DIALOGUE IS NOT POSSIBLE IN AN UNEQUAL RELATIONSHIP: BENCHMARKS IPSS PROPOSAL FOR FACILITATED AND EQUAL DIALOGUE
The Bench Marks Foundation is an independent non-governmental organisation that focuses on how multinational corporations (MNC) perform their social, economic and environmental responsibility obligations and holds them accountable. We examine their CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) claims. Our starting point is ethics and moral persuasion ‘to do the right thing’.

Our local partners in South Africa are the South African Council of Churches (SACC), the Ecumenical Service for Socio-Economic Transformation (ESSET), Industrial Mission of South Africa (IMSA), Christian Development Trust (CDT), and the Justice and Peace Department of the Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference (SACBC).

The Bench Marks Foundation is part of an international alliance of faith-based organisations. Together we developed a corporate measuring instrument, called ‘Bench Marks, Principles for Global Corporate Responsibility – Bench Marks for Measuring Business Performance’. It is recognised as one of the four international leading instruments measuring the gap between policy and practice.

THE BENCH MARKS BOARD:

Jo Seoka (Chairperson), Allan Wentzel (Deputy Chair), John Capel (Executive Director), DS Piet Beukes, Henk Smith, Mokethi Moshoeshoe, Sonto Magwaza, Zonke Majodina
IN THIS ISSUE

4 EDITORIAL

PERSPECTIVES
6 Bench Marks Concept Note

EVENTS
10 Soweto Launch
12 Activist Consultation on the IPSS Proposal

WORK-IN-PROGRESS
13 Independent Problem Solving Service
15 Building a network of community monitors in the Southern African region

RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS
16 Kanana Unemployment Survey Report - Justice and Peace Clinic Study
17 BUA Mining Communities
17 Never “Mined” Health Effects: A Community Report

REGIONAL AND GLOBAL WORK
19 DRC - Lubumbashi
21 Zambia - Solwezi

COMMUNITY VOICES
23 Tunatazama - Posts from the minefields
29 Activist Profiles: Elton Thobejane & Mmathapelo Thobejane
This issue of Action Voices is being published at the time of the 2017 Bench Marks Annual General Meeting and Conference, and provides an opportunity to reflect on our work and the situation in the region.

Our lead article is a concept paper which will be presented for discussion at the AGM. The paper reflects on issues facing communities and the mining industry, and highlights Bench Marks thinking on its 2018 programme.

In the pages that follow we present updates on our work, a brief review of two investigations by local community organisations, and reports by community monitors.

We present an update on our work in designing and developing an Independent Problem Solving Service (IPSS) to support dialogue between communities and mining corporations. Work on this service is progressing well. A draft proposal has been published and consultations were held with a range of groups and organisations.

While based in South Africa, Bench Marks works across the Southern African region. We present an update on our activities in two countries – the DRC and Zambia, and on our joint activity with the South African Resource Watch (SARW) to build a network of communities near mines in seven Southern African countries.

We briefly review two reports based on investigations by local community organisations – BUA Mining Community on the state of clinics in Rustenburg and the Justice and Peace group in Klerksdorp on the problem of youth unemployment in Kanana. Our programme to support local investigations is aimed at encouraging community actions from an informed basis.

The Bench Marks monitors programme is growing into a Southern African network with participation by SARWA, ZELA and other regional organisations. In this issue of Action Voices we publish posts from monitors in communities near mines from South Africa, DRC, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Lesotho and Tanzania.

In a final section we continue with our series of introducing you to local community activists who are key to the work of building powerful communities near mines. In this issue we introduce you to young activists from the Limpopo Sekhukhune minefields. These activists work against great odds and with little resources keep the movement of people alive.

The Editor
Moses Cloete
Mine Blasting in Vosman, Emalahleni
The fact that the mining sector is a key contributor to the South African economy has been paraded with pride by the Chamber of Mines and many governments during and post-Apartheid.

A recent report on Transformation by the Chamber of Mines, available on their website, states that the mining sector has played a critical developmental role over the past 140 years, transforming “South Africa into the most industrialised country in Africa.” It notes mining as a “major contributor to the economy with significant contributions to employment numbers, export earnings, attracting foreign direct investment, creating GDP and contributing to significant transformation in the economy.” In 2014, the mining sector employed 495,568 people who collectively earned 102.1 billion Rands; and contributed a further R18bn in taxes to the South Africa economy.

However, alongside these “positive” macro indicators is a story of misery and survival for the majority. A story that shows that the massive profits and industrialisation have benefited a few over the many.

While the country is believed to have the world’s fifth-largest mining sector in terms of GDP value and the world’s largest reserves of manganese and platinum group metals (PGMs), poverty is increasing across the country. A mid-August 2017 report of Statistics South Africa announced sharp increases in poverty, with those most vulnerable to poverty being children (aged 17 or younger), females, black Africans, people living in rural areas, those residing in Eastern Cape and Limpopo, and persons with little or no education. Poverty trends in South Africa between 2006 & 2015 increased by 55.5% to number 30,4 million; and the number of persons living in extreme poverty (below the 2015 Food Poverty Line of R441 per person per month) increased from 11 million in 2011 to 13,8 million in 2015.

In terms of the Gini Coefficient that measures income inequality South Africa is the most unequal society in the world, with black Africans experiencing the highest income inequality with a Gini Coefficient of 0,65 in 2015, increasing from 0,64 in 2006. Income inequality amongst whites declined from 0,56 in 2006 to 0,51 in 2015.

Today, economists recognise that while the official unemployment rate stands at 27% it is in effect closer to 40% in real life. Low wage employment, joblessness and marginalisation, all contribute to the social strife experienced in many townships.

The Chamber of Mines also ignores that these contributions to the economy are largely due to the sweat of mine workers and the communities living close to the mines. The legacy of mining for many workers and the poor in mining communities reveals the story of precarious lives and widespread illness. Workers suffer accidents and an uncertain place in the economy. Communities living close to mines
Community living near an abandoned coal mine in Mpumalanga

Mines externalise their cost. The community suffers polluted air.

Suffer mine-induced and cancer forming illnesses, and have been denied a real say in matters affecting their own lives. Since the killing of mine workers at Marikana in 2012, over 50 000 workers lost their jobs in the mining sector and job losses are likely to dramatically increase in the next few months, if urgent action to stem these are not in place.

Other commentators have pointed out that the contributions from the companies to the fiscus would have been greater, had it not been for illicit financial flows from corporations as a whole, including the mining corporations. Africa loses an estimated 5.7% of its GDP annually in illicit financial flows, principally because of tax evasion. During the last 13 years of Apartheid, from 1980 to 1993, average capital flight from South Africa as a percentage of GDP was 5.4 percent a year; and post-Apartheid, from 1994 to 2000 capital flight rose to an average of 9.2 percent of GDP per year (Seeraj Mohamed and Kade Finnoff, 2004).
COMMUNITY ACTIVISTS IN MPUMLANGA

Bench Marks Foundation and others have consistently pointed out that mining has many shortcomings, which the government and the mining companies often ignore. One such shortcoming is the failure to scrutinize that mining profits result from an externalisation of costs onto the people and the environment, which further impacts on the wider economic and social well-being of communities.

Corporations make profits because they have perfected the science of exploitation. As Bakan (2004) notes: “the corporation’s built-in compulsion to externalize its costs is at the root of many of the world’s social and environmental ills” (2004: 61). “A corporation,” he says, “tends to be more profitable to the extent it can make other people pay the bills for the impact on society (2004:70).” He notes, “the corporation... is deliberately programmed... to externalize costs without regard for the harm it may cause to people, communities, and the natural environment (2004:73).”

Externalisation is a concept used to explain the practices of companies when they push all or most of their costs to others, the environment, the workers and the poor and even animal life. The company does not take responsibility for the waste it produces or the damages like cracked houses or the pollution and tailing dam waste that runs into homes of community members. This is a significant way in which corporations make profits.

Indeed most of the close to 40 communities that the Bench Marks Foundation works with confirm that they have seen little or no benefits from mining. Communities have become poorer, more alienated and more vulnerable. Their social cohesion has weakened and they have no say in decisions made by mining corporations which affect their lives.

Ultimately, it is the genuine unity of people that reinforces and emboldens them to use their constitutional power to say NO to mining in their areas when they do not want it. False promises of a better life from the establishment of a mine soon wilt before the very eyes of mining communities and they find that they are worse off with the advent of mining. They find little legal and regulatory protection from government and, generally, an intransient mine owner whose sole interest in mining is the bottom line. This is achieved because they are allowed to externalise their costs: in effect, a privatisation of the profits and the socialisation of the costs.
Because of the grossly skewed power relations between mining and the communities affected by mining there is a crisis of legitimacy within the mining sector. Communities have no alternative to the rampant exploitation they face but to resist. Community resistance takes many different forms, but the most common of recent times are the daily skirmishes and struggles aimed at stopping production or campaigning to harm the reputation of the corporation. To date, these struggles have been met with bullets and repression rather than meaningful dialogue and community development.

The primary problem facing mining communities is that they are in reality disenfranchised. Over the years unions obtained rights and fought for their rights, and workers won practical mechanisms to advance their rights and struggles. Mining communities are fighting for similar mechanisms which depends on all parties to come to the realisation that there are other ways to resolving conflicts than simply ignoring communities and using private and state repression on poor communities. Mining communities are excluded from the formal platforms and structures where they can make decisions that affect them directly. They do not have the right to bargain and negotiate.

Mining communities are excluded from real rights in the Mining Law (MPRDA) as well as some of the institutions and rights that it has spawned, such as the Social and Labour Plans. Whilst constitutionally all citizens have rights, mining communities are excluded from the Mines, Health and Safety Council (MHSC) and other government created institutions such as the Mining and Mineral Sector Training Authority (MqaSETA).

Mining communities, amidst great economic and social crisis, have become new bases for social action. They are forming community organisations and movements striving to regain control over their economic, social and ecological futures.

These movements are uneven, and not all strands are necessarily progressive or democratic. However the overwhelming thrust of these movements is to survive in the face of the onslaught of mining, and there is a significant rise in movements that seek inclusion in decision-making that affect them.

THE INDEPENDENT PROBLEM SOLVING SERVICE (IPSS)

In response to the lack of genuine dialogue and the lack of inclusion of mining communities in decision making around the impacts of mining, Benchmarks is in the process of developing a programme – the Independent Problem Solving Service (IPSS). This programme seeks to address the grossly skewed power relations in the mining sector and the callous disregard and marginalisation of mining communities by companies and the government.

The IPSS is a service to support communities to dialogue with corporations as equals on problems affecting the community. The IPSS is imbued with a social justice vision, a focus on human dignity and full democratic human rights, with the overall objective of contributing to the strengthening of community power and organisation. An integral part of the problem solving process is the development of community capacity through an Independent Capacity Building Fund so that communities may engage with mining corporations as equals. Through the Fund communities can source valuable skills, and resources to ensure that they make informed decisions in the different phases of the mining cycle. The independent problem solving approach is a justice seeking empowering approach and cannot work without strong, democratic and well-functioning locally organised communities.

IPSS is an integral part of Bench Mark’s broader work aimed at providing a range of support measures to communities in their struggle for justice. The Bench Marks Foundation believes that this is the most effective approach in striving for sustainable and developmental solutions to the problems faced by mining communities.

RESOURCES
SOWETO LAUNCH REPORT

On Tuesday, 29 August 2017, Waiting to Inhale, a report on a survey of household health in four mine affected communities was launched at the Empowerment Centre in Riverlea in the shadow of the Mooifontein Tailings waste dam. The report is number 12 in the Benchmarks Policy Gap series and focuses on four Soweto mine affected communities: Diepkloof, Meadowlands, Riverlea and Snakepark.

A local nurse speaks at the launch, and Bench Marks lead researcher David Van Wyk presents the report. Opposite page: John Capel addresses the community at the launch.
Among the close to 400 people present at the launch were representatives of the four communities and officials from the South African Police Services, the Department of Health, the Department of Minerals and the Johannesburg Mayor’s Office.

Bishop Jo Seoka, the Chairman of the Bench Marks Foundation Board opened the proceedings and the Bench Marks Foundation lead researcher presented the research findings. He discussed the impact of mine waste on air, water, and household health in each of the four communities.

Community representatives then addressed the gathering. A nurse from the Riverlea clinic spoke of her experience in this community and Mr Reece Rosenberg, Chairperson of the Riverlea Community Forum spoke with emotion about community frustration with mining operations and the failure of mining corporations to engage with the Riverlea community. Ms Tiny Dlamini a community member from Snakepark spoke of the experiences of her community and the impact of the Doornkop mine tailings dump to the north of the Doornkop informal settlement.

The media was well represented at the launch. Reporters from radio, television and the major newspapers including The Citizen, the Saturday Star, Beeld, Sowetan and community newspapers were present. Following the launch media representatives were taken on a Toxic Tour – that is a visit to the communities to witness the adverse effects of mining. The two weeks following the launch saw extensive reporting on radio, television and newspapers on the findings of the report.
On the 15 September 2017 Bench Marks Foundation hosted the second consultation on the Independent Problem Solving Service (IPSS). The IPSS is an initiative to address new and long-standing problems in mine affected communities.

Sixty-three community activists attended the consultation. These activists came from mine affected communities from five provinces – Limpopo, North West, Gauteng, Mpumalanga, and Northern Cape.

The discussions acknowledged problems faced in these communities, that existing strategies are not working, and that innovative strategies are needed. The activists embraced the IPSS proposal as an important initiative in the search for innovative strategies. They stressed that the IPSS should play a greater role in capacitating mine-affected communities. Principles of human dignity and social justice were discussed as central to the IPSS.

THE MEETING CONCLUDED THAT:

- Bench Marks Foundation should continue to pioneer IPSS initiative.
- There should be continuous consulting and promoting IPSS in the communities.
- There should be constant communication with all who have been part of the consultation meeting.
- Delegates will report to their constituencies using a range of methods which work in their locality. Report back to the communities is one significant principle to assist in garnering support for the IPSS.
- Bench Marks Foundation should consider having more workshops and training on the IPSS.
Bench Marks has made considerable progress in designing and developing the Independent Problem Solving Service (IPSS). This service aims to increase the capacity of communities to engage mining corporations as equals in addressing problems experienced as a result of mining.

**DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT**

The process started with research into the relative effectiveness of company grievance mechanisms within the mining sector in South Africa. Following discussions and consultations Benchmarks produced a Concept Paper, Executive Summary, a ‘nuts and bolts’ guide on the service and a motivation for the Service. A draft Independent Capacity Building Fund proposal, and key messages for media were also developed.

**BRIEFINGS AND CONSULTATIONS**

A wide range of briefings and consultations have been held, with very positive responses. To successfully implement the service such consultations will be an ongoing process. It is essential, for example, to bring a broad layer of mining companies on board and to get information about the service to communities on the ground.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENTS**

On 30 June 2017 a workshop was held with key civil society and community organisations active in the mining sector.

On 15 September 2017 a workshop was held with sixty-seven representatives of communities and civil society organisations. The outcomes of this workshop will feed into the further development of the Service.

On 7 June and 18 July 2017 a consultation was held with Platinum Belt mining communities.

On 4 April 2017 participants of a Bench Marks Community Monitor test case workshop were briefed on the service and the group reported on progress made on 21 June 2017.

**CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENTS**

On 10 June 2017 a briefing session was held with a number of legal body organisations.

On 14 June 2017 Judge Dennis Davis and Alan Fine from Russel & Associates (consultants to the mining sector) were briefed on the service.

On 29 June 2017 Bench Marks participated in and gave input on the IPSS at the Global Pound Conference (a not for profit global project) on alternative dispute resolution. Eight participants expressed an interest in becoming involved with the IPSS initiative.
The University of Cape Town Minerals to Metals project under the Chemical School of Engineering was engaged and is ready to give both technical and advisory support.

Arrangements have been made for the IPSS to be tabled for discussion with a Courageous Conversations Programme workshop on 22 September 2017, and a high level meeting on 11 October 2017 with mining sector CEOs, senior executives and church leadership, convened by the Archbishop of Cape Town, Dr Thabo Makgoba.

MINING SECTOR ENGAGEMENTS

Constructive discussions are taking place with a number of mining sector employers. The CEO of Anglo American was initially engaged on the idea and has given in principle support and a meeting on 19 August 2017 took place with two senior executives. A further meeting with Anglo American and Anglo Platinum executives was held on 13 September 2017, where the focus was on the practical application of the service. Anglo Gold Ashanti, the Chamber of Mines and Lonmin have also been engaged and indicated an interest to continue discussions on the service.

INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENTS

An arrangement has been made for the IPSS to be on the agenda of the United Nations Annual Forum on Business and Human Rights session on Multi-Stakeholder Perspectives on Access to Remedy in Geneva on 27 – 29 November 2017.

International collaboration has also been initiated with SOMO (The Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations). This includes a teleconference and the forwarding of the IPSS documentation.

Pilot and milestones

A pilot exercise to carry out a trial run of the facilitated dialogue process is being planned. Two highly respected and experienced facilitators have been recruited and given initial briefings in preparation for the pilot. This will be an important exercise from which significant learnings will be drawn.

A six-month action orientated training of seven community monitors from three mining areas has been initiated. Each monitor is being supported to work with her or his local community to take up an issue from the stage of investigation through to engagement with the mine. This process is being documented and the learning will be integrated into the IPSS design.

THREE KEY MILESTONES HAVE BEEN SET:

- Essential start-up steps completed by 31 December 2017, culminating in a pilot facilitated dialogue exercise, with learnings drawn.
- Completion of the start-up phase by 30 June 2018, including a further pilot exercise.
- An initial but full operationalisation of the IPSS as from 1 July 2018 to 31 December 2018, culminating with a review of progress made.

The IPSS will be developed and implemented on an incremental basis, with learnings drawn as the process unfolds.
In November 2016 the South African Research Watch and Bench Marks brought together community activists from seven countries to initiate a project to create a network for communities living near mines to report on and share experiences.

The network will enable community based activists from Lesotho, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Zambia, DRC, Tanzania and South Africa to share information and ideas via WhatsApp groups, blogs and mobile Apps.

In 2017 the project launched a new website – Tunatazama (We are Watching) – which contains blogs for each participating country, and began training community monitors from the seven countries. Local community activists are being trained to make short posts on a country WhatsApp group. These posts are then reposted on the website and will appear simultaneously on a smart phone App, which can be downloaded from Google Play. The posts on the blogs can then be communicated to specific target groups via social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. The posts will also be sent out via a regular e-Letter.

A second workshop will be held in November 2017 to review the work and make plans for the development of the network into 2018.

The new Tunatazama website can be found at http://communitymonitors.net.
Justice and Peace conducted a survey in the community of Kanana on the problem of youth unemployment. The aim of the survey was to provide information to support community action on youth unemployment.

This report is written by Tshepo Mmusi who also trained community monitors in Kanana on how to conduct interviews for this survey. Tshepo and four community monitors, Mahadio Mohapi, Pele Grabie, Lebohang Maitsile and Yane Khoboli each conducted five interviews on 17 and 18 August 2017. They interviewed a total of 20 young people below the ages of 35, in four residential sections of Kanana – Z section, X section, Vaal park and Old location.

KEY FINDINGS:

The interviewees came from large families living in overcrowded conditions in one to two roomed RDP houses. Most families depend on state grants which they supplement with casual work in homes and industry, recycling waste, extended public works programmes, and contributions from family members elsewhere.

Of the 20 youth interviewed only one had a formal job, and two are self-employed – one has a sewing business at her house and the second person has a motorcar taxi service. Most of the youth interviewed dropped out of school at grade 10. More Female youth completed their grade 12, than male youth. A very small proportion (10%) of the youth interviewed qualify to go on to tertiary education. All the 17 who are unemployed were looking for employment and would take almost anything.

Some are interested in in-service training related courses such as courses for learner miners, which will give them exposure to work experience and ensure them jobs. Others are interested in courses at FET colleges in skills such as brick laying, refrigeration, electrical engineering, welding. Those with grade 12 are want to pursue courses such as nursing, human resources, accountancy, actuarial science, information technology and courses which are mining related such as mining engineering, electrical engineering, geology, rock engineering. Some would like to start their own businesses.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- There is a need to rebuild. Justice and Peace should mobilize all community organizations, movements, civic organizations, local businesses towards building a well organised community initiative that focuses on the unemployed members of the community.
- NGOs should be part of and support the process.
- Government should be engaged throughout, especially departments such as Social Development, Minerals Resources and agencies
The Mining Community, a network of local community organisations in the Rustenburg platinum mining areas, assisted by researchers of the Bench Marks Foundation published a report titled “Never ‘Mined’ Health Effects: A Community Survey of the State of Clinics Near Mining Communities in Rustenburg Local Municipalities.”

The study was motivated by the large number of complaints BUA received from residents about the poor services in local clinics. BUA was particularly concerned about the role of the platinum mining industry in the stress on health care services in the area.

The aim of the study was to understand the extent of the problems, how these affected residents, and to what extent these related to the increase in population related to mining. BUA hopes that the study provides information for a programme of action to improve the conditions of life for community members in the Rustenburg area.

The research was done by 22 researchers drawn from local community activists. Each researcher visited 11 clinics over a period of 2 weeks and interviewed patients using a basic questionnaire. In addition they interviewed nurses and a selection of community members.

FINDINGS

The study found that all clinics had more patients seeking services than the clinic staff was able to
attend to. This led to long waiting times of between four to eight hours, and sometimes more, before being attended to by a nurse. Women with sick children, pregnant women, and elders experience great difficulty. The long wait created stress for women who had to leave their families unattended, and it caused tension between “community residents” and “outsiders” whom local residents blamed for the overcrowding. There was also tension between patients and nurses who were blamed for the poor services.

The study showed problems with poor staffing, few doctors, lack of medication, and no ambulance services. Clinics were small and poorly designed and did not provide a comfortable environment with protection from the weather.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study made several recommendations and pointed to actions which should be taken by the different role players – government, mining companies, health care workers organisations, and community organisations.

Government was seen as having the key responsibility to correct the situation as the Department of Health was responsible for implementation of the health mandate and required to attend to problems that contributed to poor services. In particular the Department of Health should be responsible for monitoring the influx of population and making the necessary adjustment in its budget, and the department should demand the mines pay for health services to mine workers who use the public services.

**MINING COMPANIES SHOULD TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PROBLEM. MINING COMPANIES SHOULD:**

- Ensure that all mine workers and their families are provided for in the mining industry’s health care services so as to avoid overcrowding at the local clinics.
- Contribute towards the building of larger clinics, and support a home-based care system.
- Collaborate with the health department to increase awareness of HIV, TB and cancer, and give regular counselling to their employees and their families.
- Provide learnerships to the local communities to provide nursing services to the local clinics. This will increase the labour that is required for clinics to operate on a 24-hour basis.

Health care workers’ organisations, and nurses in particular should work with the local community to improve both the working conditions of health workers and services to the community. Health workers and patients are part of the same working class community and should not be drawn into conflict.

Community organisations have a key role in ensuring that reforms take place. Change will only come with community campaigns. Community organisations should set up action groups to monitor the problems and take action. Community leaders should educate residents on the causes of the problems and not allow long waits to slip into ethnic tensions.

Joe Magobe, coordinator of the research project
Bobby Marie from the BMF and Claude Kabemba from SARWA met local activists from Action Against Impunity for Human Rights (ACIDH) to share ideas and strategies for organising local communities.

Drawing ideas from the Bench Marks community monitors programme, we explored developing a monitoring system in Lubumbashi.

We visited a local community near the Ruashi mine. We saw security guards with attack dogs positioned on a high ridge on the side of the open cast cobalt mine, overlooking the community sprawled at the foot of the ridge. Young people worked into the ridge, digging deep into the soil and collected sand for their brick-making factory.

There was no fence to keep residents of the local community from entering the open cast mine. Residents said that the mine believed that fences did not work so they stationed armed guards and attack dogs to keep the people out. Often young people would enter the open pit mine to carry away mineral bearing soil. A young boy walked up the mud steps to show us the path they take into the mine.

The children, mothers, young men, caked in mud, crowded around us, showing us the burn on their skins. They talked about the respiratory illness from dust which suffocated the community when the wind blew. But they laughed. They were too busy surviving to worry about the destructive impacts of mining—a young girl washing in a basin, young men, digging, shaping mud into bricks, another young man carrying a bag of heavy stones for sale.

This is mining in the DRC. The community lives in the mine. No law or regulation to draw a line.

In our meeting with ACIDH we went through the different steps of set up a monitoring system. The ACIDH subsequent to our meeting brought together organisations from four communities in a WhatsApp group and began posting reports, many from the community around the Ruashi mine. The group will link with the regional network posting reports on the weblog Tunatazama at http://communitymonitors.net

The problems faced by the community living near and almost in the Ruashi mine are difficult to resolve. But the WhatsApp group and writing up of reports is a powerful first step.
An active community too busy surviving to worry about the destructive impacts of mining.
Bench Marks work in Copper mining in Zambia has been moving away from the old mines in Ndola to the North-Western Province. The new mines bring new problems to the communities living in this part of the country.

Three years ago, the Bench Marks Foundation was invited by local organisations to share its experiences with local activists on how to engage the mines on the problems they faced. This exchange has been facilitated by Diakonia and involved Caritas Zambia, FODEP, Extractive Industry Transparency Association, JCTR Catholic Jesuit and the Youth Alliance for Development. The Bench Marks work in this region was led by Brown Motsau and David Van Wyk.
Over the three years workshops were held twice a year with local community activists. The work extended traditional leaders to help make them aware of problems arising from mining and to build bridges with local community activists. Workshops were also held with local journalists to help assist better reporting of the problems as experienced by communities. The work over the past 3 years has helped organisations develop their understanding of their problems but also to develop organisational strategies.

The North Western province of Zambia shares borders with the Democratic Republic of Congo and Angola. It is a high rainfall area and one of the most water rich regions of Africa with 3 major rivers. The area has been best with large expanses of fertile soil. This area was regarded as the breadbasket of Zambia with large amount of vegetable production and cattle.

Since mining set up in the area, their problems escalated. The issues raised by community activists is no different to issues faced by all communities when a new mine is set up.

- Communities are resettled hastily and are forced to live under worse conditions then before mining
- Communities lose land, which results in a loss of livelihood and the loss of grazing land.
- The system of compensation is not fair and proportional to the losses of the community
- The large influx of people into once rural villages has created many social problems.
- Traditional life with its hundreds of years old structures are broken down. Families face new pressures and youth become disoriented.
- There is extensive environmental pollution of the air water and soil.
- Mines are not properly regulated by government
- Mining companies do not consult with local communities
- Smelters have been built close to where people live
- Mine fences cut off access roads, making travelling between villages and markets longer
- Local people are not employed or trained by the mines for work.

IN THE WORKSHOPS THE ORGANISATIONS IDENTIFIED CLEAR ISSUES AND STRATEGIES FOR ACTION:

- **EMPLOYMENT**
The emphasis here was on greater employment of local people, good working conditions and the end to casual labour.

- **CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR)**
CSR must be backed by laws/legislation. Need to restate mineral sharing mechanisms. Investor strategies must be community based and not isolated from the communities and the nation at large.

- **ACCOUNTABILITY AND REPORTING**
The community should play a more active role in validated company accountably reports. For this companies should be required to make these reports more accessible.

- **LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND LICENSE**
The communities must be involved in the issuing of mining licenses. Local shareholding should be respected.

- **ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT**
Communities should develop long–term strategies for protecting the environment. They should be campaigning for increased investment in infrastructures: Education, Health, Road Networks and Human Resources. In particular, communities should lobby for greater investment in youth and women empowerment programs. The groups discussed ways in which they could build strong organisation in the area. Key strategies were outlined:

- Communities must solve their problems before solving problems surrounding them.
- NGOs must not replicate their work on the ground and collaborate in joint programmes.
- Communities need to be consistent in their activism
- Participants who attended workshops must plan with the communities
- Women to form vibrant groups in their communities

**SOME OBSERVATIONS OF THE BENCH MARKS TEAM:**

- Mines are expanding rapidly in the northwest and the impact of mines is getting worse.
- There is a need for stronger government intervention, to use the proceeds of mining to develop the people.
- Need for local people to think of how they can create employment rather than waiting to be employed by the mines.
- There is a need to promote value addition and industrialization rather than transporting copper in raw forms.

There is a vacuum of women groups, and a need to form organizations that look at issues affecting them such as the presence of Nitrates in water which has the potential to cause abortion.
TUNATAZAMA: POSTS FROM THE MINEFIELDS

‘TUNATAZAMA – WE ARE WATCHING’ – is the name of a community monitors project recording the observations of over 100 community monitors about the impact of mining on their communities.

The Foundation set up the Community Monitors School in 2009 to assist local activists in mining affected communities to take the lead in their struggles by developing their core organising skills. Pages 24 - 28 highlight a selection of community monitors posts.
SOUTH AFRICA

ZANLE MSIBI/VOSMAN, MPUMALANGA/280817

Today at about 4:16pm I was in Vosman when I heard a terrible vibration. It was so heavy. I heard windows shaking after the blasting at Motau mine. I saw what the dust looked like after the blasting took place.

MOSHABI SELOWA/BOKONI, LIMOPO/280817

Around 08:56 today I received a call from Mr Seele Selowa informing me that one of Mr Mohuba Daniel’s goats was found dead. When I arrived I found Oupa Mohuba’s son waiting to collect the dead goat. He said they recognised they were a goat short yesterday and today they found the dead goat. I investigated and I realised that the goat was hit on its head by a car. This road is used by mine vehicles. It goes to the Klipfontein open cast mine and is used by the Benhaus mine.

FRANCINA/LEPHALALE, LIMOPO/310817

At Marapong in Lephalale we have a sewerage plant that was built years back to help the community but unfortunately it doesn’t work. The Boikarabelo Mine agreed to support Lephalale Municipality financially with the project of renewal of the plant and in return the mine will use sewerage water to clean their coal. But what we see is the ongoing blockage and the smell we face. I wish justice will be done soon.

ELTON NKWANE THOBEJANE/SEKHUKHUNE, LIMOPO/020917

Last Thursday communities near the Hackney Shaft, where the mine has stockpiled the platinum raw materials, witnessed a very strange and surprising activity by the mine. Trucks were losing the stock and moving them to the North West Province. Our understanding was that they should not sell or dispose any material because the mine has been placed on care and maintenance. The two community based organisations Come ACT and SCMAC are collaborating to challenge the Twickenham mine regarding the disposal of its platinum reserves. The two organisations submitted a PAIA application to the Department of Mineral Resources (DMR) to request the maintenance plan and the agreement with the DMR. We also requested their new mine works programme because we believe that they made changes that were not agreed to. The Legal Resources Centre helped write a letter on our behalf to request clarity and supporting documents from the mine.
The Burgersfort cluster police, on 08 September 2017, confiscated the machines used for illegal mining of chrome in Monametse Village. After the Bokoni Platinum Mine’s announcement on their Care and Maintenance plan this was the community’s only hope for income. This has angered the community members, as the department instead of making sure they regulate and help them mine legally, confiscate mining equipment. Around 8 excavators have been brought to the surface from the mountains, waiting to be loaded on the lowbed to the nearest police stations.

Between July and August something happened that shocked the owners of cattle and the community. Cattle were stolen from their camps by a cattle guard (badisa). The owners called the police. As we all know that SAPS lacks somewhere somehow, so the owners ba itsela molao matsogong tried to find that cattle guard on their own. They found him at Number 8 at Luka Village but he was empty handed. They told him to go back to fetch those cattle. He returned with half of the cattle. Even today the cattle haven’t been returned to the owners and their camp is still empty. The cattle guard has been arrested and is still in jail. The cattle owners asked the mines to help them find proper camps with security somewhere far from where people live, because people can’t live with animals it can affect their health. But the mine doesn’t do anything at all. Where the guards live there is no water, no electricity no toilets and no good shelters ba phela ko molapong, it can affect their health as human beings.

Livestock owners met with SEJN for the report back after the meeting we had with the mine on 07/09/2017. The task team asked the community for the following information: the number of villages affected by the pollution, the grievance the community wanted to lodge, the correct spot where farmers prefer the water troughs to be placed in their villages. The task team also asked the farmers to give a list of people who lost their livestock as a result of drinking water from the polluted mine stream. The farmers discussed what they wanted the mine to do to sustain the health of their livestock.
MOSHABI SELOWA/BOKONI MINE, LIMPOPO/150917

Today the workers of Highpoint, a mine contractor, received their retrenchment letters. Some others will be finishing on Friday this week. The permanent mine workers at the Braakfontein shaft will reach this point early next month. This was verified today at the safety meeting at Braakfontein shaft. The new mine General Manager Mr Sebutsi Tshele announced that September will be last month of operation at Bokoni platinum mine. The previous acting manager will be fired for stealing concentrated platinum.

ANDRIES MOCHEKO/LEPHALALE, LIMPOPO/140917

The workers at the Tša Lephalale, Grootegeluk coal mine known as Exxaro who are on strike are going on a protest march from the Marapong township to Exxaro. The main road is closed by the protesting mine workers and Marapong residents. The protesters closed down the Exxaro mine. The demands of the protesters are: land, water, housing and employment. The protesters say that the Grootegeluk coal mine (Exxaro) has been mining in this area over 30 years. As Lephalale residents they are still poor but the mine is making billions and billions. The current situation is that all roads which go to the big companies in Lephalale (Limpopo) Exxaro coal mine, Matimba Power station and Medupi Power station are closed. An Exxaro bus was burnt down.

MPUTI THOBEJANE/BURGERSFORT/150917

Since 2005 the community has been complaining about poor services from the nurses at the Mahubahuba BothasoeK Clinic in Burgersfort. When a child is sick they can’t help you without his or her clinic card so they tell you to go back home with him or her. Just imagine if the child gets worse on your way home. One day they left a woman to give birth outside the clinic. Even when you are HIV positive they break the doctor patient confidentiality and tell others that you have been diagnosed with HIV. One more thing they can’t help people without singing and praying early in the morning. Sometimes they have a lack of medicine.

TOKELO MAHLAKO/SEKHUKHUNE, LIMPOPO/170917

Water is life. Seeing a pregnant woman fetching water in the river was very painful to me. What shocked me was that the water she was fetching is next to the bridge that has been recently blasted. Dirty water from the blast still flows slowly day by day.

LESOTHO

THABO LEROTHOLI/MALUTI COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FORUM, LESOTHO/150917

Letseng Diamond Mine contaminated all the water through the slime dam and is now forced to improvise new ways to provide water to the community. It resorted to pumping water from Khubelu River but the solar system failed. This led to the Mine delivering water from the Mine with a small van twice every week for the households. Water that is supposed to be used by households from the river is not safe as animals also use the same pool. No proper sanitation system in place and people suffering from serious diarrhoea.
Boa tarde todos, falo de Tete Moatize esta-se remover os ossos dos defuntos, do antigo bairro Chipanga onde foram tirados os reacentados de Cateme e 25 de Setembro. Esto está acontecer sem conhecimento das famílias. Questionando as famílias dizem não tem conhecimento Moçambique.

In Tete’s Moatize village, bones of the deceased are removed from the old Chipanga neighborhood without the knowledge of families.

Assim foi a tarde de hoje na Vila de Moatize devido às explosões da VALE. No lugar de uma chuva de água as comunidades recebem uma chuva de poeiras negras que trazem consigo muita doença para às comunidades.

This afternoon in the Village of Moatize (Tete, Mozambique) due to the explosions of VALE the community receives a rain of black dust that brings with it much illness for the communities. This is in place of rain of water.
ZIMBABWE - MARANGE

ZAKEU NHACHI /SAVE ODZI COMMUNITY NETWORK TRUST (SOCNET) BOHERA, CHIMANIMANI, AND CHIPINGE

We have two Rivers - Save and Odzi. People swam and fished in these rivers, and got their water for domestic and farm use from these rivers. Mining started in 2007. By 2008 we started to see the downstream effects of mining. The company was discharging effluent in the two rivers and this resulted in livestock deaths, death of fish, skin diseases, and poor agricultural yields.

ZIMBABWE

JOSPHAT MAKAZA/MARANGE/ ZIMBABWE/041017

Water shortage hit Chiadzwa

There is a critical shortage of water in Chiadzwa following the closure of community boreholes by the mining companies. These boreholes supply water to more than 2 thousand villagers. Chingome, Mukwada and Chirasika are the most affected communities in Chiadzwa. Currently the diamond rich community is getting 40 liters of water per household from the Zimbabwe National Army ZNA truck after every two days. Most villagers are obtaining water from mine dumps and on once seriously polluted Save and Odzi rivers. Women who constitute 82% of Marange population are the most affected.

ZAMBIA

MYIYA MWANDAWANDE/KATETE, ZAMBIA

Sometimes we have abandoned this sector and concentrated on large-scale mining investment. These are women and children in Katete district eastern Zambia. They crush stones for construction. We need to redirect our advocacy on this neglected sector.
We profile two activists, Elton Thobejane and Mmathapelo Thobejane from Sekhukhune Combined Mining Communities, in Limpopo, South Africa. In the first section both activists write jointly on the main problems their communities experience and the actions that they are taking up to deal with these problems. In the next two sections each of the activists write on community actions they have been engaged in.

The writings of these activists come out of a reflection and writing workshop facilitated by Bench Marks for activists, and is published by Benchmarks and SARW in a book titled “We are Activists – Reflections on our struggles in communities affected by mining”.

Sekhukhune Combined Mining Communities, Limpopo, South Africa: by Elton Thobejane and Mmathapelo Thobejane
Limpopo Province is in the north of South Africa. We come from Sekhukhune region located in the eastern side of Limpopo. The area is rich in platinum and chrome. There are more than 32 mines in the area, and more mining is still to come.

We focus on the communities affected by the Twickenham and Bokone mines which are about 100kms apart – it can take an hour to drive from one area to the other.

The Twickenham Platinum Mine was started in 2001 and is owned by Rustenburg Platinum mine (Anglo American Platinum). Two shafts impact on nine tribal authorities – each authority having multiple villages. It is a very highly mechanized mine with only 36 people employed to date.

Before mining, the community around Twickenham used to cultivate the land and keep livestock. After 2002 mining operations started and the mines took land. People lost land to mine offices, mine residences, and the mines themselves. Some mountains were fenced off and livestock no longer have grazing land.

Communities were relocated because of the mines. There were no meaningful consultations with communities around relocation. People partly agreed, but they lacked information. The mines promised them heaven and earth. It was only later that the community realised that these are empty promises.

The communities face water pollution as the mining operations pollute the rivers. Mine made streams come from a shaft, from discharged water underground, and contribute to water pollution. People are losing their livestock every day in these polluted waters.

There is a sewage dam and a connecting pipe on land formerly used for cultivation. The sewage dam stream and spillage flows into our remaining cultivating land and our river.

“When a tender is out the mining employees are the ones who benefit. Locals benefit nothing.”

People moved from urban areas when the mine started and this has caused many social problems. We have chronic diseases, STIs, and prostitution. There has been an increase in shebeens and crime.

When a tender is out the mining employees are the ones who benefit. Locals benefit nothing. At first the mine employed people. It has now stopped and they have retrenched workers to make way for machinery.

With the help of Bench Marks Foundation we set up a monitoring project and a community monitors school. We have more than 21 community monitors. We share information and all our struggles through a WhatsApp group. We have organised protests and marches on water pollution, air pollution, cracks in houses, and jobs.

As community monitors we are collecting evidence from owners who lost livestock. A community member found his cow in the mud at the mine stream drinking the polluted water. When the owner asked for compensation the mine said: “We compensate for dead cows, you have to wait for the cow to die”. We got information from the headmen on how many cows died since the mining operation. We engage with the headmen on strategies on engaging with mines. We plan to get involved in negotiations with the mine on the issue of loss of livestock.
I am an environmental activist and of course I experience the same problems as my community. I was emotionally affected when my family lost their farm. I felt emotionally abused by the digging and removal our loved one’s graves. It was as if no one cares.

As a community member I took a decision that I will do something about the things that are done to us by individual industries. This is difficult and risky and sometimes you cannot do anything without money. Our parents and community members asked questions but they did not get answers. They fear losing everything. They also fear death.
I was invited to be one the Bench Marks Foundation monitors and from that day I realised everything can be possible. Through networking and sharing ideas I became informed and aware. I started introducing this struggle to the community. Since that day I have not looked back.

There are things that could hold me back, like family and intimidation but I hope and believe that as long as I do not keep information with me but take it to the entire district of Sekhukhune this is my weapon. Working together with the community makes me more powerful.

The community has different issues and I managed to attend to water pollution issues together with the River Monitoring Team. The herdsmen are the victims losing their livestock every day as a result of water pollution. But I know one day justice will be done.

Those who lost their farms, graves, houses, and loved ones as a result of the operation of Twickenham Mine will get justice!

CONSULTING WITH THE COMMUNITY IS KEY TO BUILDING POWER

The first action I planned since I started being an environmental activist was in Maotsi, in Limpopo. We went door to door to ask community members about their issues and whether they agreed with having a march. The community identified issues like water pollution, air pollution, air quality, house cracks, health issues and land grabbing.

We managed to collect many signatures, and we planned to take the signatures to engage with the mine about these issues we identified when we went door to door.

We were warned that Twickenham Mine uses court interdicts to try to stop marches. We went to the municipality the following week to get permission to march. We waited patiently for the lady who was supposed to help us. The municipality denied us permission to march and said we must negotiate with the mine as the mine told them they are always free to engage with us.

We went for the second time to the Tubatse Municipality. We used the information we were given by Right To Know and Freedom of Expression Institute (FXI) to apply for permission for the march. We were sent to different people and we were told we were not allowed to participate in any gatherings for some period. But in the end we got permission to protest.

With the help of MACUA (Mining Affected Communities United in Action) we picketed outside the premises of the mine before the march. The protest and march was a success. That day the community started to join when they saw that it was peaceful and that nobody was misbehaving. People came from the surrounding villages even though the mine used some community members to announce that everyone who takes part in the march will be jailed.

In solidarity with other villages we managed to submit our memorandum. This was a great success for a community that was denied the benefit of marches for a long time.

SYSTEMATICALLY TAKING UP AN ISSUE CAN BUILD POWER

After identifying issues like water pollution, air pollution, poor air quality, house cracks, health issues and land grabbing, I thought it would be good if we as activists can divide into groups and focus on who must do what.

That was how we came up with the idea of working in teams as environmental activists. We had teams for river monitoring, climate change and waste management.

With the help of herdsmen, the river monitoring team learns of cows or livestock that die in the streams that flow into our main river, Motse. The herdsmen alert me to any accident in the streams leading from the Twickenham mine or the Hackney mine. We keep records so we have concrete evidence to open a case in court against the mine so that the herdsmen can get compensation for their lost livestock.

Recently we called the Department of Water and Sanitation to test the waters of our surrounding rivers. But after four months we are still waiting. Bench Marks took some of our water samples and AWARD (Association for Water and Rural Development) also promised to help us with water testing.

It is important to build community power because if we stand together and work together we can work for change. With the information and support we get from NGOs we will win in the end. We get power from unity.
I became an activist in mining and environmental activities in 2009. In the beginning my focus was on the economic development aspects of mining. But when I saw that government had no political will to change the status quo in relation to the destruction of land and community benefits from mining I broadened my focus.

I was motivated by what was happening in the country at the time. The recall of the state president by the ruling party without considering what people on the ground felt triggered an alarm that they could do even worse to our communities, just for personal gain. I developed an interest in becoming a community watchdog on environmental injustices in mining, such as the pollution of water, illness, loss of human life, loss of cattle, underdevelopment and suppression of community voice. In our quest to push for change we experienced more challenges and continual violation of human rights, including land grabs by the mines.

**STRUGGLES WITH MARULA PLATINUM MINE**

In the past two years we witnessed radical action by communities affected by the Marula Platinum Mine in Limpopo Province. Marula mine have a license to mine platinum only and the chrome they find while mining they give to the communities affected by the mine operation who are then expected to sell the chrome to develop the area. A committee made up of the chief and local business people was selected to undertake the process, and proceeds were to be saved in a community trust fund account meant for development. However, the committee along with
the local chief are alleged to have squandered the money.

The community complained about the distribution of wealth in that the chrome allocated by the mine to benefit the entire community was now benefitting the chief and a few business people. The community was angered that the Trust Fund was abused so that a few could live luxury lives while the majority of families were left destitute. The community also demanded employment of local people.

The community took action. During the action cars, buildings and mine property were burnt and destroyed. The public order police came to restore order but villagers were determined. Roads were blocked with stones and burning tyres. The mine ventilations were petrol bombed now and then to force the stoppage of operations.

Mine management were at first reluctant to engage but the situation compelled them to resolve the impasse. As a result, the mine has employed 60 new local people, and temporarily stopped the sale of community chrome. A new committee is being set up to carry out the sale of chrome.

COMMUNITIES SHOULD HAVE A SAY IN DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL AND LABOUR PLANS

My experience as an activist is that government processes do not really get community input. IDP (Integrated Development Plans) and SLP (Social and Labour Plans), for example, come to the community as finished products. The only thing they need is endorsement from the community. There is no proper consultation, and no space in these processes for the community to say what they want. These processes are not designed to foster change for communities.

Mining companies are forced to adopt the IDP programmes in their Social and Labour Plans and this creates tensions during implementation because it is not what the communities want.

The solution is to create awareness that the power for change lies with the communities and that the councillor should represent the interests of the communities. In that way we will be building community power.
PUBLISHED BY THE BENCH MARKS FOUNDATION

6th Floor, Khotso House,
62 Marshall Street,
Marshalltown,
Johannesburg,
South Africa
2017

Email: actionvoices@bench-marks.org.za
Phone: +27 11 832–1743/2
Fax: +27 11 832–1750

Postal Address:
P O Box 62538,
Marshalltown 2107,
South Africa

Copyright: Bench Marks Foundation gives permission for excerpts from this magazine to be photocopied or reproduced provided that the source is clearly and properly acknowledged.

Editor: Moses Cloete
Production Team: Bobby Marie, Malebo Rammekoa, Olebogeng Motene, Susan Moraba Shamim Meer and Naadira Patel
VISIT THE BENCH MARKS FOUNDATION WEBSITE AT
www.bench-marks.org.za

VISIT THE COMMUNITY MONITORS WEBSITE AT
http://communitymonitors.net/

FIND THE TUNATAZAMA APP ON THE GOOGLE PLAY STORE

FIND THE RESOURCE BOOK FOR COMMUNITY MONITORS AT
http://communitymonitors.net/indexcommnet.php/?p=4209