



# IKEMELENG

Ikemeleng is an “informal settlement” near Kroondal in Rustenburg. Ikemeleng started as a farm in the 1960’s. The people of Mahermane and Baphalane lived here long ago.

The farm used to be a place where workers from the white area of Kroondaal were settled because the laws of Apartheid would not allow them to live in the white area. Soon Ikemeleng was used to dump farm labourers who were chased off white farms.

When the mines came into the area in the 1990’s many migrant workers built their shacks in Ikemeleng. The mines did not provide housing for them. Soon more people moved in looking for work. They came from different parts of South Africa and from countries such as Mozambique, Malawi, Zimbabwe and Lesotho. Somali people came and began setting up tuck shops in Ikemeleng.

According to a census in 2004, we are told that there were 1358 households. But we believe there are more houses than this. There are over 5000 residents in Ikemeleng.

Ikemeleng is situated in the middle of many mining operations. There are 5 big mining companies around us:

- SAMANCOR
- ANGLO PLATINUM
- AQUARIUS PLATINUM
- XTRATA
- LONMIN



## IMPORTANT ISSUES FOR OUR COMMUNITY

### HOUSING SECURITY

We have lived here for many years, from 5 to 50 years and we don't have ownership of our plots. We live in shacks with no proper housing.

### MIGRANT COMMUNITY AND CONFLICTS

We are a very mixed community with many people who are migrants and not properly settled here. This leads to many conflicts.

### NO BASIC SERVICES

We don't have water, we rely on delivery by tanks, a bilharzia river and contaminated boreholes. We don't have proper toilets, some have buckets, some make drop toilets, many use the bushes. We don't have electricity, and we don't have a system of removing rubbish.

### CLINIC

We have a mobile clinic which comes twice a week and attends to a few people, but need a proper clinic.

### UNEMPLOYMENT

Most of the people are unemployed. There is no skills development programme for young people.

### DANGEROUS ROADS

There are many road accidents because of the busy road near us. The roads inside Ikemeleng are bad.

### RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

There are no recreational facilities for young people, who spend their days just hanging about.

### CRIME

There is a lot of crime and violence especially around the taverns. Prostitution and HIV aids is increasing. Young women, as a way of surviving, are providing sex for money to migrant mining workers, this opens both of them to HIV/AIDS.

## WE DON'T HAVE TITLE DEEDS AND DON'T KNOW THE FUTURE OF OUR COMMUNITY

We have been hearing since 2003 that there are plans to make Ikemeleng a formal settlement. It is 8 years now and municipal officials keep changing their story and all we get is promises before elections.

In 2009 we were told that we could get title deeds for the land we lived on, but nobody could show us how, where, or whom to get it from. Many residents share stands and they fear that when people are given RDP houses, they will be left out. But the municipality will not sit down and talk to us properly. They make their decisions somewhere else then they tell us. This makes us angry.

All we know is that because we are not formalised we do not fall in the budget of the council. Therefore they can't provide us with basic services such as water, electricity and rubbish collection.

At an imbizo with the Mayor held in our community on the 15th September 2011, the Human Settlement representative said that they already have approval for RDP houses for Ikemeleng but there are delays because they still have to lay water pipes, and this delay is because people are not moving to make way for the pipes to be laid. Every year that goes by we hear another story why there is a delay.

We fear that there will be a lot of conflict when the RDP houses come because it is only for people with green IDs (South Africans). Many people who live in Ikemeleng are foreigners.



## SOCIAL CRISIS IN IKEMELENG

Many people in Ikemeleng are unemployed and they live in poverty not able to feed their children. Ikemeleng is also a place where mine workers find cheap accommodation because the mine does not provide accommodation for them. These are men with no families. These men pay young women who are desperate for money for sex.

### SEX WORK

Sex work and sex workers are people who stay in the community. They came like all the residents of Ikemeleng from other places looking for work. They don't find work. Some come with their boyfriends. They have problems with their boyfriends. They are dumped. Sex workers are around 18 – 28 years old. Some sell their body for booze, some for R50. At every tavern you can find plus minus 5 sex workers.

These are some cases that we know about sex work.

*I know a sex worker. She is from the Eastern Cape. We are busy talking about the past relationships. She told me how her boyfriend treated her before. In a bad way. He beat her. Her mother and father live in the Eastern Cape, Transkei. She is 22 years. She got grade 10. Who is her boyfriend? He works at Murray and Roberts Mine. Underground. He is 28 years old. The boy also stays in Eastern Cape. She does not work; she told me that at the mine they are always asking for working experience. It is about 3 years of looking for work. She rents a room. She does not want to build a new relationship because she has been hurt before. She got a child from her boyfriend. She gets a grant which pays for the rent. When she goes back home, her mother is not working. Life is tough, her father has passed away. So to survive she sells sex.*

*Young girls in Ikemeleng are looking for money. So they build relationship with workers. Some mothers encourage them to have boyfriends. I know a girl who is fourteen. She still goes to school, Tshukudu High School. Her mother allows her have a boyfriend in the mine, because the boy who is 30-32 years of age gives her money, sometimes a R1000.*

*I have a relative who stays with his girlfriend. He earns 3000 per month. He gives his girlfriend R1000 for buying toiletries and food. The mother of the girlfriend is a domestic worker. The girl is 17 years old and does not have any children. My relative is 29 years old he has two children and another family in Taung.*

### TAVERNS

In our community there are a lot of taverns surrounding our villages. These are dangerous places. There is a tavern next to the community office side. Every month end someone dies here. There is no security to prevent the violence. Many dangerous weapons are found in this tavern. According to the law all taverns must be closed before midnight but this tavern opens until morning non-stop.

### YOUTH CRIME

In our community there is a very high percentage of crime caused by teenagers. Teenagers have nothing like art and culture to keep them busy. Since we are next to the mines, the children only think about money. Above this, many children are using drugs which they can get from the taverns, and they are even allowed to buy alcohol in the taverns.

People in our community do not know each other. They come from many countries, Mozambique, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Lesotho as well as other parts South Africa like the Eastern Cape. Almost every day new people get to stay in our community building their own shelters. So we don't know who is permanent and who is not, who is a criminal and who is a decent citizen. We don't know the backgrounds of people. During the night we hear sounds of guns.

## LACK OF WATER PUSHING COMMUNITY HEALTH INTO DANGER



In our community we don't have taps that provide us with water, we are only using the tanks, municipality provides the tanks but a company called Seribate also provides water. As a community we don't know where these companies get the water from.

For washing clothes we are using the water flowing in the stream. This stream comes past the tailing dams of Aquarius Mine. This water we use has mine chemicals, we can smell it, animal carcasses, and pampers nappies. The river also has bilharzia.

The water that the two companies provide does not cover all the needs of the community. We use this water only for drinking and cooking. The worst part is that this water is only delivered two times per week. Some of the people are digging holes in their yards for water. This water tastes acidic.

There are bakkies moving around and selling water at R5.00 for 25 litres. Some of us don't have money to buy water because we are unemployed. When our water from the tank is finished we go back and use the salty acidic water from the holes we dig. It's a hard life but we are surrounded by five mines which do not care about the people.

The residents of Ikemeleng has suffered a lot, even under a government of what they call democracy today. To the residents of this place nothing has been changed in their lives. Democracy to them was to be a sudden change of an evil life for a better life. But that's not the case with our people, rather, things have got worse. We used to depend on the borehole for water, and that water was clean but that changed. The mines have polluted this water. So now we queue for the water which we either buy or collect from the tanks.



## CORRUPTION OVER WATER TENDER



The Rustenburg municipality has been wasting money in paying for the people who tender for bringing this water to the residents. They started to lay pipes for bulk water around August 2008. But this construction project for bulk water supply does not appear to be finishing. The project started around the month of August 2008 but even today the project has not yet been completed. Politicians use this project to lobby in the 2009 national elections, saying that they are bringing us water. People have been promised so much that they don't even know who to believe in.

In August 2010 the community met the contractor. That meeting was held at the local school. The councillor was present and the proportional councillor and the Community Liason officer of the project. In the meeting, they blamed each other for not completing the project.

The contractor said that the delay was caused because they never got paid for the job and that there were two contracts. The one doing the job complained about the previous contractor.

The councillors said that they would meet with us after the new budget was passed. Now there is a new councillor.

On the 15th September 2011 the Mayor met the community with councillors and other representatives. They told us that we would have water by December 2011.

The question still remains: when will the people of Ikemeleng drink the water from their taps? Its either the municipality or the mining companies around us who can provide the answer, "cause we are waiting to quench our thirst before moo fire a go burn."

Ikemeleng is a place situated between mining companies, making it extremely busy during the day. People are travelling from Rustenburg to Xstrata and Murray and Roberts Cementation shaft, and others heading to Waterfall or to Bleskop Hospital and mines.

The worst part about this busy road is that the cars travel very fast. When drivers from Ikemeleng join this road they risk accidents.

Students who go to school outside Ikemeleng have to cross this road and are at risk. This road has claimed many lives and several people have been hit by motor vehicles as they try to cross the roads.

People graze their cattle and goats nearby. These cattle stray on the road. Many herds of goat have been lost. The goats also cause accidents.

The Municipality and the Mines are well aware of this problem. They have tried to organise a patrol to help kids cross. But they are not serious; they do this on a volunteer basis and only for a short time during school hours.

The municipality promises a lot of changes such as traffic lights and speed humps. But they say in the near future. Yet in the rich white area close by they already have speed humps. What are they waiting for, a child or few children to die? Is our life cheap?

The community have suggested that traffic lights will be the only solution.

## ROADS INSIDE IKEMELENG.

### RESIDENTIAL ROADS

The roads in Ikemeleng are not tarred. During rains it is impossible to travel from one section to another. This makes it impossible for local businesses to get their goods in and even for water sellers to bring water. This places our lives in danger. Emergency vehicles are not able to reach people in rainy season.

## DANGEROUS ROADS



## THE TOILET PROBLEM IN IKEMELENG

The community of Ikemeleng does not have a proper sewage system. Some people have the bucket system, others dig their own pit toilets. Many people are forced to use the bushes. Our group talked to the community about their problems.

### THE BUCKET SYSTEM

It was in 2006 when the residents from one section of Ikemeleng heard about their removal in making way for the expansion of the open cast mining. Aquarius platinum mining was visibly at the fore in pursuing the residents move. Plenty of the promises were made but never fulfilled. One of the promises made was that temporary toilets will be used for the period of six months. This was an agreement reached during a meeting with the community. Soon the people were told that houses will follow with water and sanitation. People were very happy thinking that soon after their removal, things will be as was said to them. But the situation got worse because the companies who got the contract to empty the buckets did not do their job.

That is how the bucket system was introduced in Ikemeleng. We interviewed residents who used the bucket system. This is what they said:

- *Winter time is better than summer. In summer there are a lot of worms in the buckets and flies all around. The people who come to drain the toilet don't come on time. The bucket overflows. We cannot lock the doors of the toilet because many people share the toilet. At least 3 houses share one toilet.*

- *The buckets fill up very quickly. In summer there are more flies. Three households are sharing one toilet, this means that more than thirty people are using one toilet. In three days the buckets are full.*

- *Children are opening it easily. The toilet pot can easily fall down. The children get sick because of flies that comes from the toilet every day. Other toilets are seven meters away from the house. So from our houses we get the stink of the toilet. Many are forced to find alternatives such as the bush to relieve themselves because sometimes there are queues for the toilet.*

- *They are more than ten and they are using one toilet. Some of them have children and the toilet is situated outside the gate. During the night they are afraid to go to toilet, because they can be harmed, raped or either killed. Summer time is bad for them to go to toilet because of flies and worms.*

- *The toilets are next to the road, during the weekend, people, especially women are afraid to go to toilet because people are strolling around their street. They can be raped or robbed. Children are playing around the toilet and it can easily fall down, because the doors are not locked.*

### THE PIT TOILET PROBLEM

No sewage system caused decay in our Ikemeleng community. After many years of what we called democracy many hoped that it would better their lives but nothing has changed so far. People have dug pit toilets close to their house. During the rain the pits fill with water and the faeces runs through to the streams nearby. When the day becomes hot the whole place stinks.

When we interviewed people about the problems of the pit toilets many people did not feel free to give their names as they feared they might offend others.

## THREAT OF XENOPHOBIC WARS IN IKEMELENG

As mining is depending heavily on migrant workers, this results in Rustenburg being one of the towns affected by the influx of people who comes from different places in search of employment. Thus emerges places like informal settlements that become the nearest places for the employees to live in. The one reason is that there is not enough accommodation for them.

As our village of Ikemeleng is one of the places that has been affected by this migrant workers tension between the non-citizen with the citizen is very rife when it comes to sharing the little resources that we have as a community.

### CONFLICT OVER WATER

As we are living in this situation whereby we still have to queue for water for almost a day this is where you hear of the most heated talks between people; locals and foreigners. People boast of being better than others in terms of being citizens. You also hear people who are entitled to vote expecting to be the first to be served.

### CONFLICT OVER HOUSING

If they give people RDP houses in Ikemeleng this will be a cause for conflict among people because many foreigners will get houses because they now have South African papers.

### CONFLICT WITH TRADERS

People who are doing business in Ikemeleng are not good in the way they relate with others because they claim that they pay tax while others don't, seeing it unfair because they stand to lose while others benefit unfairly.

We are highlighting this issue while there is still time, for we expect serious measures to be taken to redeem this plague of hatred amongst Africans, which fuels tribalism and gangsterism.

We feel again that ignoring this will be a serious blunder, for we feel that delaying in implementing what was in the national anthem called services delivery will also contribute to that dilemma. We also hear people who did not qualify to vote accusing the voters by voting for nothing as they suffer the same conditions. This is the situation we are living in Ikemeleng.

