



LUKA

Luka is a village in the north of Rustenburg. We are located at the heart of the platinum mining region. Our great grandparents lost their land to the Afrikaner settlers and bought back areas with their own money. We built our own church and schools, and sunk our own boreholes. We planted crops for our use and every family had a herd of cattle. Platinum mining came into our lives in the 1960's. We were not consulted about this.

We have lived in Luka for over a century. Now we are surrounded by mines and our land is slowly being turned into mine dumps.

THE FOLLOWING MINES OPERATE AROUND LUKA:

IMPALA PLATINUM MINE AND ITS SUBCONTRACTORS:

OMNIA

MINERAL PROCESS

COMCOR

AND THE MINES IN WHICH THE ROYAL BAFOKENG AUTHORITY HAVE SHARES.



IMPORTANT ISSUES

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:

Cracked houses from blasting and underground vibrations.
Noise pollution from the shafts, blasting and machinery.
Air pollution from slime dams and blasting

EMPLOYMENT IMPACTS:

Mines offer no employment opportunities to locals.

DEVELOPMENT ISSUES:

Housing: A lack of adequate housing and the problem of cracked housing.
Roads: Roads that are not tarred are being destroyed by mine vehicles. Mine vehicles also pose a threat to community health and safety in terms of dust and accidents. There is also very poor signage.
Community projects: Mines are not investing in any development projects within the community.

HEALTH ISSUES:

The influx of immigrants and mineworkers has resulted in the already minimal resources in staff and medicine at the local clinic to be over utilised. This means that the mines are not providing adequate health for their employees. This is brought about by sub-contracting and outsourcing to labour brokers and subcontractors, it is a sophisticated way of externalising the health and safety responsibilities of mining corporations.

ROYALTIES AND LAND ISSUES:

The relationship between the Luka community and the Royal Bafokeng Authority (RBA) is conflictual. The community feels it does not benefit from royalties.

The community is in a land ownership contestation with the RBA. The community believes that it is excluded from the processes that lead to the social and labour plans and they do not benefit from these.

IMPALA MINE:

There is a conflictual relationship between the community and the mining company.

MEMORANDUM OF DEMANDS

In May 2003 we set out our demands to Impala Platinum. and copied this to several local, provincial and national government offices. The mine did not engage us seriously on these demands. They frustrated us with useless meetings and tried to weaken us. Government did not give us any support on these demands.

1. A stoppage of the proposed UG” open cast with immediate effect
2. Stoppage of the current Merensky open cast with immediate effect
3. A stoppage of the proposed UG” open cast with immediate effect
4. Removal of ventilations within a 7 km radius, and operations started after 1997 based on falsified information issued by Impala Mines to government departments
5. Disclose environmental management programme report
6. A demand for free water provision to the Luka community based on the contamination of our underground water supply
7. Free medical examination for every newborn child up to the child’s school-going age on the basis of possible hazards from emissions
8. Free access to Impala Hospital and emergency services
9. Funds to be made available for second opinions on every medical examination
10. Compensate Luka residents for environmental damages caused by Impala mining corporation since 1967
11. Removal and eradication of tailings dams within 7 km of Luka village
12. We demand to be equal partners on all minerals exploited and other mining related businesses in our area
13. Total eradication of unemployment experienced by the local people
14. Demand for Luka community to be direct beneficiaries
15. Impala must assist in the establishment of Luka Community Development Trust
16. Impala Mines must assist in the establishment of the Police Station
17. Impala Mines must grant Luka Community the necessary respect
18. Impala Mines to stop taking Luka Community for granted

ENGAGEMENT WITH IMPALA PLATINUM MINE



The mines tells the world that they consult with local communities. Our experience is that this is not true. This is our story of engagement with Impala Platinum mines.

Ever since the mines came to our village we had problems with the impact of the mine. There were many meetings with Impala by different committees such as the Luka Crisis Committee and the Luka Youth Committee. In one of the consultations we raised the issue of the drying up of the boreholes. The mine agreed that they will pay for the community's water consumption. Nothing came of this.

In 2003 we were told by Impala that they wanted to talk with the community about the new open casts they were setting up. We learnt that they were required by law to consult with the community. We called a community meeting and the people talked about the many problems they experienced because of the open casts and underground mining. The community decided that it was time to have a committee to speak on their behalf to Impala. A meeting was held in early 2003 in a local school where a committee of 10 was elected. The committee drafted a memo of 17 demands which they wanted Impala to address. An important demand was that Impala should stop all open cast blasting immediately.

Impala called a meeting in their training centre. Before the meeting we went around the community and called the people with a loud hailer. People gathered and we marched through the village and then to Impala where we presented our memo. We also submitted the same memo to the Department of Minerals and energy, The Royal Bafokeng Administration and the Municipality. But Impala ignored our memo. They went on with their open cast blasting without consulting with us.

We decided that we had to take action. One afternoon a group of us took a kombi to the open pit and we sat down in the pit before the blasting started. The mine was forced to stop its operations. That same afternoon the mine manager from Shaft No 6 called us to a meeting. There he agreed that they will talk to us about our demands.

From 2003 until 2006, we have been sitting in meetings, telling them how we feel. At first, Impala appeared to be taking us seriously but it soon became clear that they were only keeping us talking and not serious about responding to our demands.

We organised the community and held another march. We presented the memo of demands for a second time. Impala then held another stream of meetings. We complained that the meetings were

getting us nowhere because Impala was represented by junior officials who had no power to make any change.

Impala then appointed a consultant, Metago Environmental Engineers, to represent them. We took the consultant on a tour of the community to show him the problems we experienced:

- Gravestones destroyed in the explosion
- Cracked houses
- Pipelines, ventilation shafts and power lines which encircled the village blocking us from use of land.

But we did not hear from the consultant on our demands. Instead it appeared that the consultant's only interest was to get permission from the Department of Minerals and Energy for the company to resume blasting.

We were informed by Impala that they were prepared to establish a community development trust fund as we had demanded however since this not only involved Luka but all mining villages where they were involved, we could not be trustees. Instead the Queen Mother of the Royal Bafokeng Tribe was to be a trustee.

We were totally ignored by Impala.

We saw a secret memo to the company written by one of the consultants. This memo said that our demands were justified and that Impala should respond to them but Impala must be careful not to give any credit to the Luka Environmental Forum.

In 2009 Impala set up the trust fund and informed us that they wanted more communities involved and not only Luka. They wanted to involve Kanana, Pokeng, Lefaraka, Bonjala and Chaneng. We agreed with this because we thought that with more communities we could achieve more. This committee was to be the Impala Joint Community Forum (IJCF). However at the large meeting Impala would not agree with us on a working document that set out the terms of reference.

The strategy in setting up the IJCF was clearly to involve so many different groupings that it would be difficult for us to unite as a community. In this way Impala will control the IJCF. Impala shifted the focus away from Luka; they involved traditional leaders and councillors.

At present, Impala has ended the IJCF and are setting up what they call an Engagement Centre. We don't know what this is.

GOVERNMENT IS NOT HELPFUL

The role of the Apartheid government and the Homeland government was very clear. They were against our people and only looked after the interests of those who played their game. Sadly for us this has not changed in our new democracy. Our government departments and representatives do not listen to our problems. They appear to be on the side of the mining corporations.

We contacted the Department of Mineral and Energy (DME) about our problems as far back as in 2003. The DME would simply write letters, setting out guidelines that the mines should follow. Impala ignored these guidelines. The DME would not do any follow up.

We do not get any support from the provincial and local government. Right now Impala is finding ways to avoid talking with our organisation. They say that we are not representatives, only a councillor can be a representative. They appear to get a lot of cooperation from the councillor.

WATER



We had a very developed system of boreholes which the community built for their own supply of water. Since mining, our boreholes dried up. The little water available was also salty.

When we raised this with Impala over ten years ago, Impala denied that they were responsible for our boreholes drying up or turning salty. However they agreed to bear the costs of our water consumption.

But they did not keep this promise. Now the Royal Bafokeng has asked residents to pay for water. Most people in the community have refused to pay as we felt that the mine should pay.

ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTION

Over the years we have seen how the mines are destroying our land, air, and water.

REHABILITATION OF OPEN CASTS

There are several open casts which are no longer used for mining. These have not been properly rehabilitated.



DUMP SITES



The dump sites have always been a danger to the community. These dump sites contain bits of coal and wood. This attracted members of the community and particularly children. But the sites also have medical refuse, chemicals and un-exploded explosives. One of our committee members lost a finger in this dump site.

Because of our pressure, Impala covered up this dump with soil. They said that they will monitor the site to see whether it affected the ground water. At our meetings a lady appointed by Impala would give us reports but she refused to hand over any written documents on her studies.



TAILINGS DAM

During the winter our sky turns white. On the rooftops, the sides of our houses, the leaves of the trees and on the stoeps, in the houses, on the tablecloth and the furniture, there is this white sand.

You cannot enjoy any leisure outside of your house because of this white sand.

This white sand comes from the tailings dam.

SMELTERS

At certain times of the day when they burn in the smelters you can feel the sensation in your nose, and the sky is covered by the blue smoke from the long chimney, from the smelter. Now they do a lot of burning at night.

CRACKED HOUSES

Impala through their consultant investigated the cracks in our houses. The consultant issued a report acknowledging that the damages were caused by explosions. But he quickly issued another report saying that the company was not responsible. Up to today, Impala insists that the large number of cracks in Luka houses is due to poor architecture and not blasting.



MAN MADE STREAM

Impala has built a man-made stream reaching from the minerals processing plant down to the dam and river. Our cows drink this water. Many have become sick and some have died. We do not have the resources to prove this through scientific testing.



CLINICS

The “sleeping out policy” of the mine and the ending of the hostel system mean that many mine workers are living in backyards of Luka residents. This has led to an overloading of all the community facilities such as transport and the clinic’s resources.

We did some research and found the following overloading in our clinic: In 2005 a total of 15 294 patients attended the clinic. This figure rose every year 35 293 in 2008, 39 579 in 2009 and up to 46 803 in 2010.

This increase is not from original residents as their numbers have not increased. It is due to contract workers and the families of mine workers who are not covered by the mines. The number of patients has increased but the staff and facilities of the mine have stayed the same.

This overcrowding is one of the points where conflict develops between local residents and mine workers and their families from outside the community.