

Social OPEX™: Learning from Engagement to Strengthen GBA+ Practice



Susan Brissette

*Founder, Wild Matriarch
Canada*

wildmatriarch.com

*Manager, Environment, Calian Nuclear
Canada*

Cole Atlin

calian.com



Planned Growth for Nuclear Sector in Canada

- Building first small modular reactor (SMR) in the G7, about 65km east of Toronto.
- New nuclear sites are being planned or considered in various provinces
 - Ontario and New Brunswick, which have a long history with nuclear technology
 - Alberta and Saskatchewan, new to nuclear
- Impact assessment in progress for deep geological repository (DGR) for used nuclear fuel.
- Many provinces and territories are exploring whether small or micro modular reactors are right for their needs.

Public participation is a feature of the regulatory process throughout the lifecycle of a nuclear facility.

Nuclear in Canada

Supports medicine, materials science, advanced manufacturing, food safety, and energy production.

89,000

Canadians employed
in nuclear

\$22B annual GDP contribution

~ 50%

Ontario's electricity
from nuclear

Ontario, Canada's most populous province, has one of the lowest carbon grids in the world.

In Canada, 13.5% of electricity comes from nuclear power generated in Ontario and New Brunswick

40%

Single-use medical
supplies worldwide
sterilized using Cobalt-60
from Canadian reactors

Nuclear medicine benefits 40+ million patients annually, including 1 million Canadian patients.

The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission is one of the most respected nuclear regulators in the world.

Source: CNA Factbook 2025

The Invisibility Challenge

Established Communities

- Canadians closest to nuclear facilities have significantly MORE favourable views than the public
- Decades of relationship, employment, community investment
- Public participation woven through the entire lifecycle: licensing, renewals, amendments, monitoring

New-to-Nuclear Communities

- Canada's nuclear track record, regulatory culture, safety history: unknown/invisible
- May carry experience with other large infrastructure industries; not always positive
- Nuclear is entering new regions, new provinces, new community types
- Relationships built now will last decades

Addressing invisibility is where the work begins and where GBA+ becomes essential.



***If new nuclear projects
move at the speed of trust,
then trust is critical path,
social risk is project risk, and
social license is core project infrastructure.***

Nuclear Projects: Two Kinds of Risk

Technical Risk

- Decades of rigorous systems
- Operating Experience (OPEX): structured, mandatory, global infrastructure
- Non-punitive learning culture
- Lessons shared systematically across the whole sector

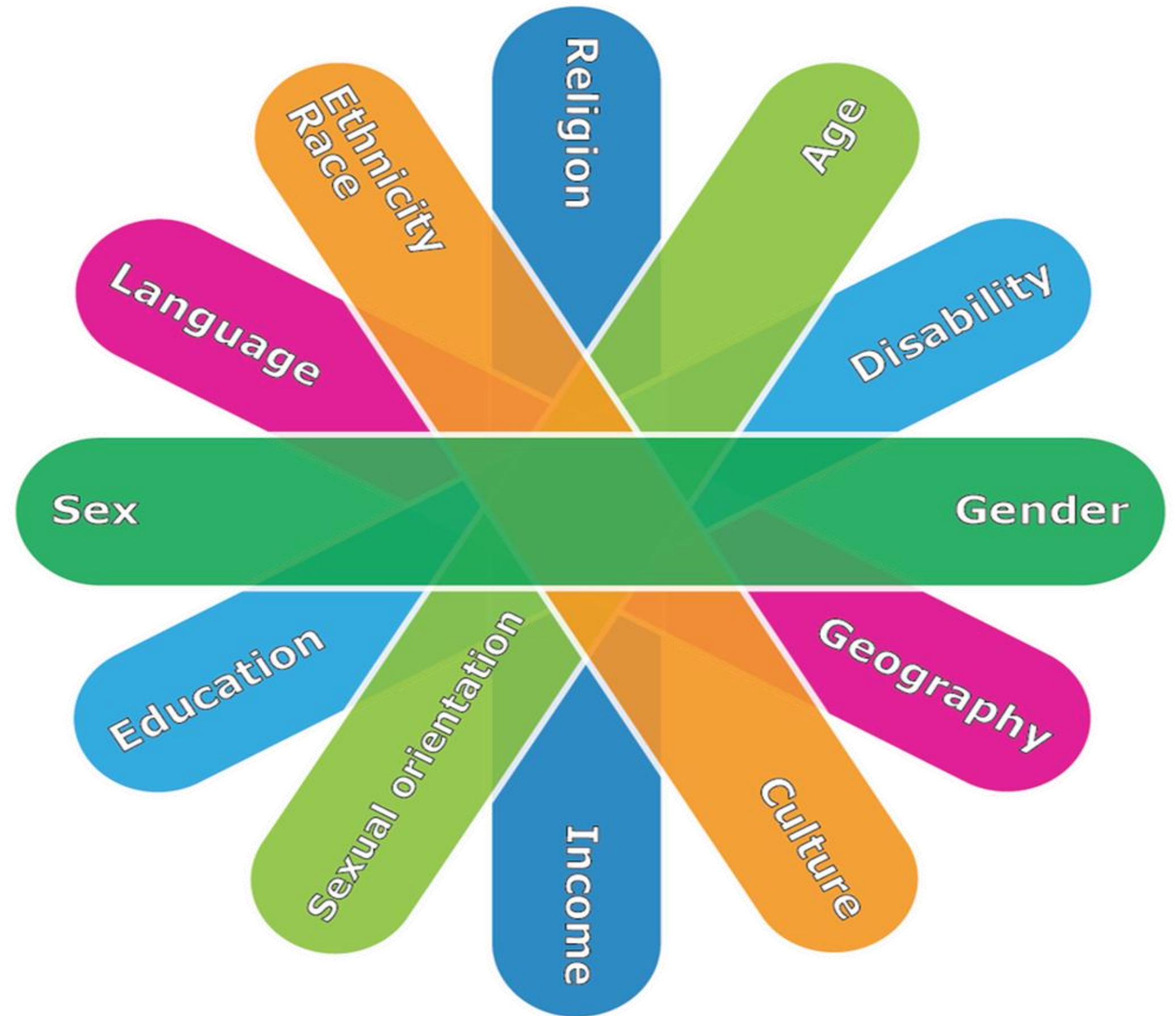
Social Risk

- Trust, engagement, relationships, reputation
- Lessons closely held or shared ad hoc: no systematic capture or analysis
- GBA+ insight siloed by project and team
- Every project relearns the same lessons

Technical excellence is insufficient to produce public confidence.

GBA+

GBA+ looks beyond sex and gender to include intersecting identity factors, such as:



GBA+: The Gender Gap Is a Signal

62%

of men support nuclear energy

Environics polling for the Canadian Nuclear Association

38%

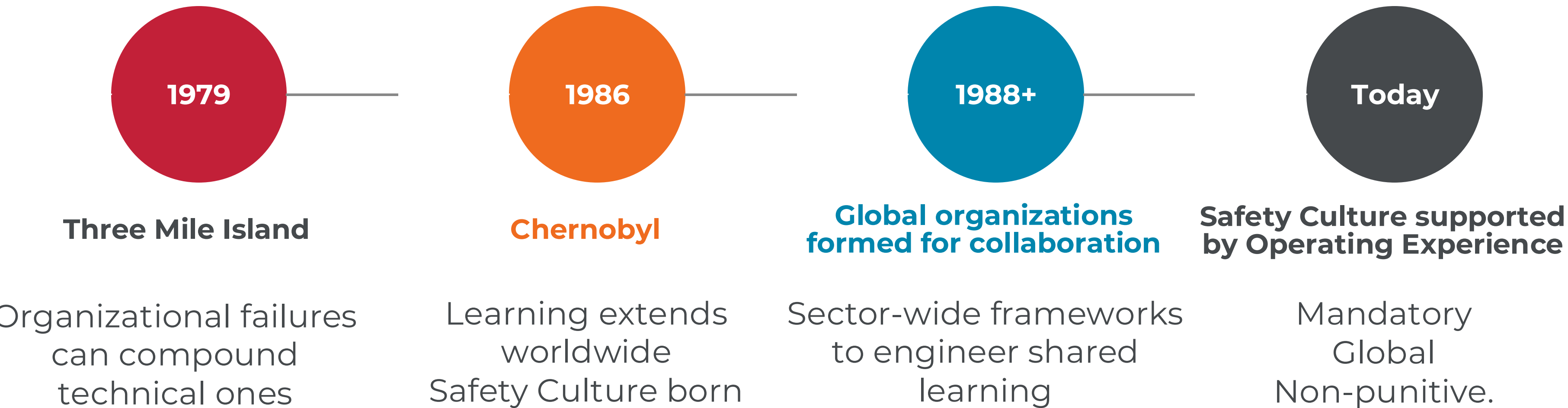
of women support nuclear energy

A 24-point gap. Consistent with global polling.

This is a relationship gap, and GBA+ gives us a framework for closing it.

- GBA+ asks: who is in this community, what are their distinct identities, how will this project affect them differently?
- Women's concerns reflect distinct lived experiences and values, not less-informed positions.
- The same communities whose trust are needed are the communities where the future workforce lives.

In Nuclear, Learning Is Engineered

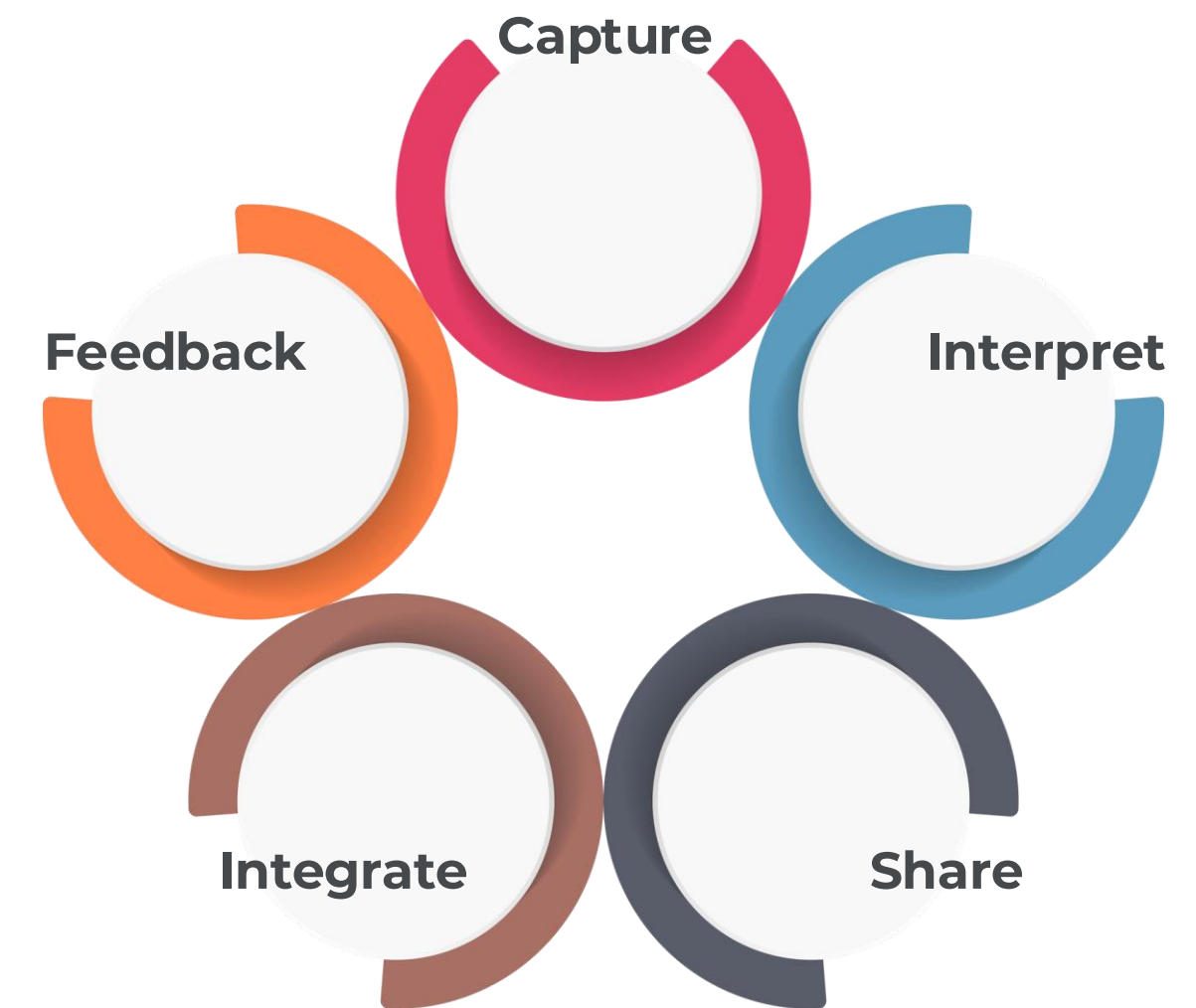


Safety culture is a *leadership* responsibility; not that of the safety department.

Social OPEX™: Same Discipline, Outside the Fence

A structured approach to capture, analyze, and apply learning from:

- Community engagement and consultations
- GBA+ intersectional analysis
- Communications and public trust
- Impact assessment findings
- Across projects and organizations over time



How can we treat social risk with a similar discipline and transparency as technical risk?

Community of Practice & Broader Awareness

Right now, GBA+ knowledge in nuclear is held by a small group of specialists.

That knowledge is deep. But the sector needs it everywhere.

What Wild Matriarch and Calian Nuclear are building:

- a community of practice for engagement specialists.
- Extend GBA+ appreciation to technical leaders, project teams, engineers, executives.
- Make social risk as visible as technical risk at the project level.
- Apply Operating Experience (OPEX) discipline to social and community learning, similar to how it is applied for technical learning.

What Our Community of Practice Told Us

01 Trust Lost Is Hard to Recover

Once trust is lost in a community, recovery is extremely difficult. Prevention is not optional.

02 People Matter as Much as Process

The wrong people in public-facing roles can undermine even technically excellent work.

03 Community-Led Priorities

Community-defined priorities must set the agenda. Not project-defined priorities.

04 GBA+ Is a Mindset First

Failures were not missing checklists. They were failures of perspective. Did we truly see the people in front of us?

We need this.

Social Performance as Organizational Learning

WITHOUT Social OPEX™	→	WITH Social OPEX™
Engagement insight siloed by project	→	Learning shared across organizations
GBA+ treated as compliance exercise	→	GBA+ becomes cumulative intelligence
Social risk reactive & invisible	→	Social risk visible & manageable early
Every project relearns the same lessons	→	Sector builds collective memory
Decisions hard to explain or defend	→	Decisions traceable and defensible

**We do not have a shortage of insights.
We have a shortage of shared learning.**

That is what we are here to build.



Let's continue the conversation!

Message us your questions or comments in the IAIA26 app.

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