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I am writing this as I sit in a cold and wet Cape Town, getting ready to address parliament with community people from around the country who are challenging the devastation caused by coal. “We exist to resist” is a slogan I came across recently which conveyed to me the critical importance of our work within various movements. And, indeed, the mechanics of nature is one of resistance, so it is not a major intellectual leap that gets us to recognise that, as society, we are in a constant process of resistance. And indeed, resistance must not be viewed as negative but as a building process towards a world that is free of the environmental and social injustices that we witness daily. So this newsletter incorporates a slight leaning toward highlighting “Africans Resisting”. It was not difficult to get to the focus of “Africans Resisting”, considering that this period covered the fifth anniversary of the Marikana Massacre. Nothing has changed for the people of the area or the workers. Poverty still prevails. And at one level the people of the area are taking on the struggle and the pain for all South Africans living in poverty. They have chosen not to accept government hand-outs in the form of housing. For the people of the area, poverty is not about housing, it is about changing the conditions for people to be accepted. Changing the conditions for people on the ground means delivering on the political promises that mining delivers for people and, above all else, it is about accountability for those who claim to be our leaders. We have to reflect on the words of local people: “Whatever happened on the 16th of August 2012 is still happening daily. Nothing has changed.” So in this newsletter we re-publish the words that we shared with the world on the Marikana Massacre in August 2012. We warned that we need accountability and “not another commission of enquiry that will hold the truth back for many years, but rather direct action against the Minister of Safety and Security and the Presidency for allowing this process to get to this stage.” We wait. We resist.

And, despite the sad backdrop of Marikana, Africans are challenging and resisting – in various spaces in Africa and globally. And it is a privilege that groundWork finds itself in various interesting spaces, not only in South Africa, but beyond the continent as well. The last three months – July to September – has been a very busy period with strategic meetings to galvanise resistance. From the Break Free from Plastics strategy meeting in Bali, with those resisting plastics production from around the world, which we will report on in our next newsletter as this process gathers more momentum, to the South African Waste Pickers Association’s fourth Biennial meeting, which was an interesting experience in true democracy. From a community coal exchange to a visit to the South African parliament – which we will report on in the next newsletter – to a visit to the South African parliament – which we will report on in the next newsletter – to galvanise resistance. From the Break Free from Plastics strategy meeting in Bali, with those resisting plastics production from around the world, which we will report on in our next newsletter as this process gathers more momentum, to the South African Waste Pickers Association’s fourth Biennial meeting, which was an interesting experience in true democracy. From a community coal exchange to the South African parliament – which we will report on in the next newsletter – to let our decision makers know about our concerns on the devastation of coal, groundWork also visited hospitals in the copper belt of Kenya and on the island of Madagascar, to share with them strategies for improved waste management and mercury disposal. In the province of Kwazulu-Natal, at home, we have started working closely with community people and NGOs such as Church Land Programme and AFRA to better understand how we support the understanding of fracking by the communities and farmworkers who will lose...
their livelihoods and in some cases their land to the devastation of fracking. But gas is not only found on land, it is also off-shore, and our resistance is here as well, where often the greed of corporations goes unnoticed as they devastate our seas in the name of “development” – with the permission of our democratically elected governments. So, indeed, a busy time.

But before I go ahead, a great thank you to all the guys in the office and community who put long hours into juggling multiple struggles, something to which groundWork has become accustomed. We have also had some interesting folk joining us for a few months. Ludwig Sonesson from Sweden is doing a four-month internship with us, through Afrikagrupperna, and Zinzi Sibanda, who has just finished her Masters in Environmental Law, is doing a four-month internship with us, through Afrikagrupperna, and Zinzi Sibanda, who has just finished her Masters in Environmental Law, is making sure that we are all supported in the resistance that we undertake. We are also about to have a visiting scholar from Italy via the US share our space for the next few months, trying to get our minds around the environmental crisis. This is amplified by the nexus between the political elite and corporate power.

Almost a week after the Marikana Massacre and in the midst of a week of mourning for those who were traumatically killed at the Lonmin mine, the groundWork team sends their condolences to the families of the deceased and reflects on what this series of events means for South Africa.

The absurd nature of South Africa’s democracy has been exposed by the brutal deaths of the forty-two workers and two South African Police Service members at Marikana. May we never forget the painful events that culminated in the Marikana Massacre on the 16th of August. These events cannot be seen in isolation, as only Lonmin’s continual search for greater profits at the expense of workers, and the worker struggles there, but rather in the context of a failed democracy and crumbling state, whose interest is tied up in protecting the wealth of the elite by using the Property Right (Section 25) in our Bill of Rights, rather than supporting the poor and responding to their call for the ANC’s promised “better life for all”.

As groundWork has said since 1999, the state remains as relevant now as it was then. The deaths of those in Marikana have given us an opportunity to reflect and to respond. This is resulting in a growing distance between union leaders and its membership. The Mail and Guardian reports that Vavi: “admitted that Cosatu’s preoccupation with ANC politics is resulting in a growing distance between union leaders and its membership.” Generally speaking, this then translates into workers never being allowed to demand too much from capital – and if they do the state must manage this demand. The ANC had to do it in this instance because they also had to protect vested corporate interests in the mining sector that many individuals in the ANC, and even the Chancellor House (the ANC’s investment arm) hold. The ANC could manage NUM; NUM managed the workers and ensured that demands never threatened corporate profits. But when the rival union arrived, workers could not be managed anymore.

The deaths of the first ten people in Marikana should have brought the nation to a halt – and we should have all asked what was going on. Critically, President Zuma should have intervened; after all he has been touted as the “people’s president” after the stiff upper lip nature of Mbeki. But he did not. He failed us by leaving the country at a critical point in time. We are waiting for guidance. We are waiting for our President to address the nation directly. But what is needed is not another...
Waste Pickers of South Africa working on the streets, in the community and on dumpsites, came from forty-nine workplaces from various towns in South Africa to attend the 4th SAWPA Biennial meeting. A total of 116 waste pickers, speaking nearly all South African languages, attended. Women were in the majority and we had young and old waste workers. Some of the waste pickers had travelled out of their province for the first time and we had people from cities as well as small rural towns. They gathered from the 27th to the 31st of August 2017 at the Elijah Barayi Training Centre, Midrand, Gauteng, South Africa. In solidarity there were waste pickers from the Movement of Collectors of Recyclables Materials (MNCR) in Brazil and Kagad, Kach, Patra Kashtakari Panchayat (KKPKP) in India.

The main aim of the meeting was to reflect on the past, to plan the future and to elect a new leadership to steer the organization forward. Since 2009, waste pickers have fought for the right to be organized and to work. Since then, government, industry and the people of South Africa have recognized their contribution. There are various programmes that government and industry have and are launching.
in the name of waste pickers. The waste pickers contribute positively in keeping the environment clean and are increasing the life span of dumps and landfills by salvaging recyclables, a job that is undervalued by both government and society.

Government and industry were given the platform to address waste pickers on how they will work in collaboration. The South African Local Government Association (SALGA), Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA), City of Johannesburg and Packaging South Africa and PET Recycling Company (PETCO) all shared their ideas. In the room for most of the time was one of the Minister’s advisors. We hope that the Minister is taking SAWPA seriously and that the presence of her advisor was not merely a “monitoring” process. SAWPA allowed the advisor to sit in, even on parts of the meeting that were closed to outsiders. It is hoped that this democratic spirit is respected by the Minister in return, and that SAWPA leadership can sit in when the Minister discusses their future in the big offices of government.

There were a number of issues discussed in the meeting. The Recycling and Economic Development Initiative of South Africa (REDISA) has failed to create the jobs that they had promised to waste pickers. The tyres problem is seemingly going to persist unless a new plan is carefully drafted. The issue of chemical waste flooding landfills results in a blame game between municipalities and waste pickers. Waste pickers argue that some chemicals, when exposed to direct sunlight, result in fires at various sites. Some of the chemicals impact negatively on waste pickers’ health either by burning their skin or their eyes due to exposure. On the other hand, municipalities believe that waste pickers are the ones starting the fires.

Since 2009, Waste Pickers in South Africa have made various strides towards improving their working conditions on the ground. Waste Pickers are now recognised by government as legitimate workers in society and, in the words of the Minister of Environment (2016): “Waste pickers are an integral part of the waste management system, and help to divert recyclables away from landfill.”

As a result of years of organizing and calling for worker and environmental justice by waste pickers, government has launched various waste picker and recycling initiatives country wide to respond to waste pickers’ calls for recognition. This is at local, provincial and even national levels, the latter referring to Operation Phakisa: Chemicals and Waste Economy, a positive initiative – despite it being rushed.

Various municipalities have worked with waste pickers to establish material recovery facilities (MRF, recycling centres, buy back centres). The City of Johannesburg recognised that working in the waste sector as cooperatives is the “better solution” to strengthen the work of waste pickers. The City of Johannesburg argued that they cannot assist individually-owned businesses. Instead, they prefer organized worker groups such as cooperatives, which they promised they will support and mentor. We hope they keep to their commitment and brave words.

The packaging industry, on the other hand, has confirmed that the waste sector is valued at R25 billion. We wonder where these billions are. For sure, the waste pickers are not seeing them. PETCO is working in various provinces with government, industry and waste pickers. To ensure that the wealth of South Africa is shared amongst its people – Freedom Charter 1995 – and not its corporates, waste pickers are working tirelessly towards increasing the number of cooperatives to secure their livelihoods, and to ensure that they, and not private individuals and businesses, hold the wealth that they create through their hard work. Industry, government and other institutions have highlighted the positive role and the critical importance of waste pickers to successful waste management, so where is the money, as a famous South Africa politician would say?

Despite the gains that were highlighted in this meeting, there are still worrying factors such as waste privatization. Waste pickers “have agreed to organize in a manner that ensures their work is protected for us, by us and with us” comments Simon Mbatla, long-standing SAWPA chairperson. There are various attempts by the private sector and government to take over waste pickers’ ideas, narrative and their work. Private people are encouraged to organize waste pickers, so that money can be channeled out of government coffers to benefit the people of these districts through exploiting waste pickers. Some waste pickers are threatened with being evicted from their work places, landfills and from the streets, because of their engagement with SAWPA. This is especially common in places like Secunda (Mpumalanga), Tzaneen (Limpopo) and Kimberly (Northern Cape).

The SAWPA call remains steady: government must develop Materials Recovery Facilities (MRF) in all municipalities. The MRFs should be operated and managed by Waste Picker cooperatives with external technical support. The South African Local Government Association was requested to advise municipalities to consult meaningfully with waste pickers in the development of Integrated Development Plans (IDP) and Integrated Waste Management Plans (IWMP) to ensure that Waste Pickers are seen as a solution. Municipal waste management officers should meet with waste pickers at least once every quarter so that they can understand their needs as well as the plans by municipalities that are in the pipeline. Landfill licences need to be urgently updated to allow for safe, organized salvaging of waste as stipulated in the Waste Act 2008, section 51.1(i).

Rural small towns should not be ignored in favour of metropolitan areas in the integration of waste pickers. Waste pickers should be legitimate partners in the new waste management plan for waste tyres, and any other waste management plans such as plastics.

Waste pickers are organizing to improve their work conditions. They make it clear that they don’t want to remain on the landfills or streets forever. They believe that they should be given an opportunity to play a central role in terms of waste recycling in the country. Industry and the market cannot be in control of waste recycling because for them it is about profit and not people. This must be a domain where we are all involved, seeking different solutions to the challenges we face, and not only relying on the markets. Support is needed since there are a number of cooperatives that exist on paper but are not functional for various reasons, such as lack of working areas, storage areas, protection from government and lack of skills development.

Finally, on the 4th day of the meeting new leadership was elected representing every province so that government departments or industry are able to communicate with SAWPA. The leadership was democratically elected and has equal representation in terms of gender. It was an interesting and vibrant election process, highlighting the maturity of SAWPA.
SAWPA Meeting Statement

We are the Waste Pickers of South Africa, working on the streets, in the community and on dumpsites, coming from forty-nine work sites from various towns of South Africa. We gathered from the 27th to the 31st of August 2017 in Elijah Barays Training Centre, Midrand, Gauteng, South Africa, for our 4th Biennial General Meeting. In solidarity amongst us we have waste pickers from the Movement of Collectors of Recyclables Materials (MNCR) from Brazil and Kagad, Kach, Patra Kashthakari Panchayat (KKPKP) from India.

We have convened here to decide and plan our future. We have developed this statement with the purpose of recording our successes and addressing our challenges. We have, since 2009, fought for our right to work and to organize. Since then, government, industry and the people of South Africa have recognised our right and we note various programmes that government and industry have and are launching in the name of Waste Pickers.

We contribute positively in keeping the environment clean, and increase the lifespan of dumps and landfills by taking recyclables away from recycling, a job that is undervalued by government and the people of South Africa.

Over the last few days, we have heard and talked to the South African Local Government Association (SALGA), Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA), City of Johannesburg, Packaging South Africa and PET Recycling Company NPC (PETCO). We also recognise that the DEA and the Ministry of Environment have had researchers and advisors present at our meeting.

We have heard of the billions of Rand available in the waste and recycling industry, yet we see none of this wealth on the ground.

We note the failure of the Recycling and Economic Development Initiative of South Africa (REDISA) to deliver meaningful livelihoods for waste pickers and its conflict with government, which has resulted in the waste tyre crisis continuing.

Since 2009, we as waste pickers in South Africa have made various strides towards improving our working conditions on the ground. These are:

- Waste Pickers are recognised by government as legitimate workers in society and, in the words of the Minister of Environment (2016), “Waste pickers are an integral part of the waste management system, and help to divert recyclables away from landfill”.
- Government has launched various waste picker and recycling initiatives country wide to respond to our calls for recognition. This is at local, provincial and national levels, the latter referring to Operation Phakisa: Chemicals and Waste Economy;
- Various municipalities have worked with waste pickers to establish material recovery facilities (MRF), also known as recycling centres;
- PETCO is working in various provinces with government, industry and waste pickers;
- Throughout South Africa, waste pickers are working towards increasing the number of cooperatives to secure their livelihoods, and to ensure that they, and not private individuals and businesses, hold the wealth that we create through our work;
- Recognition has been given by the City of Johannesburg that working in the waste sector as cooperatives is the “better solution” to strengthen the work that waste pickers do.

We are thus calling on government to commit themselves to listening and working with us as waste pickers.

Therefore:

- Urge government to develop Materials Recovery Facilities (MRF) in all municipalities. The MRFs should be operated and managed by waste picker cooperatives with the support of government and with technical support;
- Call on government to ensure that we are involved in waste-management-related projects as they are being planned and developed, and not only when implementation takes place;
- Call on municipalities to consult meaningfully with us in the development of Integrated Development Plans (IDP) and Integrated Waste Management Plan (IWWMP) to ensure that waste pickers are seen as a solution to the challenge of creating a better society for all;
- Demand to be recognised at the municipal level and for the municipal waste management officers to meet with us at least once every quarter so that they understand our needs;
- Call on government to update landfill licences to allow for safe, organized salvaging of waste as stipulated in the Waste Act 2008, section 51.1(3);
- Plead with government that our workspaces, which are the dumpsites and landfills of South Africa, should not receive hazardous chemicals and medical waste, because this illegal dumping exposes us to harm and illnesses, and results in fuelling fires;
- Call on municipalities to deliver on their unfulfilled promises, which create false hope for waste pickers and their livelihoods. Waste pickers must be respected and prioritised in terms of waste related projects;
- Encourage government to support waste pickers in skills development in order to ensure cooperatives are successful and that MRFs can be well managed and operated by waste pickers;
- Recommend that government must concentrate on rural small towns and set in place systems that will allow for the successful integration of waste pickers in these areas into the local, provincial and national economy of South Africa;
- Ask government to include waste pickers as legitimate partners in the new waste management plan for waste tyres, and other waste management plans such as for plastics. Whatever is said to be for us, must be developed with us.

We note that the market place and privatization does not deliver for waste pickers. We thus stress that:

- Industry must consult with us thoroughly when they want to implement projects. We should not be consulted at the 11th hour;
- Industry and the market cannot be in control of waste recycling because for them it is about profit and not people. This must be a domain where we are all involved, seeking different solutions to the challenges we face, and not relying only on the markets.

We the Waste Pickers also want to note:

- We are organizing to improve our work conditions and lives;
- We do not want to remain working on the landfills or streets forever. We believe that we should be given an opportunity to play a central role in terms of waste recycling in the country;
- We have a number of cooperatives that exist on paper but they are not functional for various reasons such as a lack of working areas, storage areas, protection from government and a lack of skills development. We therefore urge municipalities to allocate us land or work areas. We also request municipalities to register waste pickers as individuals as well as their cooperatives.

We have elected our new leadership where every province is represented so that government departments or industry are able to communicate with us.

Our leadership has equal representation in terms of gender: six male and six female.

We also re-confirm our commitment and ongoing work towards our previous Biennial General Meeting positions.

Meeting closed at 11h00 on the 31st of August 2017.

Signed, the South African Waste Pickers Association (SAWPA)

Simon Mbata
Chairperson of the national coordinating committee, SAWPA.
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In July, various coal-affected communities from Fuleni, Somkhela, Highveld, Waterberg and Vaal, joined by the mining-affected activists from Xolobeni, gathered in Newcastle in the midlands of the KwaZulu-Natal province to share their bad experiences of coal mines and coal-fired power stations. The objective of the exchange gathering was to build solidarity amongst the coal-affected communities, to share their coal struggles, to learn from each other’s experiences and also to get to learn about the coal impacts around the Newcastle communities.

This kind of a community exchange meeting happens annually to maintain the solidarity that is building momentum in the coal struggle. These exchanges have borne positive fruits in strengthening the coal struggles around the country, showing people that they are not alone in their struggles.

As usual, the first day of the meeting began with the introduction of each participant and the programme for the duration of the stay. On the second day the host (Sisonke Environmental Justice Network – SEJN) led a toxic tour into the field to learn about the coal impacts around the Newcastle communities.

The first point of our visit was the Normadien community affected by the Chelmsford open-cast coal mine. The mine is owned by Continental Coal, a company that owns another open-cast coal mine operating in 2011, the surrounding community outside Delmas town in the Highveld area of the KwaZulu-Natal province to share their bad experiences of coal mines and coal-fired power stations. The objective of the exchange gathering was to build solidarity amongst the coal-affected communities, to share their coal struggles, to learn from each other’s experiences and also to get to learn about the coal impacts around the Newcastle communities.

of the mine if needs be. The other two families next to the mine were left despondent as their appeal to be relocated away from the mine but the relocation plan did not include her two neighbours and they were left to fend for themselves. Her husband’s grave was exhumed and relocated without paying due respect or covering the necessary expenses to perform proper ritual procedures according to African culture. She told us that she constantly has bad dreams about her late husband complaining about his hat, which was left behind during exhumation. She suspects that he is referring to his tombstone, which was left behind in her yard.

She said that she refused to move into the new house until it was completely done, painted and ready to stay in. Otherwise, she was going to stay in her old house until her house collapses into the mine if need be.

To the courageous of the mine members, they knew that they were fighting for a bigger cause than just their small problem. They were fighting for the rights of the people on the same site, to bake their bricks to sell. What was remarkable about their activity was that there was an unusual operational chain. The miners were not only selling coal for household use, but they were also supplying coal to the brick making group of people on the same site, to bake their bricks to sell. This created an economic chain of dependency. Although the digging would be classed as illegal, it appeared to be creating good economic development for the local population.

After the tour to the community, the participants gathered later that evening to debrief on what had been observed. From the debriefing session, people could relate to what they saw as some had experienced similar situations in their own communities.

On the third day of our exchange, the participants made a heart-felt statement airing their demands from the coal mining companies to do justice to the communities of Newcastle and for the local government departments to effectively intervene by enforcing the law on the transgressive activities by the corporates.

The gathering received some well-deserved attention from the local Newcastle media, as one of the journalist from the local radio stations visited the participants and requested to interview each one of them. Again, the exchange lived to its intended expectations.

National Coal Exchange
by Robby Mokgalaka

Building solidarity amongst coal-affected communities in Newcastle

In July, various coal-affected communities from Fuleni, Somkhela, Highveld, Waterberg and Vaal, joined by the mining-affected activists from Xolobeni, gathered in Newcastle in the midlands of the KwaZulu-Natal province to share their bad experiences of coal mines and coal-fired power stations. The objective of the exchange gathering was to build solidarity amongst the coal-affected communities, to share their coal struggles, to learn from each other’s experiences and also to get to learn about the coal impacts around the Newcastle communities.

of the mine issues impacting the community and asking the mine to show the community the copies of their Water Use Licence and other environmental authorizations, as the community suspected that the mine operated without necessary authorizations.

In the Newcastle Advertiser (the Newcastle local newspaper), CEO of the mine, Mr. Malcolm Pryde, said that he “acknowledged the allegations against the mine” but added that they were “unfounded and without any substance and therefore not true or correct”.

Contrary to his assertion, sometime in June 2017 the Provincial Department of the Mineral Resources (DMR) investigated the mine, subsequent to which investigation the mine was closed by the Department. Although the basis upon which the mine was closed was not communicated to the community, it was suspected that the Department discovered some inconsistencies with the environmental laws.

The mine was later opened during the week of the 11th of July 2017, again without clear reasons afforded to the affected community. On the night of the 11th of July 2017, the mine started digging in the area where the community graves were located. When the community members quickly rushed to stop the mine from digging up the graves, the mine official refused to listen to the families until one community member approached the local police and the Department of Land Affairs for assistance. It was only after the interventions from the Department that the mine ceased their digging.

During our toxic tour around the community, we had an opportunity to hear the grievances from the community about the mine. The relocated family, which had had about eight houses before relocation, now had a five roomed-house of low quality built by the mine, which had cracks from the mine blasting and also leaked. The family members advised us that the mine officials visited the house with only promises to fix the problems, but did not fulfill them.

Our tour extended to the Dannhauser area where the community has the Buffalo open-cast coal mine operating approximately thirty metres from the Zwane homestead, making an old lady in her late eighties inhale dust every single day and leaving the houses cracked from the mine blasting. The mine eventually built a house to relocate the old lady away from the mine but the relocation plan did not include her two neighbours and they were left to fend for themselves. Her husband’s grave was exhumed and relocated without paying due respect or covering the necessary expenses to perform proper ritual procedures according to African culture. She told us that she constantly has bad dreams about her late husband complaining about his hat, which was left behind during exhumation. She suspects that he is referring to his tombstone, which was left behind in her yard.

She said that she refused to move into the new house until it was completely done, painted and ready to stay in. Otherwise, she was going to stay in her old house until her house collapses into the mine if need be.

The other two families next to the mine were left despondent as their appeal to be relocated away from the mine fell on deaf ears.

Moving along with our toxic tour of the day, we visited the Bouwlerbosch community to see the coal artisanal miners digging out coal from one of the abandoned open-cast coal mines. What was remarkable about their activity was that there was an unusual operational chain. The miners were not only selling coal for household use, but they were also supplying coal to the brick making group of people on the same site, to bake their bricks to sell. This created an economic chain of dependency. Although the digging would be classed as illegal, it appeared to be creating good economic development for the local population.

After the tour to the community, the participants gathered later that evening to debrief on what had been observed. From the debriefing session, people could relate to what they saw as some had experienced similar situations in their own communities.

On the third day of our exchange, the participants made a heart-felt statement airing their demands from the coal mining companies to do justice to the communities of Newcastle and for the local government departments to effectively intervene by enforcing the law on the transgressive activities by the corporates.

The gathering received some well-deserved attention from the local Newcastle media, as one of the journalist from the local radio stations visited the participants and requested to interview each one of them. Again, the exchange lived to its intended expectations.

Front row: Phillip Zwane (MCFA-Somkhela), Dercus Mwelase (MCFA-Somkhela), Nomhle Mabuthuma (ACC-Xolobeni), Nompilo Makuhubelo (HEJN-Highveld), Sanele Mhlongo (MCEJO-Fuleni), Vusi Mabaso (HEJN-Highveld), Victoria Riet (VEJA-Vaal), Billy Mqondo (MCEJO-Fuleni), Khanyisile Ndovela (ACC-Xolobeni), Nothando Dube (SEJN-Newcastle), Robby Mokgalaka (groundWork) Back row: Sheila Nkabinde (SEJN-Newcastle), Lucky Shabalala (SEJN-Newcastle), Kidibone Mafisa (VEJA-Vaal).
Animal farm
by Samuel Chademana

South African pigs at the trough

Unfortunately, that promise has been overtaken by greed and our leaders continue to plunder the country’s resources in an oppressive fashion. The oil and gas expansion plans under Phakisa are one good example of this culture of impunity that characterizes the current leadership. At the very centre of the continued plunder is a dangerous idea of “radical economic transformation” – the question is, transformation for whom? Environmental justice is increasingly under threat as the elite gradually sidelines the principles of environmental justice. This doctrine – radical economic transformation – trumps sustainability. It elevates economics above science and logic in policy and legislative decision-making processes. This is being achieved by watering down applicable legislation, increased tokenism in public participation processes and weakening or co-opting environmental institutions that have the protection of the people and their environments as their mandate. The above are the results of an increase in the acquisition of stakes in, or the establishment of, oil and gas companies by politically connected emerging businesses, with the financial backing of the powerful local banking sector and multinationals. These powerful interests have led to the trumping of environmental laws and the voices of the masses.

On the 17th of August 2017, I attended a public hearing on the Draft Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) bill where I stressed the dangers of the ongoing watering down of applicable legislation to pave the way for Phakisa. As an example, I pointed the portfolio committee to the fact that Clause 11 of the Draft MSP Bill, entitled Compliance with the marine spatial plan and which read as follows: “An organ of state may not issue any permit, permission, license or other authorization that is contrary to the marine spatial plan or any final decision of the Directors General Technical Committee, the Ocean Economy Ministerial Committee or the Executive Issue Resolution Committee,” had since been removed from the most recent version of the MSP Bill. This is a critical omission in that this clause sought to bind organs of state to marine spatial plans and the decisions of MSP institutional structures, and provided guidance and certainty on “the status of permit, permission, license or other authorization” issued contrary to the marine spatial plans as pointed out by the Centre for Environmental Rights. Our primary belief is that this was done to minimize red tape in the issuance of permits, permissions, licenses or other authorizations under Phakisa.

I further informed the committee that the MSP Bill doesn’t have punitive clauses for offenders that infringe the provisions of this MSP Bill and our assertion here is that this is meant to protect extractive industry companies from litigation in instances where they fail to comply. Further examples of erosion of legislation extend to Minerals and Petroleum Resources Development Act (MPRDA) which in recent years has seen the removal of sections 38 and 39 which required exploration companies to conduct Environmental Impact Assessment (EIAs) for reconnaissance activities such as seismic surveys. The removal of sections 38 and 39 from the MPRDA paves the way for accelerated seismic surveys activities that have been completed and those that are soon to commence along the eastern coasts of the country. These surveys have gone ahead despite the cries of both government and civil society environmental organizations, clining the internationally acknowledged environmental dangers of seismic surveys on both marine flora and fauna. Attempts to reach out to the Minister of Environmental affairs have been futile. I have come to the tragic conclusion that greed is inversely proportionate to common sense.

On the 4th of August, I had the privilege of making a presentation at a NERSA hearing concerning an application by Exon Mobil for the expansion of three berths at the oil terminal in Durban. NERSA, in their infinite wisdom, had decided to hold only one hearing in Pretoria; until reprimanded by SDCEA on the basis that it was too far from the interested and affected communities. In response, NERSA agreed to host a meeting in Durban but at a five-star hotel nearly thirty kilometres from the communities. This decision was not based on the lack of a suitable venue in the Durban south communities but was because the venue was convenient for the NERSA officials who did not want open public participation. Needless to say, the meeting was poorly attended. This tendency to hold meetings in inconvenient locations for affected communities is a growing trend among both government departments and private entities like the oil and gas companies and contracted EIA practitioners, and it is meant to silence the voice of the masses. Furthermore, public hearings are often characterized by a heavy police presence meant to protect politicians from their own people. The question is, what has caused this fear? Finally, there are no guarantees that objections raised by communities during public hearings will be taken into consideration, let alone influence the government’s decisions. It’s all a compliance issue done to meet the nominal public participation requirements.

South Africans are, however, pushing back on this impunity. The plethora of recent court victories – such as the Thabametsi case, the nuclear deal and the Northern KZN court interdicts on fracking; student protests; the Marikana massacre; the daily community protests across the country and the last local government elections that removed the mandate from the ANC in integral municipal centres – represents the trend in society of rejecting the ANC’s reign.
Africa bucking the trend

by Rico Euripidou

A great heading for a positive story. We’re tired of negative stories but we need to be aware of not recognising or dealing with our past. So we stand in the positive glow of a victory but, as groundWork is always aware, there is always some bitterness with the positive glow of a victory but, as groundWork is recognising or dealing with our past. So we stand in negative stories but we need to be aware of not A great heading for a positive story. We’re tired of

Health

African countries include Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Chad, Djibouti, Gabon, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Swaziland, Togo and Zambia. So why the urgency for the countries in the African region to make this a priority considering that mercury is not mined in the region, nor is it generally used in the manufacturing of products and goods in the region? A great heading for a positive story. We’re tired of

Many African countries work with have completed their mercury inventories and have a good overall sense of what their major mercury sources and releases to the environment are. The data indicate that the African region is a net importer of mercury-added products and in many cases these products are not labelled as such. Because of the challenges with waste management in our region, most of this mercury is released into the environment and enters our food chain – and poisons people and their environments. Furthermore, the biggest “gold rush” the world has ever experienced is currently underway in over seventy countries worldwide, directly employs over fifteen million people and, according to the UN, indirectly involves an additional seventy-five million people. In Ghana and Tanzania alone, over

The treaty also includes other provisions, which provide information and guidance necessary to reduce major sources of emissions and releases, such as those from coal-fired power stations, a particular challenge in South Africa. Taken together, these steps will eventually lead to significant global mercury reductions. However, while heading in the right direction, the treaty does not reach far enough nor fast enough to address the spiralling human health risks from mercury exposure. For example, in the case of South Africa’s major emission sources, like coal-fired power plants, the requirements are for countries to follow BAT/BEP practices (best available technologies/best environmental practices) to curtail releases, but no numerical reduction targets were established. This means that new facilities will not be required to have mercury pollution controls for five years after the treaty enters into force, with existing facilities being given ten years before they begin their control efforts.

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Unintended POPs

by Luqman Yesufu

Persistent Organic Pollutants - the Zambia Ministry of Health takes major steps to address this public health threat

Where are we going? This was my thought as I sat comfortably at the back of a United Nations car that had come to pick me up from the airport in Lusaka, Zambia. I was wondering why we had to travel almost three hours on a really busy and dusty road to Kabwe, where we would be having our United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) workshop. It later dawned on me that the town – Kabwe – is the world’s most toxic town according to pollution experts, where massive lead poisoning has damaged children’s organs, including their brains. I then understood that there was no better place to have this workshop. Kabwe would serve as a good environmental health reference to the health professionals we were about to train.

Taking care of the environment is key to protecting population health; patients, staff and communities are often exposed to environmental and public health risks during the implementation of health programmes. These risks could range from direct exposure of staff and patients to chemicals or microbiological agents, to serious public health risk from improperly managed healthcare waste – particularly the burning (incineration) or indiscriminate disposal of potentially infectious healthcare waste or toxic chemicals. Following the maxim of medical ethics (first do no harm), these health risks need to be addressed systematically at all levels of care without compromising patient care and safety. One such risk is exposure to the toxic fumes from medical waste incinerators.

The health sector waste in Zambia is generated by the teaching hospitals, regional hospitals, government, quasi government, private and faith-based hospitals. Most of the waste can be managed in the same way as municipal waste if it is properly segregated and separated from the hazardous waste. This is usually not the case in many African hospitals, which mix and bum waste in dangerous and harmful incinerators, or even in the open. These methods of waste disposal can end up polluting the environment and spreading disease. It has been established that incinerating medical waste produces large amounts of dioxins, mercury and other pollutants. These toxic substances mix with the air, where they can drift over thousands of miles.

It was for these reasons that the workshop at Kabwe was targeted at environmental health technicians, laboratory assistants, infection control nurses and hospital engineers from eight hospitals, who are responsible for healthcare waste management or contribute to generating healthcare waste. The emphasis was on developing their skills and knowledge on best practices and techniques for healthcare waste management, with the overall aim of minimizing or eliminating releases of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs).

Doing this helps countries meet their obligations under the Stockholm Convention. The downstream life cycle of products can be critical in terms of the unintentional generation of persistent organic pollutants, and the incineration of waste containing plastic or chlorine is a predominant factor leading to unintentional persistent organic pollutant (UPoPs) release.

It was a very intensive and interactive five-day workshop, with participants keen to learn more and adopt environmentally friendly practices. We had a one-day session on the Global Green and Healthy Hospital (GGHH), which was an opportunity for me to share some of our achievements and experiences from South Africa. The participants were trained on the tools and resources available on the green hospitals’ website, case study writing, Hippocrates and the energy and waste challenges. Furthermore, I also had an opportunity to meet with the GGHH focal point persons for each of the project hospitals. People were very enthusiastic, keen to be involved in sustainability practice. The challenge for me will be to maintain the momentum and hunger they showed throughout the workshop. They did come up with the following awesome solutions: the establishment of a WhatsApp group; the appointment of a chairperson to oversee activities and keep everyone in contact; the establishment of a GGHH forum to ensure that members are constantly motivated to learn and share; and finally they decided to assist Ndola Hospital to come up with the first case study on waste minimization strategy. This was a fantastic set of decisions and I was amazed at how the GGHH focal point champions have taken ownership of the initiative.

With this set of GGHH champions on the ground in Zambia, I am confident that healthcare waste management in the six hospitals – Ndola Teaching Hospital, Matero First Level Hospital, Chilenje First Level Hospital, Kabwe General Hospital, University Teaching Hospital and Kamuchanga Hospital – is in good hands. My hope is that with constant support and communication through the Global Green and Healthy Hospital internet platform – GGHH Connect – we can assist these members to promote best practices on healthcare waste management. This will not only reduce the disposal cost but will also reduce the health risk of nosocomial infections, occupational accidents and environmental pollution.
Climate Justice = Open Borders

by Niven Reddy

The second cross-regional meeting of the Erasmus+ Project proved rather short of Africans

As we mentioned in our previous newsletter, the Erasmus+ Project is a programme that looks at engagement of youth and building inter-regional solidarity between Europe and Africa.

In July I attended the second cross-regional meeting and this time it was the European's turn to host the Africans. It was a week-long gathering in Brussels with seven youth from Europe and, unfortunately, only three youth from Africa. The reason for this is that four of the participants – from Cameroon, Liberia, Nigeria and Uganda – could not get a visa to attend this workshop. This situation is the complete opposite of the experience of the first cross regional meeting in Durban. All seven European participants attended the workshop and only one had to apply for a visa in order to gain entry into South Africa.

The difference between Europeans and Africans obtaining visas is shocking and deeply unsettling. The time and effort our friends have invested in this project is being jeopardized and they have experienced significant emotional stress due to systematic and biased injustice. As its name indicates, balance, equity and solidarity between African and European youth is the foundation stone of this project: “fostering a diverse and inclusive youth movement in Europe and in Africa”.

Sadly, the Erasmus+ project is not the only instance of this occurring. Non-European movements and people are banished to the sidelines of climate action development and decision-making. Solutions to the climate crisis are often devised by countries in the global north, which has the historic and contemporary responsibility for causing the climate crisis, and are then imposed upon the global south, which is the most vulnerable to its impacts.

The meeting itself was very informative. We spent a lot of time looking at solidarity and the distinction that should be made to isolate the term from sympathy. As Young Friends of the Earth Africa (YFoEA) we agreed to participate in Young Friends of the Earth Europe’s (YFoEE) days for global justice in keeping with the interregional solidarity we want to engender. We went on a lobby tour with CEO (Corporate European Observatory). They showed us the faceless buildings that lobby groups work out of in Brussels.

YFoEA was officially endorsed by the steering committee of Friends of the Earth Africa at the AGM held in Togo in May this year. They have seen the need to have a youth presence in the work that we do in Africa and recognise how having a different perspective from a different generation amplifies the message.

We had a presentation from YFoEE on how they are structured and how they are funded. This would have been much more beneficial if the four other African participants were able to attend.

I presented, along with Susi Hammel from BUNDjugend, on the first leg of the bilateral exchange, which was Germany visiting South Africa. Maike Tasch did the exchange to groundWork from BUNDjugend. Susi and I spent a lot of the week looking at the exchange and tried to plan the South African Exchange to Germany in a way that eliminates some of the challenges we faced with Maike’s exchange. Promise Mabilo from the Highveld Environmental Justice Network (HEJN) will be doing the exchange.

The next step was decided as being a joint letter by YFoEA and YFoEE to the EU commissioner on migration, highlighting more generally the injustice of European border controls and the global inequality of freedom of movement.

To unity in diversly!
Sweden's recycling rubbish?

by Ludwig Bengtsson Sonesson

Could it be that Sweden's claim to a 99% recycling rate is just good propaganda?

At the time of writing, I've been interning at groundWork for one month. I moved half-way across the world, motivated by a passion for the environment and, to be frank, a confusion over what to do with it. While I'm still fresh off the boat, the goggles through which I view the world are already being modified. Because, being a Swedish environmentalist is sometimes like being a cute baby. You're constantly reminded of how astonishing your country's fight for the environment is. You hear it in national and international media, you read about it in course literature and passers-by yell it at you from across the street. For instance, Sweden has made international headlines by importing waste from other countries and claiming that 99% of its own waste is "recycled, in one way or another". The Independent writes, "Sweden's recycling is so revolutionary; the country has run out of rubbish". But what happens to the waste once it reaches its destination in the land of herring and IKEA?

Incineration = Recycling?

It is recycled, one might guess given the headlines but, according to the latest statistics, almost 50% of the waste processed in Sweden falls in the category of "energy recycling", a fancy word for a waste to energy solution. As recycling means converting waste into a reusable material, it is absurd to claim that incineration, even if it does create energy, matches that description. Yet that is what the EU does. If the process is energy efficient enough, it is to be considered recycling. Incineration is also justified by claiming that only the waste which can't be recycled is used in this process, but I personally find it hard to believe that 50% of Sweden's waste is irreducible. And let's face it, given today's consumption patterns, those materials will have to be replaced to create the next batch of fast fashion for H&M, the next chic couch from Ikea or the next fighter jet from SAAB (all Swedish exports). If we don't break the consumption/waste cycle and move towards a zero-waste society, more forests will be cut down, mines opened and oceans polluted. Another consequence of putting Swedish waste management on a pedestal is that other countries are dissuaded from making real investments in recycling. Instead of striving for more, the governments of wealthy nations pad their statistics by shipping their waste to a Swedish incinerator. This is not to say that there is nothing to be learned from the Swedes. Barely any waste ends up in landfills, separation at source makes it easier to harvest recyclables and separating organic waste allows it to be turned into high-nutrition compost and biogas. But by no means does that make it a perfect system, and normalizing incineration comes at a cost – one not paid by the Swedes themselves.

Okhla

Take the Okhla waste to energy plant in New Delhi, India, which is located just thirty-five meters from a residential area. Every day tonnes of garbage is incinerated, which releases toxins into the air and nearby residents describe "wiping black particulate matter off their balconies". These appalling conditions led to communities launching a court case against the plant, alleging that it was burning mixed waste and that its location violated several zoning rules. The court ruled that the plant had indeed violated "pollution norms" but that it would not be closed since improvements had been made since. The case has now moved up to the supreme court. The sad thing is that India, like South Africa, has a vibrant community of waste pickers – people who make their living recovering recyclables. Now their livelihoods are lost, that which feeds their families and businesses separate waste from dry waste, build material recovery facilities and integrate waste pickers into their waste management plans.

A step in the right direction

During a visit to Mooi River, I witnessed what can happen if municipalities work together with waste pickers. At the local landfill, a cooperative of ten waste pickers associated with SAWPA (South African Waste Pickers Association) sorts through recyclables, sells them and splits the profits. The municipality has helped by building a material recovery facility on site, allowing the waste pickers to be shielded from weather and to store their recyclables. They also purchased bottle crushers and other machines that make processing the waste easier. The municipality’s waste load is lessened and it provides local jobs – it’s a win-win situation. But the road towards a zero-waste society is still long and the waste pickers’ fight for separation at source goes on!

Conclusion

Sweden, India and South Africa are wildly different in many ways, but they all struggle with waste management (in one way or another). It’s important to scrutinize Sweden’s image as a green country, identify what it does well and denounce its habit of burning perfectly usable material. It’s important to realise that, as a wheelhouse in the global capitalist system, Sweden has been and still is supporting the very system that creates all this waste. It’s important to realise that there is no universal solution to waste management. What works in Sweden might not work in South Africa. Instead of shuffling cash into incineration plants, India and South Africa should support the local waste pickers and improve their working conditions and, instead of buying into the consumption patterns of the west, resist and break the cycle to create a zero-waste society!

[Image 638x62 to 1109x378]

[Image 1136x17 to 1170x51]
Democratic Spaces are closing fast: The Right To Protest in South Africa is Under Threat

Right2Know (R2K) KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) and groundWork recently marched to MTN in the leafy suburb of Umhlanga, Durban. It was Press Freedom day and one of the issues close to R2K’s and groundWork’s heart is access to information. Telecommunication companies in South Africa have become the gatekeepers of information in SA, by applying high tariffs whilst providing inadequate infrastructure. This has made quick google searches a luxury reserved only for the middle class. These companies have, for the most part, gone unregulated, setting and changing the rules as they go along, including inventing expiring data. Their actions are a threat to our democracy and limit people’s public participation and abilities to engage in public debate.

The result is often uninformed citizens and voters, who struggle to communicate and mobilise on important issues. People are also often easily manipulated and are left out of public discussions. Communities are excluded from public discussions and debate, just because a simple act like opening an email for many South Africans is the difference between having and not having a loaf of bread to feed their family for the day. Figures show that even though the story of the Marikana tragedy greatly affected workers, their voices were the least heard. Worker’s voices only contributed 3% of what was printed, while business contributed 27%. One could blame it on lazy and insensitive journalists, although the other reality is that data falling is a life and death issue. I would like to think that if the world had known sooner what was happening in Marikana, the slaughtering of desperate innocent workers might have been avoided.

Marikana also shone a light on our right to protest, and how this right is under threat. Government, corporations and anyone who has a vested interest in protecting their wealth, privilege, profits or power frequently crush resistance and mobilisation. From Marikana to #Fees Must Fall, or small-scale service delivery protests that happen on a regular basis, any form of questioning and challenging is brutally crushed.

One of the things the media campaign has worked on is uniting those who have experienced this force at the hands of the rich or powerful. We did this through our recent Right2Protest meeting, attended and facilitated by the R2K working group, which has grown into an organization. The R2K Right2Protest working group developed into a bigger structure as a result of a need R2K identified upon receiving a flood of stories and cries for help coming from communities, students, gender movements and other revolutionary groups who had felt the full force of the law.

Our meeting took place in June and it reached out to civil society groups and NGOs in the Pietermaritzburg/Durban area, including South African Waste Pickers Association, South Durban Community Environmental Alliance, Church Land Program, PACSA, R2K KZN, The Electricity Action Group, Centre for Civil Society and many other activists who came as individuals. While the event hoped to unite activists in their areas, create meaningful engagement and storytelling, it also provided important legal information on bail hearings, steps to follow when serving notice for a protest, how to go about challenging the police and municipality when protests are denied and how to represent yourself if you find yourself arrested and without legal representation.

We are exploring a working relationship with international partners who are just as concerned about South Africa’s closing democratic spaces and rising political tension and how authorities handle it. This process is still in its early stages and we are currently pulling together information on various mining companies and sectors, their licenses, the permits they have, what threats they pose to the community and the environment and what the action on the ground has been, as well as how it has been received by the mining companies and government.

The point of this exercise is to come up with constant themes, to share them nationally and with our new international allies and to have a process that brings local struggles together and links them up to the international movements. This is just another tool to remind the oppressors that the world is watching. We also hope to generate international pressure and demand for the South African government to do things differently and to protect communities who are vulnerable to exploitative mining and extractive companies.

Right2Know
KwaZulu-Natal (KZN)
The top dogs of aggressive snarling business on the international exchange trading floors are known by aspiring juniors as big swinging dicks. A patriarchy of performance where you’re done if you didn’t make a billion bucks today. Meaning some others lost a billion so screw them. And if it’s a whole country, well screw them two times.

Some way down the global hierarchy, uBaba has a country to screw – with a bit of help from his friends. A patriarchy of power, patronage, money and mshiniwam. Where you’re done if you lose position. So it’s candy all round so they know who they need. Bow ties, body guards and BMWs for seventy-five ministers and deputies. And about ninety provincial MECs. Let everyone strut their status but lick the ground when they come before the patriarch.

The big swinging dicks went big into South African Rand when Baleka Mbete, in charge of The House, announced that a no confidence vote in the patriarch would be by secret ballot. The Rand gained 20c against the dollar. There’s money to make when prices move.

Tensions rose on the way to the vote. Some called for conscience. The patriarch’s men and women shouted loudly for discipline. In a nightclub, the dapper Mr Mduduzi Manana, one of the seventy-five, struck a blow for the patriarchy. Two women had the temerity to disagree with him. And called him gay. A provocation beyond endurance. So he beat them. And when they were down, put the boot in. And so did his mates. Apparently, it takes four men to beat up a woman properly.

Three days later, parliament voted on the motion of no confidence. The patriarch won. The big swinging dicks sold off Rand. The Rand lost 30c against the dollar. There’s money to make when prices move.

Patriarchal gallantry waited one day more for women’s day. That’s when the men send flowers to the women who know their place and wish them a happy women’s day. And a card that says: Wonderful, Outstanding, Marvelous, Adorable, Nice. Or another that says: Every woman deserves a man who looks at her every day like it’s the first time he saw her.

The patriarch then went into the country to speak – nay, to deliver – the keynote address at a church service ‘themed’ for women’s day. He told the women – assembled or congregated? – that leaders are appointed by God. They should continue praying.

Perhaps the patriarch above reflects the patriarch below.

The president of the ruling Women’s League meanwhile refused to call for dapper Mr Manana’s head. Other leaders were worse than him. Action should be taken against them first. She did not say who. The general secretary to the ruling Women’s League said this was false news from neoliberal media houses. False, apparently, irrespective of whether it was true. A smear on the ruling Women’s League so that the neoliberals’ preferred candidate would be elected next president of the ruling party.

How many other leaders are worse than him? What did they do? Who are they? The Women’s League will not say. And that’s just the ruling party. And its leadership. Once a liberation movement.

Men make patriarchy. Patriarchy makes misogynists. Men assault women. At home, in the street, on the bus, at the shops, at school, in the taxis, at work, at the concert, in the shack lands, in the House, at the games, in the boardroom, at church, in the assembly. And in the #movements for liberation. It starts again.

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Greenfly with trash

by Greenfly

A community takes a stand against incineration in Wellington
Credit: Wellington Community Care Group’s Aneil Redelinghuys

Miners take a stand at Marikana
Credit: Greg Marinovich

A community takes a stand
against incineration in Wellington
Credit: Wellington Community Care Group’s Aneil Redelinghuys

Waste Pickers take to the street to demand that their work get proper respect, and that their livelihood not be taken away by bad policy.
Credit: groundWork

Community members from around South Africa protesting outside Caltex Oil Refinery in 2003, before addressing parliament on air pollution issues in South Africa.
Credit: groundWork

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Mining is not part of development

Mining is not part of a development plan. It is a process that extracts minerals from the earth and enriches a few and impoverishes the majority.

Let's take a closer look at what mining provides a society. The World Bank's own research report, *Where is the Wealth of the Nations?* presents empirical evidence that mining reduces a country's savings: it makes countries poorer rather than wealthier.

In South Africa, mining is destroying the land we need to grow our crops that sustain life, the water we need to nourish life and the air we breathe to ensure life. If you live in a mining area, it means you will suffer the impact of mining and you will probably die younger and be afflicted by more illnesses than those who get rich from mining.

The eastern Highveld is fertile and water-rich. It is the source of several major rivers, including the Olifants, the Komati, the Usutu and the Vaal, and as such is a critical food-producing region. Over a century of mining and burning of coal has damaged large parts of the Highveld. The hydrological functions are interrupted by underground and open cast coal mining, with the latter causing wide-scale destruction of the land. The land is also coated in coal dust from blasting and acid deposition from combustion emissions. Groundwater and rivers are contaminated by acid mine drainage to the extent that entire catchment areas are turning into wastelands.

The promises by mining companies and government of wealth for local people, work for the unemployed, rehabilitation of the land after destruction, and a better life for all, are never met. Over half of the people living in South Africa are poor, according to official statistics and in the Highveld the poverty rate is amplified, so such promises are especially attractive to the people there. The reality is, however, that the mining sector is shedding jobs and reaping increasing profits.

Mining is failing South Africa. Research by groundWork, the Centre for Environmental Rights, and the Centre for Applied Legal Studies highlights the accumulation of wealth, failed governance and false promises. In the *Bliss of Ignorance* documentary, people on the ground spoke first-hand of how coal mining destroys people's lives.

The desolate “post-mining” landscape is all the delivery people get in mining areas. People and the land are abandoned on the scrap heap of mining waste and companies flee with profits and rehabilitation funds.

Here are some movies that deal with the ills of mining:
https://carteblanche.dstv.com/coal-wars/