



2021/2022 Annual Report:

Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights (VPSHR)

Statement of commitment or endorsement of the Voluntary Principles

IMPACT is committed to promoting the implementation of the VPSHR internationally and believes that the VPSHR initiative can help promote multistakeholder dialogue and problem-solving between governments, companies, civil society organizations and local communities impacted by extractive sector operations. Furthermore, we believe that the VPSHR provide an important basis upon which oil, gas and mining companies can implement effective policies, procedures and commitments to minimize the risk of contributing to human rights violations. Like all multistakeholder processes, IMPACT believes that the VPSHR must continue to progress and evolve in order to maintain its relevance. This includes clearly demonstrating positive impact, where able, as well as improving accountability for their implementation.

Relevant policies, procedures, and guidelines to implement the Voluntary Principles

IMPACT adopted and operationalized a new security management system in 2018, which includes site assessments, incident reporting, and various tools for staff, amongst other components. IMPACT also updated its Code of Conduct, and adopted a Workplace Violence and Harassment Policy, Conflict of Interest Policy and Safeguarding Policy. Also, on 15th October 2018, IMPACT signed on to the Canadian Council for International Co-operation's (CCIC) Leaders' Pledge on Preventing and Addressing Sexual Misconduct.

Through its projects, such as the Just Gold project in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Ivory Coast, IMPACT endeavors to introduce supply chain due diligence and transparency in the artisanal gold sector, in order to identify and address human rights and corruption risks. This includes risks related to the provision of security (private or public) in and around artisanal and small-scale mine sites. Further, IMPACT strives to identify effective conflict-prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding strategies in the mineral sector. This includes through projects like Women of Peace, which supported women artisanal miners to become peacebuilders in their communities through peace networks and community dialogue, as well as the Foundations for Peace project in Burkina Faso which aims to promote peace through women's economic empowerment and financial inclusion in artisanal gold mining communities.

Integrating the VPs into IMPACT's security management

While the VPs were first designed for oil, gas and mining companies, as an NGO working in high-risk areas and making use of private security personnel, IMPACT has drawn from the IGT for the Voluntary Principles in its own implementation of effective security management policies and processes. While at times IMPACT may contract a very small number of unarmed, private security personnel at some of its local offices in Africa, we believe it is important to ensure that these personnel abide by IMPACT's policies and procedures, and will continue to receive briefings on these accordingly. All of IMPACT's

contractors are contractually obligated to abide by IMPACT's policies. As an additional measure, IMPACT requires its contractors to sign its Code of Conduct to confirm receipt.

Examples of promoting awareness of the Voluntary Principles throughout the organization

IMPACT regularly holds internal information sessions for staff in order to ensure that they are aware of IMPACT's role in the VPs. IMPACT also holds regular staff meetings to share information across the organization's different focus areas (Regulatory and Legal Reform; Supply Chain Transparency; Illicit Trade and Financing; Gender Equality; and Environmental Stewardship). The VPs are included in these discussions, as IMPACT identifies ways in which it can incorporate the VPs, both process and principles, in its existing programming.

Promoting and advancing awareness or implementation of the Voluntary Principles internationally

Due to human resources constraints, IMPACT was unable to organize events or activities directly related to the VPs internationally. However, throughout the course of the year, IMPACT has participated in a number of conference calls with its fellow NGO members of the VPs to discuss pertinent issues and guide the NGO pillars decision-making.

Engagements with stakeholders on country implementation

IMPACT has limited ability to participate in engagements with stakeholders on country implementation due to limited resources. We regularly participate in VPs meetings hosted by VPI member governments in Kinshasa (DRC), as well as other member organizations' events (e.g. DCAF).

Implementing the VPSHR where there is a presence of artisanal and small-scale miners

In the fall of 2021, IMPACT helped to organize and facilitate a webinar discussion for VPSHR members on the implementation of the VPSHR in situations where there is a presence of artisanal and small-scale miners. The webinar helped to build on previous discussions on this topic that have been had within the initiative, as well as to identify both potential security challenges and approaches to managing these, while also recognizing potential options for 'co-existence'. IMPACT welcomes further opportunities to further explore this topic in the context of the VPSHR.

Implementation of the VPI Gender and Vulnerable Groups Project

In early 2021, IMPACT and Stratos began a project on behalf of the VPI to undertake analysis relating to the implementation of the VPSHR that is sensitive to gender considerations and the unique human rights risks faced by vulnerable groups, including Indigenous peoples. The outcome of this work was a Companion tool to the IGT and updates to the VPSHR training toolkit, which were designed to help Members and others implement the VPSHR in a manner that considers and responds to the unique needs of vulnerable groups.

In addition to these new/re-designed tools, IMPACT, in collaboration with Stratos, also facilitated a half-day training session for participants attending the 2022 VPI Annual Plenary. The session provided an opportunity to carry out an overview of the new Companion Tool to the IGT, as well as to facilitate group activities by which participants were asked to analyze a particular scenario from the perspective of women and other disadvantaged groups.

IMPACT is encouraged by the efforts that are being taken to highlight the important need for applying

a gender and inclusion lens to implementation of the VPSHR. As an initiative dedicated to protecting human rights, it is essential to acknowledge that certain groups of people are at greater risk of human rights violations and face significant barriers when trying to protect these rights. Increasing meaningful inclusion of women and other disadvantaged – who have often been left out of security-related dialogue and actions – will only serve to improve the overall effectiveness of the VPSHR as mitigating and reducing the occurrence of human rights violations.

Lessons or issues from this reporting year, as well as plans or opportunities to advance the Voluntary Principles for the organization

IMPACT continues to scale up its work in Central and West Africa, which focuses significantly on artisanal and small-scale mining, certification and due diligence, gender and mining as well as broader governance issues related to extractives. This includes new projects in Burkina Faso, Uganda, Mali, Cote d'Ivoire and Zimbabwe. IMPACT will use these opportunities to more thoroughly assess if and how we may be able to further integrate promotion and/or implementation of the VPs with the various stakeholders we work with in this region, as well as at the level of our field operations in a number of countries.