Social Impacts of Mine Closure

Lessons from the South African Platinum Belt

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Mining Dialogues 360°

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Mining Dialogues 360°?

- Focused on the socio-economic issues arising from the mining sector
- Using collaborative multi-stakeholder engagement
- Neutral, non-partisan, safe space for dialogue
- And evidence-based research
Sudbury - Ontario, Canada
The Platinum Belt – South Africa
City of Rustenburg
Existing social programs around mine closure assume that:

• Economic alternatives exist

• The State provides an effective safety net and functioning over-sight mechanism

• There is an existing level of social resilience
Current reality
Economic alternatives don’t exist

Mine closes - community collapses

- Dependence on mine worker wages for income in local and labour sending areas
- Local economy not diversified
- Hard to diversify economy after mines leave: skills follow mines, loss of market
The Effect is much larger than the local economy

Every 1000 mineworkers = support 27 000 dependents

(MD360 The Rise of Resource Nationalism report 2012)
Current Reality
No effective public safety net

- Local municipalities are dependent on mine-based taxes / income – no public sector cushion
- Impoverished municipalities unable to provide basic infrastructure and services
- Lack of capacity in the private sector
Current reality
No existing level of social resilience

• Low levels of education

• High levels of long-term health problems

• Low levels of social cohesion

• Gender and family dynamics impacted by the shift system and migrant labour
Reality after mine closure

• Huge environmental impacts: sterile land
• No clean up: no funding and not enforced
• Health impacts: reduced services
• Break-down of family dynamics
• Ghost towns and abandoned children
Reality after mine closure
The experience of women

MINING DIALOGUES 360°
Present men doesn’t necessarily mean coherent family structure

- Unemployed men at home hinder women’s capacity to earn side income – piece work
- Increased levels of domestic violence
- Increased risk of HIV, sexually transmitted disease
- Decreased access to medication
- Increased child neglect
Why is Action Urgent?

- **Millions of people** live in mining communities and multi-millions are dependent on them

- Near-mining communities have almost **no voice** in labour debates, government and corporate plans

- Highly **vulnerable** to shocks - strikes, sectoral downturn, retrenchments

- Fuel for **unrest**: labour, political, social
Instruments usually available to intervene aren’t there

- Economic alternatives don’t currently exist
- The State does not provide an effective safety net
- There is not an existing level of social resilience

Existing paradigms need to be broken
What can we do in Africa?

• Build up strategic strengths in each sector:
  - In communities find specific ways of building resilience
  - Within the state find specific interventions for capacity building
  - Within the private sector, find different ways of creating collaboration for impact

• Pull together the 3 sectors in a detailed manner to function effectively
THANK YOU