



**RUSTENBURG
COMMUNITY
REPORT
2011**

DEFENDING OUR LAND, ENVIRONMENT, AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The Bench Marks Foundation is proud to be associated with the production of this first community report on the impact of Platinum mining in Rustenburg.

The Bench Marks Foundation has had a long relationship with the communities of Rustenburg. In 2007 we produced the first report (Policy Gap 1) where we reviewed the Corporate Social Responsibility of mining corporations operating in Rustenburg. In 2011 we produced our second study to review the changes since our first 2007 report.

In implementing our 2011 study we drew local community groups as active participants in the research. This Community Report is a product of this process.

We believe that a system of regulation (government laws, regulations and monitoring institutions) is important to make private corporations accountable and responsible. However this system of regulation will not lead to real changes without the organised, informed and active monitoring by the community at large and specifically the local community directly affected.

The Rustenburg community groups have identified a programme for action in 2012. The Bench Marks Foundation is committed to supporting the group in implementing this programme.

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INTRODUCTION

Our purpose in writing this report is to highlight the suffering and hardships of Rustenburg communities resulting from the practices of mining companies.

Community activists from different villages met regularly from February to September 2011 in order to discuss ways we can gather information and to review the information collected towards writing this report.

In the first meeting key individual community challenges were identified and more information was collected to substantiate the challenges after this session. Photos of the identified issues were taken and presented in the following joint meeting.

A draft report was produced after another presentation was made by individual communities for final review. More photos and interviews were conducted with relevant stakeholders, where possible with mine workers.

In working together to develop this report we have greatly not only learnt more about our communities and the problems they face, we have also developed our skills and our capacity as organisations.

We faced many difficulties which reduced the scope of this report. We worked on a small budget which restricted our ability to increase the number of community groups and our travel across communities to visit sites. We had a limited number of cameras and most communities did not have access to computers to prepare our reports. It was difficult for us to access statistics and information from corporations and government offices as these involved lengthy applications and officials were not very cooperative.

We are very grateful to the Bench Marks Foundation and the resource people who gave us support and guidance in preparing the reports.

The following organizations from five different Rustenburg communities were involved in writing this report:

Chaneng Youth Organisation and Mafenya Youth Organisation team totaled a number of 15 activists.

- Marikana Development Organisation and Enviro Kids involved 10 environmental activists.
- Ikemeleng Environment Organisation: Participated in the process having 5 activists actively involved.
- Luka Environmental Forum had 5 activists from their organisation.
- Tlhabane Youth Organisation involved 4 comrades in the community report.

MINE PROMISES AND CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IS A LIE.

The reports from the different communities show that CSR is a lie.

Mines make a lot of promises when they enter and when they make social labour plans. In their reports they talk about how much they are doing for the community as part of their CSR. As a community we experience arrogant mine officials, who use their resources to avoid community organisations and only deal with individuals whom they can control. When they set up community projects they do not consult with the community but only selected individual. We see many projects which have failed or which simply serves a few individuals.

Mining companies initiate most of these projects which are mainly intended to impress their shareholders and go into their glossy annual reports to satisfy their public image. Rarely do the projects develop the lives of the communities as they are determined by the corporate world and not by the communities

GOVERNMENT IS FAILING THE PEOPLE

We are disappointed that the Department of Mineral Resources, which represents our democratic government has failed to protect the community. They simply do not enforce the MPRDA. This government body has grown to become a partner with the mines and has not played their role as custodian of community lives.

Rustenburg communities are finding it difficult to understand why they should continue to vote for the government which does not have their interest at heart, especially considering the roles which they (Department of Mineral Resources, Environmental Affairs & Water Affairs) are abandoning in favour of the mining industry.

COMMON ISSUES ACROSS RUSTENBURG

In all the local community reports the following problems are common:

UNEMPLOYMENT

All communities suffer very high rates of unemployment and poverty. This is in spite of being located in the one of the richest land in the country and the world.

DESTRUCTION OF TRADITIONAL ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

Families in Rustenburg subsidised their low incomes over the years through small vegetable gardens and keeping poultry and cattle. Much of this has now been destroyed by the expansion of mining. Worse still when mines take away farming land they give them no compensation or alternate land.

UNEVEN DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH

A tiny group in the community get business opportunities and are growing wealthy while the majority of people grow poorer.

WATER, NOISE AND AIR POLLUTION

All communities in Rustenburg suffer water problems due to contamination of the rivers and boreholes. Mine blasting, giant air-conditioners for mine shafts and the network of railways that run across Rustenburg expose people to noise at all times of the day and night. Dust blows from the increasing number of tailings dams causing respiratory problem in the community.

INFLUX OF MINE WORKERS IN VILLAGES

The mines do not provide housing for mine workers, These workers then find cheap accommodation in the villages thus dramatically increasing the population. This has led to an over-crowding of the transport and health services, an increase in the number of taverns and new social problems which the villages never had in the past such as crime and prostitution.

CRACKED HOUSES

All villages around the mines complain of cracked houses which are caused by blasting and underground vibrations.

RELOCATION

Many families have been forced to move out of the homes they traditionally occupied and where they had settled down to make way for mining expansion. The compensation given to these families is very low and does not cover the full scale of the losses they experience.

DESERTIFICATION

Already we see areas of Rustenburg, where mining has ended, turn into little deserts.

DISEASES INCREASE IN MINING COMMUNITIES

We believe very strongly from our personal family experiences that mining has brought an increase in diseases. We now see diseases such as asthma, TB, HIV infections, sinusitis, which we had not known in the past.

SOCIAL PROBLEMS ON THE INCREASE

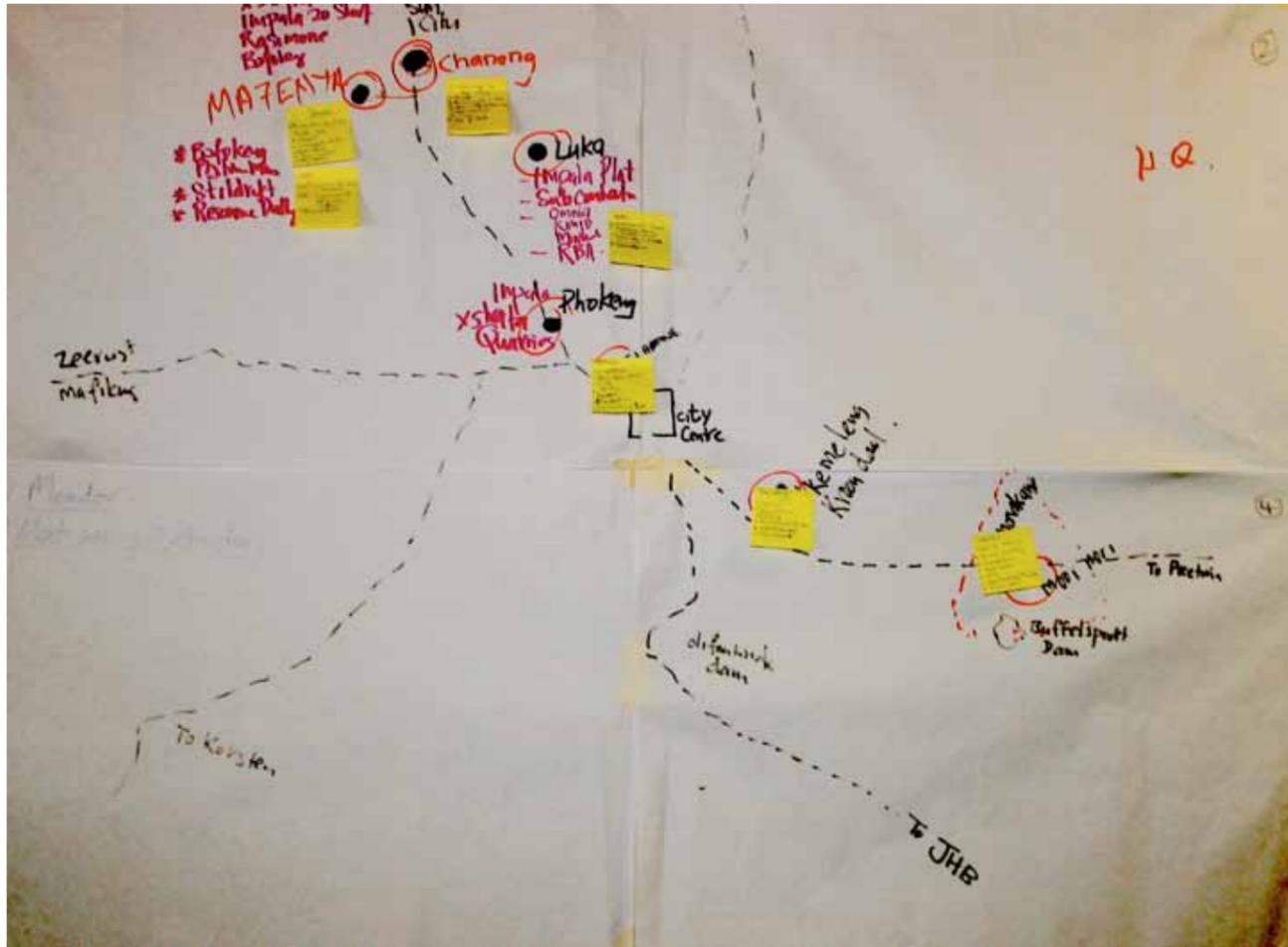
All our communities are experiencing high levels of social problems which did not exist prior to platinum mining. There is growing youth alcoholism and drug taking, increase in crime and teenage pregnancy

THREAT OF XENOPHOBIC CONFLICT

The high rate of local unemployment and poverty in our community has led to a situation where local people are resentful to the presence of people from other countries working or seeking work on the mines. The mines have set people up in relationship of potential conflict.

UNSCRUPULOUS COUNCILLORS

Most communities see their councillors as individuals who are serving their personal business interest and do so using unscrupulous methods.



OUR PLANS FOR 2012

While we suffer many hardships, this report is a testimony to the fact that we have not given up hope of change. Generally the affected and participating communities are strengthening their relations and regular interaction to strategise in defending their environment, land and human rights

The research and the writing of this report has helped local community organisations come together not only to better understand our problems but to make action plans for 2012.

We have agreed to implement the following programme of action in 2012

- Hold workshops on key issues and affecting the people of Rustenburg. This should include a workshop on the “nationalization debate”
- Launch campaigns on specific problems we have identified in this report
- We will embark on targeted community driven social and infrastructure development projects
- We will launch a regular newsletter to keep the local community informed.
- We will use social media such as blogs and Facebook to inform the larger world on what is happening in Rustenburg and get support for our actions
- We will spend time on strengthening the network in Rustenburg and linking with organisations elsewhere in the country, the Africa region and the world.
- We will hold capacity building workshops to develop the skills of our local community organisations.
- In implementing the above activities we will in 2012 ensure that a larger number of women activists are drawn into the programme and that what ever issue we take up we will ask the question: in what way does this affect women and girls in our community.

