and are not processed in countries where they are sourced.

It is important to note that just because a mine has begun exploitation, continued exploitation is not inevitable. Engagements to halt or stop active mining operations have been and can be successful, though remaining watchful of resumption of operations by other companies is necessary.

Closure

When a mine is exhausted or operations are ended for any other reason, careful processes for mine closure, damage remediation, and site rehabilitation need to occur, especially as mining generates a lot of toxic waste. These steps should be ideally discussed

and planned clearly from the very beginning of a mine's operation, even if the exploration phase may be long, and changes in operating control may result in companies trying to shift responsibility to one another. Catholic actors and partners can play a role in holding companies accountable to fulfill their remediation plans, and they should address these plans as early as possible in the lifecycle of the mine as companies can often leave quickly without a remediation plan in place.

The International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM) has published [industry standards](#) for mine closure practices, as they do for most all aspects across a mine's lifecycle, such as engaging [Indigenous Peoples](#) and [environmental management](#). These industry standards might be imperfect, but it is useful for Church actors and allies to be familiar with them as they can provide helpful pressure points for advocacy and stepping stones for dialogue with mining companies about better practices.

Lastly, a mine's closure may not always be the end of its life. If a mine is closed for legal or business reasons while it is still productive, it may be reopened at a later time or informal miners may exploit it. But even if the mine is exhausted, companies may attempt to process old dump waste with more sophisticated equipment. For this reason, vigilance with regard to the environment, worker safety, illicit armed groups, or other problems may need to be maintained even after a mine closes.

C. Law and regulation

Mining companies typically perform to the minimum standards required of them by law in the country where a mine exists, though national laws can routinely be violated due to corruption. As companies with shareholder responsibilities, they are not incentivized to do more than what national laws require. Those working for greater justice and equity in mining must therefore have extensive knowledge of national laws and regulations regarding mining. This helps with ensuring accountability for full compliance with existing national protections, and informing advocacy on where improvement needs to be made. Because these laws can vary from country to country, some questions need to be answered in order to have a grasp of the legal context of mining in one's own country.

- 1 **Contracts and permits:** When was the mining law adopted?; What are the government bodies that grant exploration and exploitation concessions?; Are there limitations on permits for foreign investment or ownership?; Does national law differentiate land surface ownership from subsoil ownership?; What impact assessment and consultation standards are required?
- 2 **Taxes and royalties:** What is the country's tax law for mining?; What tax incentives are offered to mining companies?; Where and how is taxation and royalty information available?; What tax and royalty rates would constitute a just rate? Is there a special tax regime that bypasses national rules for the sake of economic development, such as in so-called "Special Economic Zones"?
- 3 **Environmental regulation:** What national standards exist for environmental regulation, who creates them, and who enforces them? From whom do they accept environmental impact assessments?; What are the major environmental risks associated with the material(s) and location(s) to be mined?; Will the mine have a major impact on climate vulnerability?; Which are the environmental regulatory organizations responsible for monitoring, and are they independent or connected to the government and/or mining companies? Do they produce regular public and easily accessible monitoring reports?
- 4 **Labor laws and human rights:** Has the country ratified [ILO C176-Safety and Health in Mines Convention](#)? Has it ratified any other ILO Conventions, Protocols, or Regional Agreements?; What is the mining company's track record for human rights? Does it follow the [Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights](#)? The [OECD Guidelines of Multinational Enterprises on Responsible Business Conduct](#)? The [UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#)? The [UN FAO Voluntary Guidelines on Land Tenure](#)?; Is there recourse for action

against illicit groups operating mines and violating human rights?; Are any Indigenous Peoples' rights under threat? If so, does the country recognize the [UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#), or does it have any national laws specific to Indigenous Peoples or Scheduled Tribes?

5 Certification: What international certification processes apply to a mine's products (i.e., Dodd-Frank, Kimberley Process, EU Conflict Mineral Regulation)?; What barriers exist for acquiring required certifications?; Are certification requirements having any adverse impacts?

6 Home-country laws: Does the home country of the mining company have applicable laws by which the company can be held accountable for its conduct?

In addition to any specific questions, it is also broadly helpful to examine any recent changes in national mining codes and ask, "Who has ordered or lobbied for these changes?" and "Who benefits?" Looking at what changes are made and why, and by whom they have been initiated, can help diagnose deeper maladies in a country's system of laws governing mining. One must in that regard be vigilant about industry lobbying.

D. Majors, Juniors, and company dynamics

It is obviously essential to know what mining company is working in a particular area in order to effectively engage with it. But the industry can be complex and there are some important structures and dynamics to understand.

Some large multinational mining firms are grouped together as "Majors." This is not an official designation, but the [member companies](#) of ICMM is a fair baseline. These companies may frequently make good faith efforts for improved practices and claim to follow established ethical principles and environmental standards to which advocates can point to critique activities that fall short. These companies also frequently work with and share principles and best practices with national, regional, and commodity-specific organizations that try to improve mining practices. These companies will also typically be more sensitive to shareholder advocacy and consumer-side pressures that can be leveraged through international networks.

That being said, while companies may uphold principles and best practices in discourse, there is a gap between discourse and reality, between ethical ideals expressed by these companies' websites and statements and their on-the-ground actions. There is significant "[greenwashing](#)", that is, discussion of sustainable mining and environmental practices and small publicized environmental actions covering up underlying practices that are very damaging. There are also inconsistencies within companies themselves. Site managers and other in-country personnel may not adhere to ethical standards as closely as international executive leadership may wish. They may also contract with private security firms, national police or militaries, or other subcontractors who are not bound by the same standards of ethics. Companies may willingly accept such circumstances in order to shield themselves from responsibility while benefiting from tactics or practices that violate peace, human rights, or environmental protection. Additionally, in some countries, armed groups can act as intermediaries between mines and companies that bring extracted materials to markets.

The large number of subsidiaries is also a factor adding complexity for holding companies accountable for their actions. For example, BHP, one of the biggest mining firms in the world, has [420 separate subsidiaries](#) listed with the US Securities and Exchange Commission. [Rio Tinto](#) lists on its website more than a hundred subsidiary companies in the countries in which it operates. The further down the chain of subsidiaries a company is, the looser its ties to the broad principles of ethics advertised by major companies.

Another factor that makes identifying company ownership and holding the sector accountable difficult is the presence of smaller firms, or Juniors, which are not connected to the kind of international standards and practices or shareholder pressures that Majors are. They will often be much less scrupulous in their activities. A common dynamic is for Juniors to expedite the exploration phase of a mine before selling the rights to a Major that has greater reserves of capital to carry out the exploitation phase.

Finally, a common tactic for companies to avoid consequences is deliberate change of ownership so that the original company which has perpetrated ecological destruction and human rights abuses can absolve itself of responsibility while the new company denies accountability for the previous company's actions.

Advocates, peacebuilders, and rights defenders need to know the nature of the company that they are dealing with and where it lies in this complex picture of mining company structure and dynamics.

E. Artisanal and informal mining

This document is primarily focused on large-scale industrial mining. However, one cannot ignore artisanal and illegal mining, especially given the overlaps they have with industrial mining for some metals, such as gold, coltan, tungsten, and others. In the Amazon region, a [report](#) published in 2024 has documented how illegal artisanal gold mining is leading to deforestation, severe levels of water contamination, health and social consequences for Indigenous Peoples, and other human rights violations. In the DRC and Zambia, artisanal mining is closely knit together with industrial mining. There are also some countries where criminal groups have resources to buy dredges and necessary technologies to engage in medium-scale mining activities. It is impossible to outline the variety of contexts where artisanal and illegal mining occurs – for instance, the [garimpeiros](#) of Brazil encroaching on Indigenous land are very different from [galamsey](#) in Ghana. There are, however, some similar patterns to be aware of when facing smaller-scale mining activities:

- 1 Mining companies often blame artisanal miners for being worse perpetrators of environmental damage. This can be true in some respects, as artisanal miners usually face less scrutiny, possess less capacity for environmental safeguarding or mitigation, and often have less understanding of the science behind environmental protection. However skewed mining companies' blame narratives may be, environmental protection is a legitimate concern with artisanal mining.
- 2 While transparency initiatives and processes for ensuring conflict-free minerals often help reduce human rights abuses, as long as the product mined fits that legal category, many minerals are not governed in similar ways. In those situations, it is common for artisanal miners to be co-opted by illicit or criminal groups and to be treated very harshly. Cobalt mining in the DRC is a paradigmatic example. There are, however, regional initiatives such as the [International Conference of the Great Lakes Region](#) to address illegal exploitation and protect human rights in the context of artisanal mining.
- 3 In some cases, it is important to look at whether artisanal mining can offer a viable alternative to industrial mining, provide fairer employment, and/or reduce adverse environmental effects through the use of traditional or sustainable mining techniques (see part IV 'Act' for further discussions on alternative livelihoods). In such situations, artisanal mining can be synonymous with ancestral mining, where communities follow generations-old practices that have lower environmental impact. The [AMATAF](#) cooperative in Peru works with artisanal miners to process gold without the use of toxic mercury. But market access and scale present problems. Artisanal miners may have difficulty finding market niches since their mining techniques will be less efficient than industrial mining and result in higher prices. And the smaller scale and capacity of this type of mining would likely be unable to meet current global demands.

PART II–SEE: SOME KEY PROBLEMS OF MINING

Mining presents an array of problems which vary widely according to what is being mined, who is doing the mining, the local ecology, the sociopolitical context, the legal-national framework, the local economic situation, the region's conflict history, and its colonial history. In this section, we summarize some key problems that are generated by mining activities. What do we “see” in the territories affected by mining? Many workshop participants expressed how “mining takes up everything.” It takes up people's lands, livelihoods, rivers, forests, graveyards, sacred sites, their health, their identity, and the social fabric of their lives. The list below is not exhaustive, nor does it imply that these problems are discreet. They tend to be interwoven and mutually reinforcing. In addition, each mining site and project is unique and capable of spawning new and distinct issues. The purpose of this list is to identify and describe some of the most common cross-cutting issues faced by mining-affected communities in order to help analyze one's own specific circumstance before developing a plan of engagement.



Photo: Javier Arrellano-Yanguas

A. Workers' rights and safety

Mining is difficult and hazardous work. Workers are often exploited, being forced to work unreasonable hours, for low wages, with insufficient protection gear, and in dangerous conditions, such as in close proximity to toxic materials or in unstable mine galleries. In any operating mine, the rights and safety of the workforce must be a paramount concern. Mining projects are often sold on the promise of employment and lucrative jobs. When workers are not treated justly and work in unsafe conditions without a decent wage, and often with precarious employment contracts, it amounts to a breaking of that promise. There is also the question of skills and training. Many of the jobs for local communities created by mining are low-skilled, with the more skilled jobs like engineers and managers being filled from overseas. There is often little commitment from mining companies to invest in skill-building for local populations. Available jobs are also often much lower in number in modern mines because of automation and increased use of technology.

Mining severely impacts gender and family relations. Mining jobs are mostly male, leaving women and young girls to do the care work. When women are employed in mining operations, they suffer from lower pay and more unsafe working conditions than men. They can also experience sexual harassment and violence. When accidents happen, there is very rarely insurance or compensation, leaving families with no breadwinners, and forcing children to drop out of school to make up for the lost family income.

B. Ecological impacts

Mining risks many negative ecological impacts: deforestation, desertification, increased climate vulnerability, biodiversity loss, pollution and contamination, and greenhouse gas emissions, which can have a range of consequences, from loss of livelihoods and increased migration, health damage, loss of agriculture, water depletion, worsened impact from natural disasters, increased violence over reduced resources, and contribution to climate change, to name a few. These impacts can spread far from a mine site, via rippling ecosystem changes, impacts throughout the lengths of watersheds and damage to preexisting water tables, infrastructure projects, like roads or railways, or downwind carriage of air pollutants.

Many of these ecological impacts constitute permanent changes in the landscape. Once water aquifers are depleted in one region, they are not being replaced. Once a stream is diverted, a community that depends on it will never recover that access. Even if a forest is recreated, it has lost the original flora and fauna and does not hold flood waters, habitats for wildlife, nor control erosion. And on a large regional scale, once the Amazon forest reaches a tipping point and is no longer a carbon sink, there is no way back, with planetary consequences. This introduces a new set of risks and vulnerabilities, not only for mine-affected communities who are confronting more extreme weather events induced by climate change but for all life on earth.

ICMM companies are increasingly aware of the reputational and political importance of [mitigating these ecological impacts](#), including responsible closure and cleanup plans. Actual performance on these standards may vary, and smaller firms, or Major companies' subsidiaries, will likely not be as careful, but these standards give an opening for advocacy actions to hold companies accountable.

It is paradoxical that these ecological devastations caused by extractive industries can be the consequence of the search for more sustainable modes of living in other parts of the world, which has also been called “green extractivism,” and is part of wider structures of power inequalities (see point F).

C. Health and socio-cultural fabric of local communities

Mining can have serious impacts on the health of local communities, and especially on women's reproductive health. Young women who live near mining sites have difficulty conceiving, or give birth to children with disabilities. Lead and mercury poisoning in children have devastating long-term consequences for their development and cognitive abilities. Residents can also suffer from skin diseases due to water pollution and other illnesses such as gastric problems and cancers. Given the disproportionate effects of mining on women and children, it is not surprising that women are often at the forefront of the defense of life and territories when these are threatened by extractive projects, including leading Catholic communities' responses at the local level. As research on the role of the Catholic Church in natural resource governance in [Brazil, Colombia, and Mexico](#) highlighted, women are agents of change rather than mere victims.

Another frequent consequence of mining is damage to the social fabric of a local community. During the exploration phase, it is common for mining companies to lavish gifts or money on local communities to buy consent, leading to divisions between those who welcome the mine and its “gifts” and those who oppose it because the “gifts” will be accompanied by social and ecological deterioration later. Even before any mining operation and any ecological destruction happens, [research](#) has shown that the mere announcement of an exploration phase and a company setting an office in a territory weaken the cohesion of local communities and pit members against each other. In addition to the social dimension, mining affects the cultural identity of local communities, especially when the mining site overlaps with land that they consider sacred.

D. Displacement

Mining can lead to people being legally and/or forcibly removed from lands, even when those lands are ancestral holdings or are environmentally protected. People forcibly displaced from their lands by mining projects migrate to cities where they often become slum or street dwellers, and encounter further social and economic exclusion and violence. Women, especially Indigenous women, are at risk of suffering racial and gender abuse, including sex trafficking, and youth are particularly vulnerable to joining gangs due to a lack of employment alternatives.

In addition to direct displacement of local communities because their land is being taken by mining operations, there is also a slow displacement process. Water and soil contamination lead to local communities being unable to carry on their fishing or

agricultural livelihoods. Residents eventually have no other option but to migrate to cities in search of employment. Women are particularly at risk of being lured into domestic jobs and trafficked. These migration dynamics are exacerbated by climate change and unpredictable weather patterns.

E. Economic imbalances

Mining activities often generate unjust economic relations and deepen poverty dynamics. This can be as simple and direct as skewed or unfair employment contracts, which can be because of corruption, poor governance, weak bargaining power, or obstacles to the unionization of workers. Unjust economic relations can also be created because of a lack of local input in national economic development plans, such as minimum legal wage legislation. Another major economic imbalance lies in the lack of proportionality between the actual profits a mine produces and what workers earn and/or the social projects a company performs (via its so-called corporate social responsibility) to gain community consent. Companies generally pay very low taxes and operate with little financial transparency. When the amount of minerals extracted is not publicly known, mining companies can pay what they please. In Honduras, for example, mining companies only pay two percent tax on their profits, and one percent in Guatemala. There are also international legal loopholes which allow mining companies to avoid paying taxes.

The complexity of mineral trade is another challenge. Both raw and refined minerals are traded on an international scale, following market trends which can be very volatile. Minerals are not simply transported from the storage facilities of the seller to the facilities of the buyer. In fact, there can be many trading operations without physical movements of ore or refined minerals that can introduce extra layers of economic and social problems. Sadly, commodity markets often lack transparency; traders are reluctant to disclose where and when they purchase a given stock of minerals and at what price. This has negative consequences particularly for countries whose economies are highly dependent on commodities exports.

Another way that a mine can have adverse economic impacts on local communities is the creation [extractive export enclaves](#). These are circumstances where the resources and personnel necessary to operate a mine are brought from overseas, and host countries are excluded from participating in the extended value chain and the more lucrative processing of extracted materials. Moreover, the increase in foreign workers often leads to increases in alcoholism, substance abuse, and prostitution.

Mining activities can also lead to the surrender of the state as provider of public services. Mining companies dangle the offer of building roads, hospitals, schools, sports facilities, and other things. These are services that should be provided by the government from the taxes that it collects, including taxes from mining companies. This changes economic relations, reinforced by government and company discourses that the exploitation and extraction of minerals, which is destructive in its essence, is synonymous with social and infrastructure development. One workshop participant cited an example from Colombia where a community was offered electricity in exchange for consenting to mining operations on their territory, which led to their water source being contaminated.

F. Power inequalities

The economic, legal, and political power of mining firms dwarfs that of impacted communities. If mining companies oppose single groups or communities in isolation, they know that their power and resources will prevail. This does not mean that communities are powerless. It does mean that advocates and supporters of at-risk communities and workers must be mindful of, yet undaunted by, this imbalance of power. National and international legal networks, such as pro-bono lawyers, exist to help redress these imbalances, although they have capacity limits. More simply, communities networking with one another and with larger social institutions like the Catholic Church, other Christian denominations, organizations from other religious traditions, or secular groups can also help push against this power discrepancy.

In addition to the power inequalities between mining companies and local communities, there are also power inequalities at the global level. Certain countries, led by their energy and material consumption, are putting pressure on the Global South to exploit minerals needed for their energy transition, military equipment, and electronic goods. Foreign ministers can influence host governments to give multinational mining companies special tax breaks or other perks. Mining investments are financed by pension funds and banks, and citizens who have savings in these banks or whose pensions depend on these funds indirectly contribute to the problems generated by mining. This is why disinvestment from mining companies can be an effective action to challenge these power inequalities (see Part IV). In the case of “green extractivism”, those who consume far more energy than others need to be pressured to reduce their demand. Ultimately, it is the global economy and its consumer and military demands that are driving the expansion of mineral extraction. This is a very difficult but very important line of advocacy, but also one that global Church networks are well-situated to pursue.

G. Corruption

Corruption can exist at any level of civic life. It can exist among national leaders and ministers who are given benefits, either money or in the form of stocks or other perks, for helping mining companies skirt laws or even changing laws. Corruption can also occur with local civic leaders, as some Church personnel have reported experiences with royalties being paid by the government to local authorities who keep the money rather than using it to benefit the community. It can happen with tribal leaders, who often speak for their entire communities, meaning they are convenient targets for mining interests to buy off to obtain consent. Corruption can be especially prevalent in fragile states with low levels of governance, but it is widespread. Politicians often have financial or ownership stakes in mining companies. Government officials cannot be expected to pass legislation that will regulate the industry or enforce environmental and good governance laws if they have some ownership of mining companies or have received donations from them. This also happens at the local level where it is not uncommon for mayors or local governors to be either direct owners or sub-contractors for mining companies or are part of the mining value chain.

H. Short-term thinking

As mentioned above, one of the primary ways that mining companies can manipulate communities is by offering upfront benefits that a poor community finds attractive, leading them to ignore or simply accept as trade off the long-term harms of mining on their territories. These upfront benefits might include promises of employment, infrastructure development, or public buildings like schools or health clinics. These are worthwhile benefits, but they must be carefully weighed and assessed. Public works projects typically represent a disproportionately small amount of the total value a mine can produce. And the good of employment can be offset by the other problems mentioned in this section (workers’ rights and safety, fewer jobs than anticipated, health, breakdown of social fabric of local communities, water contamination, etc.). Moreover, jobs are only guaranteed as the mine is in operation. When the mine closes after the mineral deposits have been depleted in 10 or 20 years, the local community is abandoned and often left with land unsuited to other economic activities and is also left with long term mining waste such as toxic mine tailings and residue, with some forms like waste arising from uranium mining polluting for thousands of years. It is therefore vital that communities not be seduced by the allure of short-term benefits that will prevent the realization of integral human development in the long run. The consequences of mining for future generations need to be acknowledged. They are the ones who will most pay the price of pollution, biodiversity loss, and land degradation today.

I. Criminalized protest and danger for defenders

A common occurrence in many countries is the criminalization of legitimate protest and intimidation or threats against those who seek access to information or seek to defend human rights or the environment. This usually occurs when government entities seek to ease the way for mining companies' operations and to remove civil society obstacles to the project. Clear knowledge of local and national laws for protest, public gathering, and dissent is crucial. Also crucial is ensuring the safety of environmental and human rights defenders, who frequently face threats to their safety or even their lives. Many of these defenders are women who also face gender-specific threats such as sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based violence. One significant initiative in that regard for Latin America is the [Escazú Agreement](#) and its article 9 on the right to a safe environment for environmental defenders, with community protection and community accompaniment as key protective strategies.

J. Illicit armed groups and organized crime

In many areas, the specter of paramilitaries, rebel groups, or criminals controlling mines is a growing phenomenon. These groups introduce major risks of violence and are not subject to the kinds of legal pressures that can be applied to mining corporations. They are also far more likely to disregard the well-being of workers and of ecosystems. In such contexts, it is worth repeating from the introduction that the safety of researchers, activists, community leaders, or anyone working for justice, peace, and integral human development in the mining sector must be a paramount concern. Furthermore, the cooperation of national authorities and the exercise of peacebuilding strategies are absolute necessities. It is also vital to understand how these groups are able to get their mined products to market, and whether companies or individuals based in the EU, North America, or Australia are complicit in buying minerals from such sources as that is one important political-legal channel that can be utilized by justice and peace advocates.

PART III—JUDGE: THE CATHOLIC SOCIAL TRADITION

The key problems listed above touch on major themes of Catholic social teaching: caring for our common home, protecting human dignity, strengthening solidarity and the common good, and promoting integral human development to name a few. Catholic social teaching offers strong critiques of economic activities that disrupt ecosystem balance, endanger social cohesion and foment conflict, undermine health, worsen inequality, or fail to regard social and intergenerational justice.

We briefly review in this section what popes and bishops have said about mining in recent years, and highlight some key moral principles of the Catholic social tradition in relation to mining that can help frame responses. The [“Annotated Bibliography on the Catholic Social Tradition and Mining”](#) provides more in-depth resources.

Integral human development has been a cornerstone concept for guiding Church engagement on mining, with many documents denouncing the development models influencing extractive activity and questioning the narrative that mining brings development to an impoverished region. The concept of integral human development was coined in *Populorum Progressio* by **Pope St. Paul VI** in 1967. The core of the encyclical is the insistence on a model of development that is not reduced to economic growth and accounts for the development of the whole person in all her dimensions (economic, social, political, cultural, spiritual, psychological, ecological, etc.) (§14). And in separate speeches in [1970](#) and [1972](#), St. Paul VI emphasized the gravity of pending ecological decline, linking the importance of a healthy environment to the fullness aimed for in integral human development.



Photo: clemMTravel/Adobe Stock

Pope St. John Paul II continued to deepen this teaching by emphasizing the promotion of a culture of life. In his 1990 [World Day of Peace message](#) he noted the association between environmental and social degradation, the links between ecological harm and conflicts, the importance of global solidarity, education for ecological responsibility and conversion, the need for lifestyle changes, and the responsibility of the international community of states to lead change, all of which Pope Francis would later make central to his teaching. St. John Paul II also emphasized that markets and businesses, and this would include mining corporations and markets for minerals and metals, are to be oriented toward the promotion of the common good. He also spoke firmly against corruption, for example in [Veritatis Splendor](#), where he connected corruption to cultural problems of moral relativism which are “linked to particular ways of looking at man, society and the world” (§98) that are separated from deep human truth knowable by all peoples (§1).

Pope Benedict XVI pointed indirectly to mining-related issues in the post-synodal apostolic exhortation [Africæ Munus](#), in which he denounced the “plundering of the goods of the earth by a minority to the detriment of entire peoples” (§24). This exploitative activity prevents populations from achieving integral human development, and often comes at the cost of grave ecological destruction which further inhibits human well-being (§79-80). In addition, Benedict wrote [Caritas in Veritate](#) to promote the concept of integral human development and offered several extended reflections which touch on many themes relevant to the mining industry. This included the need to accept moral responsibility for supporting the development of technology without becoming overly focused on it; the problem of expanding inequality and ecological costs of consumerism; the fact that the hoarding of natural resources by some companies and power groups represents a grave obstacle to development and can trigger conflicts; and the need for states to regulate resource extraction so that economic and social costs be transparent and borne by those incurring them rather than low-income countries or future generations (§49-50). Furthermore, he insisted on the participation of local communities in the light of the principle of subsidiarity (§47, 57).

With **Pope Francis**, mining-related ecological and social issues became more explicitly addressed in the Church’s Magisterium, with [Laudato Si’](#) and its focus on integral ecology presenting a paradigmatic change. Humans are part of creation and it is the entirety of creation, not humans only, that is redeemed by Christ. *Laudato Si’* singled out mining as a driver of global inequality, with contamination, deforestation, and land dispossession in the Global South resulting from the need to satisfy market demands from the industrialized North (§51). Throughout his pontificate, Francis critiqued consumerism and a “throwaway culture” which goes against what Pope St. John Paul II called a “culture of life.” In his encyclical [Fratelli Tutti](#), Francis called for a “culture of encounter” to counteract a “globalization of indifference”, in which those living high-consumption and high-energy lifestyles are indifferent to the consequences for poor communities. There was also a shift during Francis’s papacy towards a more pronounced multi-species approach that recognizes the intrinsic value of non-human life and the centrality of the rights of nature in addition to human rights.

The plight of Indigenous Peoples was another central focus of Francis' papacy, culminating in the Amazon Synod in October 2019. In his post-synodal apostolic exhortation [Querida Amazonia](#), he criticized the “extractivist mentality” that views the Amazon solely as a source of resources, re-emphasized the need for integral economic and development models, and strongly advocated for the protection of Indigenous rights and territories that are often the most affected by mining activities (§9-14). Francis pointed the finger at the mining industry driven by “colonizing interests,” and whose consequences “are provoking a cry that rises up to heaven” (§9). Under Francis, three conferences addressing mining concerns were held at the Vatican. In the [2013](#) conference, Francis urged that decisions cannot be taken from the perspective of economic gains only; in [2015](#), he enumerated the many cries caused by mining; and in [2019](#), he reiterated a call for an economic paradigm change. It was in [2023](#), during an Apostolic visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan, that Francis offered a striking prophetic critique of the way mining interests have harmed the African continent: “Hands off Africa! Stop choking Africa: it is not a mine to be stripped or a terrain to be plundered. May Africa be the protagonist of its own destiny!”

In addition to these papal documents and statements, several national bishops' conferences and regional bishops' councils have issued pastoral letters and other documents to guide local churches in responding to the social and ecological consequences of mining. These are discussed in the [“Annotated Bibliography on the Catholic Social Tradition and Mining.”](#)

Ecclesiology plays a central role in enacting these papal teachings. Under Pope Francis, ecclesiology underwent a deepening of its missionary orientation. In [Evangelii Gaudium](#), which can be considered a programmatic document of his papacy, he stated that he prefers “a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security” (§49). Francis also deepened the Second Vatican Council's understanding of the Church as “People of God” (§111-134), in which all are missionary disciples, with “a real commitment to applying the Gospel to the transformation of society” (§102), in all the institutions and organizations which the Catholic Church is composed of, or in which its members are working. With its 1.3 billion members, and thousands of schools, hospitals, parishes, and social and development organizations across all continents and at different levels, the Catholic Church possesses unique institutional assets to leverage for social impact and uphold human rights and protect ecosystems, especially in these times of rising authoritarian governments.

However, and in the context of synodality, there is much room for rethinking current organizational structures to address mining issues. In many countries, bishops' conferences do not have the human or financial resources, nor the expertise, to accompany communities affected by mining in their territories or to take actions to protect their lives and promote their integral human development. This is an area where we invite readers of this document to examine current ecclesial structures and what can be done to improve their ability to respond. Some dioceses in Colombia are, for example, introducing a special social apostolate in relation to mining

Pope Leo XIV has already indicated that his pontificate will be characterised by a strong orientation to peace, justice, and truth, which, he emphasized, is a need and yearning shared by all individuals and peoples on the Earth. A week after his election, in an address at an [Audience with the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See](#), he noted that peace “engages and challenges each of us, regardless of our cultural background or religious affiliation, demanding first of all that we work on ourselves.” “Working for peace,” he continues, “requires acting justly,” and this implies overcoming global inequalities, and “striving to ensure respect for the dignity of every person,” concluding that “truly peaceful relationships cannot be built, also within the international community, apart from truth,” without which it is “difficult to build authentic relationships, since the objective and real premises of communication are lacking.” In July 2025, he introduced a new Mass for the Care of Creation. In his [homily of its first celebration](#), Leo asked for the conversion of all who do not yet see the urgency of caring for our common home and linked peacebuilding, reconciliation, and ecological care as the same mission received by Christ.

Key Relevant Themes

1. Dignity of the Human Person, with its corresponding Rights and Duties: This implies, among other things, the demand that workers in the mining industry be guaranteed labor rights and that mining operations respect the right of local communities to a healthy environment.

2. Preferential Option for the Poor and Vulnerable: Special consideration for those who are disproportionately affected by mining operations. The Church emphasizes the land rights of Indigenous Peoples as well as the right of local communities to free, prior, and informed consent. The earth itself is due special consideration as a vulnerable entity, defenseless against destructive and irresponsible human activity.

3. Solidarity, Justice, and the Common Good: This includes fighting corruption, advocating for the rights of local communities, and putting pressure on states to set and enforce regulatory frameworks for socio-environmental protection. This also implies exerting consumer and investor pressure on companies for better conduct. The current dynamic of hugely disproportionate energy consumption in wealthy countries, including renewable energy consumption with mining consequences to enable it, constitutes grave injustice that violates the common good.

4. Integral Human Development, Integral Ecology, and a New Economic Model: The Church condemns extractive-based development policies which offer short term economic and social benefits, or benefits to a few, and which cause irreparable harm. It not only calls to develop renewable energies, but an entirely new economic model based on care for people and the earth, simple lifestyles, and joyful sobriety.

5. Subsidiarity, Participation, and Dialogue: Decisions about mining affecting local populations should not be imposed by distant authorities without the consent and participation of those directly affected. Subsidiarity can also demand that higher social orders collect local experiences to represent and defend local communities at higher levels of governance, and sometimes that they coordinate responses so that communities can be empowered by having a broad strategy and platform to follow rather than working in isolation. Not only does the Church emphasize the need for prior consent for mining operations, but it also encourages that all stakeholders come together in open and honest dialogue to discuss concrete mining operations and their consequences. Transparency is vital to legitimate dialogue and informed participation.

6. Universal Destination of Goods and the Social Function of Property: Mining companies must prioritize the common good over mere profit. The universal destination of goods challenges governments and mining companies to consider the long-term effects of their activities. However, one important caveat is to make sure that the universal destination.

PART IV–ACT: MODES OF ENGAGEMENT

The following modes of action have been derived from examples of mining engagement from the worldwide Catholic community. It is an attempt to provide options and details to help those seeking to address concerns of justice and peace in mining make an informed decision about the most prudent and effective way forward. Different problems call for different answers, different circumstances allow for different possibilities, and different positions within the Church carry different responsibilities. For each mode identified, we include some examples, describe the circumstances and assets required for success, and discuss some key challenges and cautions. The different modes of engagement are connected to one another. They are also mutually reinforcing, such as capacity building for better monitoring and documentation which can enable more effective advocacy. The different modes reflect the different levels and organizations of the Church and the roles they each play. For example, for local churches, the mode of engagement may be more about monitoring human rights violations and alerting; for international organizations, it may be more about policy advocacy and global disinvestment campaigns. It is also worth mentioning that “Act” also includes monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of Church actions themselves and **critical self-examination**.

One mode of engagement is, however, fundamental to all, and that is **pastoral closeness** to mine-affected communities and **accompaniment** on a journey toward reconciliation and justice. As Pope Francis reminded in [Fratelli Tutti](#), “we do not serve ideas, we serve people” (§115). An accompanying Church operates as the “field hospital” Francis envisioned, and prioritizes the experiences of victims, whether those victims be nations being dealt with unjustly, communities or individuals experiencing inequity and violence, or the earth being destroyed. He often referred to the image of pastors having the “smell of the sheep,” such as in his [homily for the Chrism Mass](#) in April 2015. The pastors of the Church and their associates offer long-term commitment to problems that require long-term solutions. Accompaniment builds on the proximity and fidelity that Church leaders have to the people, and it provides a foundation for hope and a measure of consolation.

But accompaniment also means that the Church does not try to claim roles that are not appropriate to its mission. The Church is not a political institution, but it is a very important civil society actor in many contexts. Accompaniment means supporting and empowering people in these civic and political realms and not taking them over (see below section F “Cross-cutting strategies”), always keeping in mind that people are ultimately artisans of their destiny, of their own integral human development, and of their own path towards holiness ([Populorum Progressio](#), §65).

We wish to note up front that for all the different modes of engagement, **financial, human and organizational resources** are a major need. Institutional commitment to have dedicated personnel working on mining issues, and adequate ecclesial structures that bridge the local, national, and international levels will be a requirement whatever the type of engagement. For example, some countries like the Philippines, Brazil, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo have dedicated structures within their national bishops’ conferences that work on integral ecology and issues arising from mining. We recognize that funding will be a perennial challenge. In many cases, relationships with funding or granting organizations or institutions in countries with more access to funding streams is a major component of successful action. Finding similar arrangements will be a necessary part of most all of the modes of engagement identified below.

Some cautionary notes before we analyze different possible modes of engagement by the Catholic Church on mining issues.

- 1 It is paramount to take stock and do a mapping within one’s context of the different entities within the Church which can act in relation to mining, and what other organizations could be possible allies. This would reflect a synodal approach, beginning by asking, “With whom could mining-affected communities journey together on their road to justice and peace?”

- 2 The modes of engagement described in this section focus on structural change. It is important to bear in mind that these structural actions are not mutually exclusive of immediate responses to locally affected communities, such as tending to the wounds or health of mine workers and populations who live near contaminated sites, giving shelter to those who have lost their houses to mining disasters, giving psycho-social support to those involved in nonviolent resistance, or other needs, as well as fostering social cohesion and unity to overcome divisions resulting from different views about mining activities.
- 3 Before any mining companies start their exploratory activities, a critical aspect of Catholic actors' engagement will be facilitating local communities' right to say "no", and raising consciousness of the real long term impacts of future mining activities, as well as laying bare manipulation through "gift-giving" and tactics used by companies to divide communities and make it easier to obtain consent.
- 4 In addition to engaging on mining issues as such, debunking the myth of unlimited material progress (*Laudato Si'* §78) is crucial. This means developing an alternative economic model based on joyful sobriety and low consumption lifestyles and changing consumption patterns for the whole worldwide Church. Helping to develop alternative livelihoods that are in harmony with local ecosystems is valuable in this regard. Many mining-affected communities are spearheading agro-ecology projects, such as the Amazonian Farms project of the Vicaria del Sur in the Archdiocese of Florencia in the Colombian Amazon ([Finca Amazonica](#)), the agro-ecology national initiative of the [Pastoral Land Commission](#) of the Brazilian Conference of Bishops, or the alternative livelihoods and agro-ecology program for women of the [Good Shepherd Sisters in Kolwesi](#) in the DRC.
- 5 As noted in the introduction, the work to defend human rights and protect the environment is a dangerous venture, especially in the area of mining. The Latin American workshop participants highlighted the importance of the four rights of the [Escazú Agreement](#) in their context: the right of access to environmental information, the right of public participation in the environmental decision-making process, the right of access to justice in environmental matters, and the right to effective protection for rights defenders. These rights are fundamental and the Church can play a critical role in ensuring them, and in supporting those whose advocacy and defense of rights has been criminalized.
- 6 Many workshop participants emphasized that the Church's work on increasing transparency and addressing corruption in the extractive sector is more effective when the Church itself is transparent and not colluding with or profiting from the mining industry. One workshop participant mentioned cases where parish priests participated in labor hires for mining companies or sat on the boards of their philanthropic foundations. Demand for accountability is not a unidirectional privilege. Dioceses in [Brazil](#) and [the Philippines](#) have declared a ban on parishes and Church organizations receiving donations from mining companies. In addition to a non-acceptance policy, these dioceses are also calling for disinvestment of all Church actors from mining companies, to mirror the global [campaign of disinvestment from fossil fuels](#), while recognizing that keeping some shares can be an important tool to keep a seat at the table to hold mining companies accountable during shareholder meetings. Disinvesting from banks and pension funds that finance harmful mining activities and disinvesting from mining companies that do not respect the right to free prior and informed consent³ were highlighted by several participants of the Bogotá gathering as a very important and effective action for the Catholic Church globally and a good example of exercising solidarity.

³ See "[Recharging Community Consent: Mining companies, battery minerals, and the battle to break from the past](#)," by Oxfam America, on the record of 43 mining companies in respecting FPIC in the extraction of selected transition minerals.

- 7 A point especially emphasized at the Bogotá conference is that all forms of action will be enhanced by prayer, spiritual practices, and formation that may be clearly connected to planned actions or stand on their own as contributions to strengthen the causes of justice and peace. Eco-spirituality, in the sense of nurturing relationships with God, nature, and others as an integrated whole, and maintaining connections with rivers and forests, can be an important source of strength and hope when undertaking actions despite setbacks

A. Documentation and communication



and challenges.

Mining often occurs in out of the way areas, and without intentional efforts to document violations and make them known, those violations can easily remain cloaked in obscurity. Recording and compiling data about human rights violations, ecological damages, criminalization of protest, threats or violence against land defenders, or other illegal activities can provide vital foundations for advocacy and catalyze policy change. Communications efforts can also help publicize important occurrences in legislatures or courts that might be hidden beneath benign-seeming complexity or ignored by mainstream news outlets. Press statements, social media, radio programming, or reports can help explain issues, interpret actions by governments or mining companies, or just raise public awareness about consequential events and policies. The examples below reflect three important actions that Church organizations and their partners can take: data collection, case

studies, and communication campaigns.

1. Examples

An example of **data collection** is the [Observatory of Mining Conflicts in Latin America](#) (OCMAL), a coalition of secular and religious organizations engaged in mining advocacy. Its central function is documenting and disseminating information about violence, human rights violations, and environmental damages related to the mining industry. Another good example, rooted in the Church of England, is the [Global Tailings Portal](#). After the tailings dam collapse in Brumadinho, Brazil, in January 2019, the Pensions Board of the Church of England, along with the Swedish Council on Ethics, launched the [Investor Mining and Tailings Safety Initiative](#) to study the status of [tailings dams](#) around the world in order to support strategies for ethical investing. Yet another example is the [Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative \(EITI\)](#) where member countries commit to disclose information about extractives. Church organizations can play a role in ensuring countries meet the EITI standards.

Many Church organizations have developed **case studies** related to mining. One example is from the Natural Resources Commission of the National Episcopal Conference of the Congo (CERN-CENCO), which wrote an in-depth case study of mining in the territory of [Walikale](#) in the DRC. Another is a joint project of the Jesuit research centers [CINEP](#) in Bogotá, Colombia, and [ALBOAN](#) in Bilbao, Spain. Their report examined gold mining's impact on communities near the [El Alacrán mine](#) in the southern part of the Colombian department of Córdoba. In India, the [Bagaicha Institute](#), a Jesuit social center, led a detailed case study of a land acquisition process by a coal company in an Indigenous Adivasi area in the state of Jharkhand, and resulting human rights violations and displacement.

In the Philippines, [Alyansa Tigil Mina](#) (ATM) is an example of an organization with a sustained, multifaceted **communication campaign** on mining issues. ATM is a large coalition of organizations, several of which are Catholic ones including universities, diocesan social action centers, and religious orders. ATM issues frequent press statements, social media posts, and newsletters that comment on national and local events that impact mining.

2. Circumstances for success

In the above examples, especially for documentation of cases, **time** is a key factor. While the projects deal with urgent problems, the products they aimed to produce were not urgent. Documentation requires patience to be done effectively, and it also requires **commitment** over a period of time if the data to be collected is to be robust and valuable.

The examples also demonstrate a **clear focus**. The goal of what they want to document is specifically defined. Mining is a complicated reality, and documenting every dimension is too dense of a task. Specific goals are needed. They may be **geographic**, focusing on telling the story of one particular location, or **topical**, with possible issues apart from the ones above including things such as soil contamination, employment practices, deforestation, children's health, women's reproductive health, or violence against women, to name a few.

Collecting data to document in mining areas can be highly dangerous. **Safety** must be a primary concern. Some risk is likely unavoidable, but documentation work should not be carried out if it will put data-collectors, journalists, researchers, or others contributing to the effort at unnecessary risk.

3. Assets needed

Documenting requires a **communications platform** to make information available. A partner institution with a highly visible internet presence is one possible way to meet this need. Personnel with skill in data presentation is also needed. Two helpful assets are radio stations and social media platforms. One workshop participant noted that in the Philippines, all 85 dioceses had Facebook pages and that there were 52 diocesan radio stations. Yet, none of these communications channels were used to give voice to the communities affected by mining or to inform the wider public about human rights violations and ecological destruction. Another participant mentioned an ecumenical initiative in Canada which interspersed a country music program on a local radio channel with information about the dangers of uranium mining in the area.

Adequate human and financial resources are needed, suited to the scale of the intended focus. A single community case study may require a skilled individual or small team; documenting a topic across locations would likely require a large team, but may not depending on the type of information sought. For example, the Global Tailings Portal was developed largely from a survey of the industry, while the OCMAL database requires reporting from multiple on-the-ground data collectors from a coalition of agencies.

Persons involved in documentation work need **skills in ethnographic research and data science**. Depending on the type of project, these skills may not need to be expert level, but facility with collecting information from the field and/or presenting and analyzing data is important.

4. Challenges

Data can change quickly and become outdated. Documenting the experiences of vulnerable communities and the various problems they face requires sustained efforts to **keep information current**.

Developing **thick information** that is substantial enough to warrant use in other settings, like research, advocacy, or education, requires skill and proficiency, organizational commitment, and enough resources to do the depth of work required for the length of time needed.

Threats, intimidation, and violence are not uncommon for those who work to unmask violations associated with the mining industry. Accordingly, **safety** is a perpetual challenge in this type of front-line work, and as stated above, must be a central concern and necessary condition for carrying it out.

For a communication strategy, the **volume of information** that can potentially be reported is very large. Keeping up with it, and deciding how to filter and focus it, can be a daunting task.

B. Training and capacity-building

To engage with the mining industry requires a wide range of specialized knowledge. And effective advocacy and peacebuilding work of any kind in any context requires honed skills and understanding of how to navigate policy and legal channels and complex community dynamics. This can be a difficult reality calling for things well outside the expertise of those working for and leading the Church. Catholic universities can play an important role in that regard by providing the needed expertise, such as geologists, hydrologists, public health specialists, biologists, legal experts, etc. There are also individuals and organizations that share the Church's values of justice, peace, and integral ecology, and who possess important skills and assets, with whom Church actors can partner to enact effective change.

The aims of training and capacity-building can vary: legal literacy, mediation and advocacy skills, scientific understanding, land management, alternative livelihoods, or business planning, to name a few. The examples below are chosen in part to try to represent this range of possibilities.

1. Examples

In 2013, Kenya announced discovery of oil and mineral deposits that would figure prominently in national economic development plans. Several of these resource discoveries were in regions with high ecological vulnerability and established conflict. A team of researchers from Hekima University College led [a study](#) to identify knowledge gaps among the local population and government officials. Hekima responded by creating a program, [Chartered Mediation in Extractive Industries](#), to educate and empower community members to form systems of leadership at the local level. This example reflects training in **legal literacy** and **mediation and advocacy skills**.

The Madre de Dios region in the Peruvian Amazon includes the government's designated corridor for small-scale gold mining. But much of the mining occurs illegally, either because of miners not receiving proper permits or not following regulations correctly. This has led to serious ecological damages, public health problems, sex trafficking as mining boom towns emerge, and loss of traditional livelihoods for many Indigenous groups. With its partner organization [Centro de Innovación Científica Amazónica](#) (CINCIA), [Cáritas Madre de Dios](#) helps Indigenous Peoples and rural communities develop land management plans,

informed by scientific understanding from CINCIA's research work.

Some communities may choose to move ahead with mining, either granting a corporation exploitation rights or carrying out small-scale mining on its own. With corporations, training in negotiation or legal literacy, like the Chartered Mediators program above, can be helpful to ensure greater accountability and more equitable distribution of benefits. In cases of small-scale mining, training and planning assistance can help make sure that mining occurs in the most sustainable and viable ways possible. Another project supported by Cáritas Madre de Dios and CINCIA is [AMATAF](#), which is a coalition of artisanal miners who work together to mine gold without mercury and with responsible land management, and with a **business plan** to bring it to market. It is the first alluvial mining organization certified fair-mined in the Amazon. Another example of assisting artisanal miners is in the DRC, where the Natural Resources Commission of the National Episcopal Conference of the Congo, in 2020, led workshops for **legal literacy** that would enable artisanal miners to better understand and navigate transparency regulations, like the United States' [Dodd-Frank Act](#), so that they would not be blocked from market access.

2. Circumstances of success

Training and capacity building presumes an **active civil society**. There must be a receptive audience—social leaders and engaged citizens—to be trained and empowered.

The community and civil society need to **share values** with the Church in these areas, especially in line with integral ecology, integral human development, and integral peace.

Transparency is needed in order to allow civil society members being empowered to defend their rights and build peace. This includes knowing details about how mining operations are being negotiated and carried out. Those details are essential for being able to build effective and targeted action campaigns.

Capacity-building and training will be much less impactful as one-off activities. Successful work in this area will involve some degree of **institutionalization and replicability** so that a critical mass of mediators, advocates, and leaders can be created and sustained. Working with universities could be valuable in that regard, such as a [human rights course](#) for the Amazon region run by the University Program of the Amazon in partnership with Jesuit Worldwide Learning, or the University of Deusto running a [3-month Indigenous rights course](#) for Latin American Indigenous environmental defenders in Bilbao, Spain.

3. Assets needed

Expertise is a necessity for training and capacity building, but it is expertise that will be frequently available within Catholic spaces. Many Catholic development agencies, like Catholic Relief Services or Caritas, peacebuilding organizations, like Sant'Egidio or Pax Christi, or universities include people with expertise in areas like law, mediation, and development. Secular partners with similar values can also be valuable contributors, such as the organization [Pure Earth](#) which has assisted the AMATAF coalition in Peru with several technical dimensions of their gold production operation.

To conduct training courses, **safe and accessible spaces** are needed. For some communities, travel may be prohibitive or difficult and trainers or capacity-builders will need to go to the communities. If it is possible, it can be very effective to bring those being trained together in a central location to focus and work together for a period of time. Schools, universities, diocesan offices, churches, or community centers are examples of spaces that may be suitable for these kinds of gatherings.

As with any educational endeavor, **materials and resources** are required. If circumstances and/or goals are unique, these materials may need to be produced, but it may also be possible to use or adapt materials from other sources that have done similar work.

4. Challenges

A significant number of community leaders that would be targets for training and capacity-building are employed outside of the advocacy space. And many are women with responsibilities for children and other family members. Accordingly, training sessions must be flexible and account for **work hours and family care** that potential trainees will have to work around.

Mining often involves heavy **migration**. This makes communities around mining sites more transitory, and introduces many socio-economic challenges, like separated families, economic benefits being carried away from the local area, and community members without a stake in the area's long-term sustainability. Strategies like training and capacity-building, which often focus in different ways on community-building, must carefully navigate these migration dynamics.

Some of the projects that would be outcomes of these interventions may require significant **capital costs**, such as implementing a reforestation plan or setting up alternative livelihood systems. Given funding challenges, the end goal of a training or capacity-building project and how it can be financially supported should be in view from the beginning.

C. Advocacy

Advocacy can take many forms, such as legal prosecution, legislative reform, or disinvestment campaigns, and it can be targeted at many different social levels, from the local to the international. The law is an area where many Church actions have taken place, such as guaranteeing the legal protection of Indigenous territories, demanding reparations for right to health violations, and others. In some cases, Church organizations are one of the plaintiffs in a court case. Facilitating dialogue roundtables and convening different actors to mediate a way forward amid conflict has also been, in some countries such as [Peru](#) and [Colombia](#), an important role the Church plays in the policy arena. In whatever form, the extensive networks, community presence, moral voice, and broad reach of the Church give it great and distinct potential for impact in the advocacy space.

1. Examples

[Derechos Humanos y Medio Ambiente–Puno, Peru](#) (DHUMA) was founded in 1988 as the Vicariate of Solidarity within the Catholic Prelature of Juli. In 2008, DHUMA became an independent civil society organization, but it has maintained its Catholic identity. It works in the area of legal advocacy for Indigenous Peoples in mining-affected areas trying to navigate the law and assert and defend their rights. It is able to do this in large part thanks to having trained lawyers leading its organization.

In 2017, El Salvador became the first country to pass legislation for a total ban on metal mining. The ban was achieved with support from the leadership of [the Catholic Church](#), which helped consolidate national support, and academics from the Jesuit-run Central American University, who drafted proposed legislation and provided data and research to make the potential harms of mining in the country known. The ban was sadly [overturned](#) by President Bukele in December 2024 and a new bill is being introduced that will grant the government sole authority over mining activities.

In 2018, in Minas Gerais, Brazil, communities organized around a parish in the Belisário district to [reject a bauxite mine](#) and commissioned their own environmental impact assessment, as the only assessment done was that of the company. In 2016, [Vicaria del Sur](#) in the Colombian Amazon also led an alternative environmental impact assessment, through which they stopped an oil project from going forward.

In the Philippines, ATM contributed to developing and implementing a mine performance audit in 2016, led by the government's environmental department, as a tool to hold mining companies accountable and verify their claims of "responsible mining." The audit monitored and assessed a mining company's compliance with environmental laws and their own contractual obligations, and enumerated their violations, with evidence, so that they could be easily tracked.

In Madagascar, the bishops' conference launched, with the support of Catholic Relief Services, the [Taratra project](#) which aimed at ensuring that mining companies operating in the Toliara province in Southwest Madagascar have a positive impact on improving the living conditions of local populations. The bishops demanded an increase in taxation and redistributive measures.

2. Circumstances for success

Advocacy campaigns are more likely to be effective if there is **stable governance** through which advocacy can be directed. This includes a functional judiciary. Activities in this area will be less successful in situations of weak governance and high corruption, but advocacy can also be a tool to work against weak governance and corruption, especially if it can leverage international support.

The goal of advocacy should have a reasonable amount of **public support**. In some cases, such as the El Salvador example above, forging public support and combating disinformation that might inhibit it can be a part of the advocacy work.

Advocacy work should have a **clear and targeted goal**, such as a specific piece of legislation being sought, a particular legal dispute being resolved, or a distinct regulatory reform. Any of these kinds of goals, and many others, can be reasonable. But there needs to be a defined aim. Such aims may often emerge as responses to given circumstances or actions by governments or mining companies.

While not strictly a necessary factor for success, some forms of advocacy can be greatly enhanced by complementary or even primarily focused **efforts in home countries** of mining corporations or Global North countries that account for a majority of consumer demand. Such efforts are much more feasible when focusing on minerals that are on conflict or critical mineral lists. An example of this is the legal work conducted by [CINEP with Swiss multinational Glencore](#) over the Cerrejón coal mine in Colombia, or the advocacy of the bishops in the DRC to bring about the United States' Dodd-Frank Act on conflict minerals.

Advocacy also requires **a range of strategies** to apply pressure and achieve the desired goal, and **a large coalition** at different levels. This can range from organizations in the Global North to disinvest from mining companies, protests against Major companies' headquarters in Australia, Europe, or North America, protests against Junior and subsidiary companies in the company's national headquarters, lobbying a national assembly, launching a large scale media and information campaign, or others.

3. Assets needed

Advocacy works best when it is done with skill and it is well informed. **Experts** with advocacy skills and the ability to give a campaign a robust base of understanding with regard to the technical issues at stake are needed. Training tools for advocacy skills can be useful, such as Pax Christi International's guide on [advocacy and peace](#). When the Church is called



Photo: Henri Muhiya

to mediate conflict, this requires diplomatic skills in conflict-mediation. Secular NGOs and other groups can also be strong allies in this regard, such as [Publish What You Pay](#), which can provide transparency data to strengthen the Church's advocacy.

Access to civic leaders, policymakers, and legislators is needed for advocacy work. In some cases, a country's civil society may be structured in ways that ordinary citizens are readily able to voice concerns to leaders. In other situations, such as international advocacy, that access may require networks of collaborators or opportunities created out of personal relationships.

Institutional commitment is a vital way for Church organizations to harness their capacity in the advocacy sphere. Effective advocacy is a slow, prolonged process that requires sustained attention, resources, and effort.

Successful advocacy campaigns are strongly organized. A **dedicated coordinator**, or coordinating team, is very important. Part of the institutional commitment to advocacy should include dedicating resources to making sure adequate advocacy leadership is in place.

4. Challenges

Weak governance or corruption present significant difficulties for advocacy. Advocacy work for good governance may need to precede advocacy for specific issues of governance like mining regulation. In the DRC, for example, the bishops' conference is very active on mining, but much of its public advocacy focuses on elections and governance because it is a necessary condition for impact in the mining sector.

The **fragility** of advocacy success can be a major frustration. As El Salvador demonstrates, advocacy successes can be dependent on the government which can always overturn legislation or decisions approved by previous regimes.

Advocacy is greatly enhanced when there is **unity among stakeholders**. Such unity can be very difficult as community ideas on mining can vary greatly. Advocacy should focus on practicable goals that reflect justice and sustainability, and that represent points of reasonable consensus among stakeholders.

Advocacy work calls for **balancing prophetic and policy discourse** (see [Tobias Winright's](#) chapter in *Catholic Peacebuilding and Mining*). The experiences of suffering by many mining-affected communities, and distrust of mining companies, can lead practitioners and peacebuilders to adopt a strong prophetic condemnation of the mining industry. Such critiques have their place, such as for defending the right to say "no." In some cases, advocacy was successful because it was not gradualist, such as the case of the [Dongria Kondh](#) against Vedanta in the state of Odisha in India, or the resistance against [Sagittarius Mining](#) and its Tampakan copper-gold site in Mindanao in the Philippines. Such nonviolent, uncompromising resistance is a very important element of anti-mining struggles. However, in other cases, advocacy will be more effective if it is rooted in policy discourse that tries to work within realistic limitations, soberly reconcile conflicting points of view, and accept some degree of accommodation and gradualism.

Relatedly, one of the Church's roles may be mediating between different stakeholders with competing interests. In such circumstances it must be careful to **maintain a moral voice**, remaining focused on key principles like human dignity, the common good, care for creation, and preferential option for the poor and vulnerable.

Advocacy successes can have **unintended consequences**. For example, after successful advocacy to get the United States' Dodd-Frank legislation passed on conflict minerals, many artisanal miners saw their [situations worsen](#) at first because of difficulties navigating the new regulations. Trying to forecast these kinds of difficulties is prudent, as is planning ahead to make sure communities and individuals have resources to adjust to new circumstances that successful advocacy might bring about.

D. Nonviolent civil resistance

Nonviolent civil resistance is a strategy that Church actors can use to oppose a government decision or law or to protest when governments or companies ignore laws without consequence. This can include approval of a disputed environmental impact assessment and demand for a new assessment to be carried out by an independent body, opposition to the government granting a mining company license to explore or operate, revendication for environmental laws, or agreed upon social compensation and environmental mitigation plans not being respected. Churches possess a large array of creative ways for undertaking nonviolent actions to press governments to revert their decisions or fulfill their legal obligations. Often, churches will rely on their liturgical and symbolic resources to convey a message, such as eucharistic liturgies celebrated near exploration or exploitation sites, pilgrimages, prayer vigils, and others. In many cases, the Church's involvement will include partnership with other actors, often secular, and their symbolic and liturgical actions will be part of larger nonviolent types of action such as marches or road blocks.

1. Examples

In the department of Caquetá in the Colombian Amazon, Vicaría del Sur, via its "[Commissions for the Life of Water](#)," participated in a bridge block to oppose trucks entering an oil exploration site. The blockade lasted for two months and was successful in renegotiating a new environmental impact assessment, which eventually led to the exploration not going ahead. The group used spiritual practices, such as baptisms, pilgrimages, and stations of the cross, to make connections between the sacredness of water and life and the destruction of life the project would entail.

In Chiapas, Mexico, [Modévite](#), a movement linked to the Jesuit Misión Bachajón, undertook marches unifying different communities affected by a highway project, which would open the way for mining companies to start extractive activities in the region. These marches took place over several days under the form of a pilgrimage and included human rights training activities when the march stopped in villages along the way.

The Catholic Church in the Philippines has lent support in several instances of local nonviolent resistance against mining. In Brooke's Point, Palawan, a mining company refused to observe a local government order to halt operations due to environmental risks. Bishops Socrates Mesiona and Broderick Pabill voiced [public support](#) for protests that blocked the company's access road. And Fr. Salvador Saturnino, along with 11 other priests, [celebrated mass](#) for the protesters. The protest in Brooke's Point was inspired by a similar protest on Sibuyan Island that lasted over a year beginning in February 2023. The protest in Sibuyan was coordinated by [Living Laudato Si' Philippines](#), a lay movement that was begun in 2018 to promote disinvestment from environmentally harmful activities.

Another good example comes from [a case](#) in Panama that was presented in October 2024 at a meeting of Latin American bishops whose dioceses were affected by mining. In 2023, a license for copper exploitation was renewed to *Minera Panamá*, a subsidiary of First Quantum Minerals, which operated in biodiversity-rich areas. Several organized demonstrations subsequently broke out. [Iglesias y Minería](#), the Archdiocese of Panama, through its Caritas agency and its Justice and Peace Commission, and Panama members of [REPAM](#) were involved, and encouraged Catholic laypeople to join the demonstrations. These led the Supreme Court to declare the mining contract unconstitutional and the president of Panama announced that the copper mine would therefore be closed.

When not directly taking part in nonviolent protests, Catholic organizations can support protesters by bringing food for people who stay encamped, blocking a road, offering moral and emotional support, or, in extreme circumstances, attending to the wounds of protesters who may be injured by police or military violence.

2. Circumstances for success

For nonviolent resistance to be successful, there needs to be a **clear goal or demand**, e.g., revocation of an approved environmental impact assessment, or legal consequences for a company acting illegally or in bad faith. It is also helpful for those goals to be **linked to other strategies** for legal action or advocacy, and linked to a **formation** element to educate and organize people around the values driving the nonviolent action, such as human rights or ecology.

Most of all, nonviolent resistance is most successful in **democratic environments** where governments and businesses do not resort to criminalization or violence to curb opposition or dissent and are responsive to people's demands. With the growing trend of [criminalization of environmental protests worldwide](#), the space for nonviolent resistance, and civic space more generally, may be shrinking. However, the Church may possess here a unique resource, with church buildings offering a space for civil society to come together as was the case in the 1970s and 1980s in Latin America to confront authoritarian regimes, or in South Africa to confront apartheid.

3. Assets needed

Nonviolent resistance does not require many resources beyond **time** and **organization**. It needs a leading person or institution to organize the protest and articulate its specific demands and rationale. It needs people to commit time to attend, as well as a supportive financial and emotional environment if the protest extends to several days or weeks.

In contexts of repression and violence, **formation in nonviolence** is critical. In the case of Chiapas in Mexico, the diocese of San Cristobal de las Casas created, under the leadership of Bishop Samuel Ruiz, the organization [Servicios y Asesoría para la Paz](#) (Serapaz) to mediate between the Zapatista Army of National Liberation and the Mexican government. It now works on nonviolence formation in the region to help local communities oppose government and drug cartel violence.

4. Challenges

The greatest challenge to nonviolent resistance is the **violence of state actors, police, and private security hired by mining companies**, as highlighted by a recent paper by the [UN Special Rapporteur on Environmental Defenders](#) under the Aarhus Convention. In the face of such violence, **international visibility** of the local communities' demands is paramount. This was true, for example, in the case of [Berta Cáceres](#) in Honduras and the organization she co-founded, the Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras (COPINH). Although not directly a Church organization, COPINH has links to the Catholic Church and participated in the World Meeting of Popular Movements convened by Pope Francis in 2014. Her murder in March 2016, shortly after winning the [Goldman Environmental Prize](#), led to the cancellation of a dam project on the Gualcarque river following disinvestment from major Western companies, including Siemens. Without such visibility, protests can often end without achieving significant change.

The **public perception** of a protest can be difficult to keep under control. Companies with huge assets can maneuver narratives to make protesters look bad. This occurred in El Salvador where a mining company seeking to end the effort to ban metal mining carried out a disinformation campaign that required strategic counter-measures from involved Church actors.

Many of the above modes of engagement are interconnected. Documentation, advocacy, training and capacity building, communications, and nonviolent resistance often go together, with different emphasis or intensity at different moments.

E. Cross-cutting strategies

Underpinning these different modes of engagement, there are some cross-cutting ways of proceeding, all rooted in the closeness of the Church to the members of the People of God. As Pope Francis expressed it in *Evangelii Gaudium*: “Our commitment does not consist exclusively in activities or programmes of promotion and assistance; what the Holy Spirit mobilizes is not an unruly activism, but above all an attentiveness which considers the other ‘in a certain sense as one with ourselves.’ [...] Only on the basis of this real and sincere closeness can we properly accompany the poor on their path of liberation” (§199).

1. Practicing subsidiarity

Such closeness to the lives of those who are afflicted implies **subsidiarity**, that is, the principle that problems should be dealt with at the lowest level possible, but the highest level necessary. Subsidiarity is rooted in the principle that each individual person holds transcendent value that places moral demands on economies and governments. As the United States bishops observed in 1986, “The economy should serve people, not the other way around.” It is this principle that drives the Catholic approach to problems of poor governance and corruption. As Pope St. John Paul II taught in *Veritatis Splendor*, it is because of the human dignity of each individual that political and public leaders must deal honestly and transparently with the peoples they serve (§98-101).⁴ The principle of subsidiarity grounds engagement with civic, economic, and political entities in the fundamental moral truth of human dignity.

In the case of mining, subsidiarity would say that the communities impacted by mining need to be centered and empowered to the greatest extent possible, but that the national, regional, and/or global nature of the issues at stake, like climate change, violent conflict, or economic justice, mean that community goals and decisions need to be translated into broader frameworks. Action at the mine site needs to be connected to action in the company headquarters and the national and international legislations under which its activities fall. This involves connecting local levels with higher level resources and opportunities, like connecting impacted communities with major mining legislation like the European Union Critical Raw Minerals Act, or UN platforms such as the [UN Forum on Business and Human Rights](#), or the [Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development](#). One of the Church’s strengths is its ability to engage on multiple levels of society through its unique organizational structures that bridge the local and global, and coordinate those engagements. Subsidiarity means being deliberate and prudent about calibrating that engagement and coordination. National bishops’ conferences and regional councils should work to establish common platforms on mining so that local communities are able to follow clear guidance and act from a position of greater strength by being part of a larger support network. Such higher-level coordination can also mitigate the possibility of local peoples being seduced by promises of immediate benefits without understanding potential harms or tradeoffs, and help integrate responses to mining with other policy priorities, such as a national peace process or a campaign for environmental advocacy. And whatever form it takes, it is vital that subsidiarity follow the model of **synodality**, with all Church actors, lay or ordained, women or men, walking and deciding together. This could include creating dedicated ecology ministries within diocesan structures, such as the [Eco-Convergence initiative](#) in the Philippines which links communities and civil society organizations. The Amazon Synod in October 2019 was a pioneering example of synodality which led to the sufferings of the peoples in the Amazon region being a central focus of the Church globally. It also led to new ecclesial structures to better respond to the socio-ecological challenges of the region in ways reflective of subsidiarity.

⁴ St. John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, 6 August 1993, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_06081993_veritatis-splendor.html.

2. Building coalitions

A second cross-cutting strategy of engagement is **coalition building**. With few exceptions, the examples referenced above owe much of their success to having robust coalitions at the local as well as at the national and global levels, and to partnering with secular organizations and ones from other Christian denominations or other faiths. Mining companies thrive on the skewed power dynamics that their financial advantages grant them; similarly, corruption is often protected by the typically greater power that governments have relative to civic organizations and communities. There are many organizations that share the Church's values and vision with regard to development, peace, and ecology. Partnering to amplify one another's power is a vital way of countering those power imbalances. Coalitions are important means of resource and workload sharing, finding additional funding streams, widening activities to have more significant impact, and sharing wisdom and best practices for new engagements. But fundamentally, coalitions express best what the principle of **solidarity** is, a "firm and persevering commitment to the common good" (*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, §38) – or we would say today a "firm and persevering commitment to integral ecology," which includes "every person living on this planet" (*Laudato Si'*, §3),⁵ of whatever creed or none.⁶ This is exemplified by the work by Churches in Latin America and [Brazil](#) to lead advocacy with other actors for international institutions and states to recognize the rights of nature.

3. Seeking expertise

All the modes of engagement require **seeking out expertise**. Documenting what is happening on the ground requires professional experts such as scientists who collect and analyze water samples to assess levels of contamination, lawyers who can represent local communities whose human rights have been violated, communications and media professionals who can amplify the message through videos, radio programs, news articles, or other media, conflict mediation professionals who can unblock a deadlock situation, and many others. In many cases, Church involvement in mining issues will require partnering with professional organizations, be it a local university that can provide the necessary skills for conducting an alternative environmental impact assessment, a professional network of pro-bono human rights lawyers, or media agencies and news platforms, among others.

4. Leveraging symbols and sacraments

When it is appropriate, Church actors in the above cases leveraged **symbolic and sacramental images and practices** to enhance moral credibility and prophetic impact, but also to galvanize supporters and strengthen solidarity. They also help foster spiritual formation which, when it is not an explicit primary goal, is almost always part of the cluster of secondary goals that can help advance positive social impact. Utilizing these quintessential Catholic elements is also an important way to keep engagement centered on gospel values and Church mission. Several participants of the Bogotá event mentioned the importance of cultivating prayer and an eco-spirituality, for communion with the rivers and forests and with God is often what is the source of action and what gives strength to act despite challenges and setbacks.

5. Emphasizing education and formation

The Church houses a vast network of educational institutions throughout the globe at all levels: primary schools, secondary schools, and universities. In many countries, the Catholic Church is the biggest provider of education after the state. It possesses a unique leverage in **education and formation** in ethical values and the formation of conscience around respect of human dignity and care for our common home. Educational institutions can include justice and

⁵ St. John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 30 December 1987, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_30121987_sollicitudo-rei-socialis.html.

⁶ Francis, *Laudato Si'*, 24 May 2015, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html.

ecology as compulsory subjects in their curriculum, as some universities are already doing, such as the Pontifical Catholic University in Peru introducing a compulsory integral ecology module for all its students. As Pope Francis writes in *Laudato Si'*, “Once we start to think about the kind of world we are leaving to future generations, we look at things differently; we realize that the world is a gift which we have freely received and must share with others. Since the world has been given to us, we can no longer view reality in a purely utilitarian way, in which efficiency and productivity are entirely geared to our individual benefit” (§159).⁷ Focusing on formation for youth and including them as central participants in advocacy work and other modes of engagement is a critical cross-cutting strategy. Another important stakeholder for Church formation is Indigenous and rural communities so that they understand their rights better. [The University Program of the Amazon](#) is a recent example of an initiative especially focused on empowerment and formation for Indigenous Peoples, and is a direct outcome of the Amazon Synod.



By no means are the modes of action outlined here exhaustive. Our hope with this document is to create a process of reflection and planning for Catholic organizations and their partners to respond to the sufferings of women and men of this age, and to the sufferings of the earth, that a certain economic model and its consumption patterns are creating by disregarding the effects of this consumption for people and planet.

In a [message](#) after Juan Antonio López’s murder, Bishop Jenry Ruiz, of the Diocese of Trujillo where the National Park that López sought to protect is situated, addressed the following words: “You told me that you were not an environmentalist because, for you, the social, ecological and political commitment was not an ideological question, but a question of your being of Christ and of the Church.” Addressing mining and its ecological and social consequences is not an optional extra, it is indeed a question of being of Christ and of the Church.

⁷ Francis, *Laudato Si'*, 24 May 2015, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html.

Acknowledgements

We are very grateful for the comments received from the following individuals and organizations:

Latin America

Edgar Antonio López, Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Colombia

Luiz Felipe Lacerda, National Observatory of Socio-Environmental Justice Luciano Mendes de Almeida, Brazil

Bro. Rodrigo Peret, OFM, Iglesias y Minería

Pedro Cabezas, Central American Alliance on Mining (ACAFREMÍN), El Salvador

Laura Montañó, Publish What You Pay Latin America Centro Montalvo, Dominican Republic

Elvin Hernández, Centro Eric, Honduras

José Bayardo Chata Pacoricona, Derechos Humanos y Medio Ambiente—Puno (DHUMA), Peru

Thomas Bamat, independent consultant (formerly Catholic Relief Services Senior Advisor for Justice and Peacebuilding), Ecuador

Africa

Robert Groelsma, Catholic Relief Services, Africa Working Group, USA

Johan Viljoen, Denis Hurley Peace Institute, South Africa

Reabetswe Tloubatla, Denis Hurley Peace Institute, South Africa

Sr. Nathalie Kangaji Kayombo, Centre d'Aide Juridico-Judiciaire (CAJJ), DRC

Rev. Rigobert Minani, SJ, Centre d'Etudes pour l'Action Sociale (CEPAS), Democratic Republic of Congo

Wesley Chibamba, Caritas Africa

Henri Muhiya, formerly Commission Episcopale pour les Ressources Naturelles - Conference Episcopale Nationale du Congo (CERN-CENCO), DRC

Léocadie Lushombo, IT, University of Santa Clara, USA

Asia

Emil Omarov, Publish What You Pay (Asia-Pacific, Eurasia and MENA)

Rev. PM Antony, SJ, Justice in Mining Network, South Asian Jesuit Conference

Rev. Tony Herbert, SJ, Justice in Mining Network, South Asian Jesuit Conference

Sr. Leena Padam, Justice in Mining Network, South Asian Jesuit Conference

Deepti Mary Minj, Justice in Mining Network, South Asian Jesuit Conference

Jaybee Garganera, Alyansa Tigil Mina, The Philippines

Jing Rey Henderson, Caritas Philippines

Bishop Gerry Alminaza, Caritas Philippines

Europe/North America/International

Javier Arellano Yanguas, University of Deusto, Spain

Richard Solly, Jesuit Missions, United Kingdom

Gerard Powers, Catholic Peacebuilding Network, University of Notre Dame, USA

Lydia Lehlogonolo Machaka, CIDSE, Belgium

Vincent Miller, University of Dayton, USA

Ketakandriana Rafitoson, Publish What You Pay International

Rev. Patricio Sarlat, Holy See Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development

Carlotta Paglia, Holy See Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development

Tebaldo Vinciguerra, Holy See Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development

Victor Genina, Caritas Internationalis

Participants of the conference on 'Peacebuilding, Mining and Integral Human Development, Bogotá, 10-13 June 2025, also provided valuable feedback. See the conference website for a [list of participants](#).

