

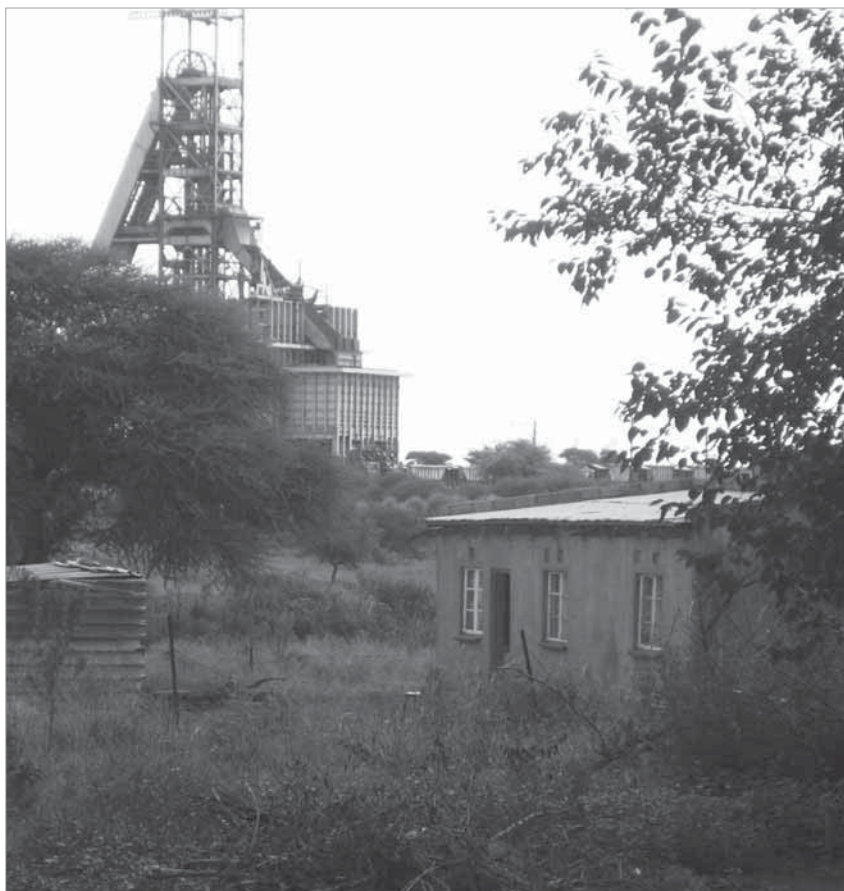
# Lonplats, Angloplats, Xstrata, Implats Undoing Rustenburg community life

## In villages...

Most community life in Rustenburg takes place very close to the platinum and chrome mines. Before mining began, Rustenburg was a rural farming community. These two have lived uneasily alongside each other. Eric Makuoa from the old farming village of Luka looks back at the days when he swam in this river as a child, now a pool of sludge.



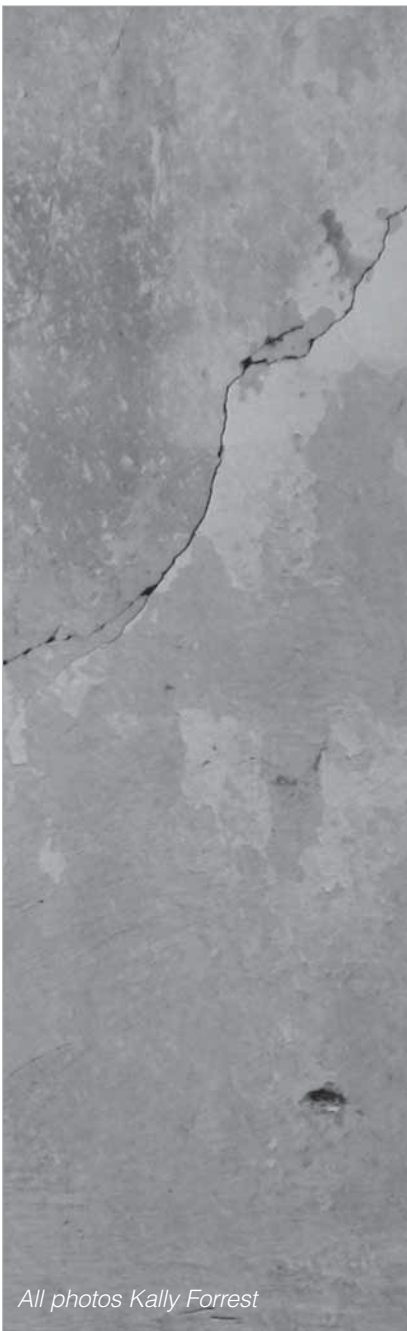
Eric's grandmother remembers using the village pump and the pump in her back yard to access water. She and other members of the community grew mealies and vegetables and farmed cows on the open land around their houses. Now there's not a drop of water to draw up. Mining activity has pumped out most underground water in the area.



Impala's headgear is literally in the Makuoa's backyard. Eric recalls growing up with a lot of noise - the rattle of stones, the roar of trucks, and the clunk of trains moving back and forth night and day.

## In villages...

Vibrations from underground activity were part of Eric's sleeping and waking life. Blasting is stronger today than before because of the platinum rush and it sounds like a battery of machine gun fire – cracks are beginning to show on the walls of villagers' houses.



All photos Kally Forrest

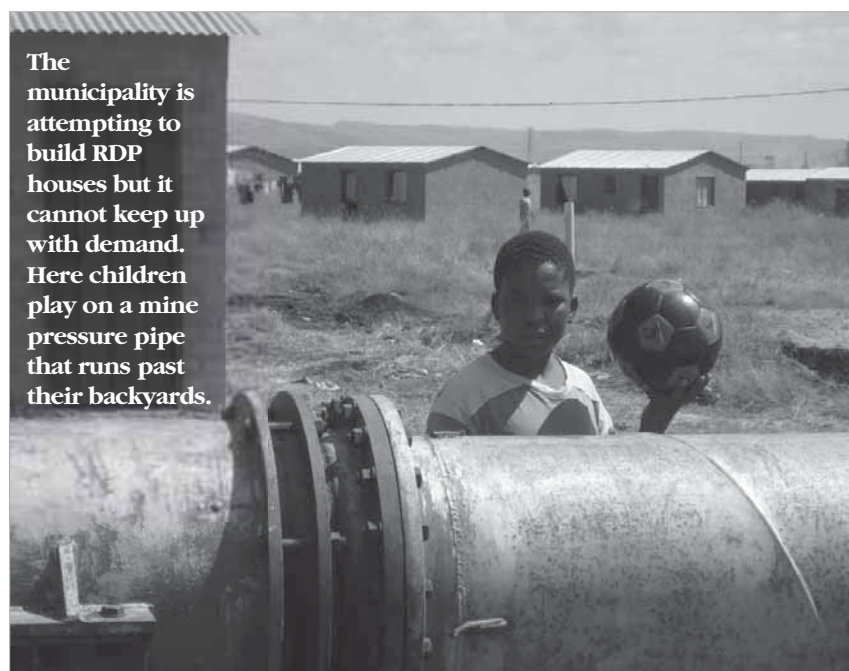


People from Luka and other villages in the area farm livestock, mainly goats and cows. Old open cast mining leaves mess, grime, oil and chemical residues on the land. Will the grass ever grow back on abandoned sites like this? And if it does will it be poisoned so that people's livestock become sick?



## In communities around mines...

There are other communities also living on the doorstep of mining activity. Miners' compounds, squatter camps, RDP houses all feel the assault of mining. Migrant miners get a living out allowance of between R600 and R1000. There is limited rental accommodation in Rustenburg and anyway the LOA is mostly too little for rental. So sprawling squatter camps have sprung up on farm land close to most mines. Like this informal settlement, Freedom Park, most have no sewerage, running water or electricity.



The municipality is attempting to build RDP houses but it cannot keep up with demand. Here children play on a mine pressure pipe that runs past their backyards.

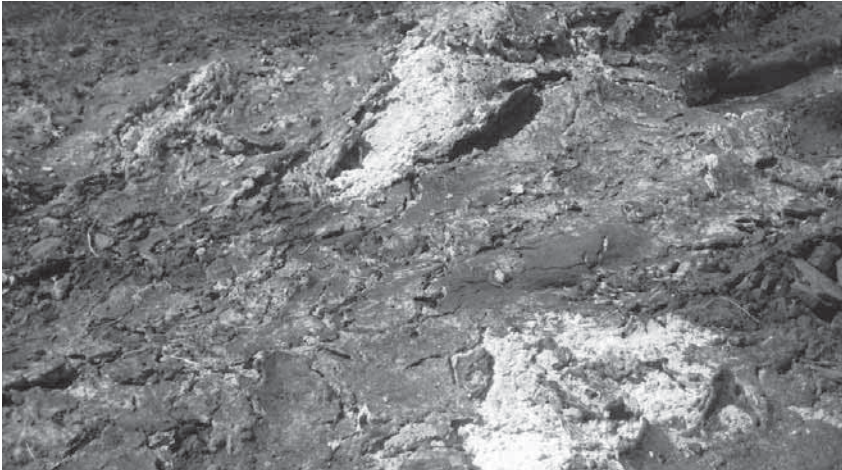
For all of these people the closeness to mine activity creates health problems and dangers. Next to the Xstrata compound a small river runs by. A danger sign warns people not to drink or swim in the pools of water lying about – water that will seep deep into underground water channels.

Some workers live in single quarters in hostels on mine property. Others live in tiny, makeshift compounds owned by local landlords. This compound directly outside the chrome mine Xstrata, is according to miners 'owned by a Portuguese man'. Outside taps provide washing, cooking and drinking water to miners and their families.



## In communities around mines...

Lying in the veld outside Xstrata's fence near the compound is sludge and what looks like contaminated rubbish, probably from mining activity.



Everywhere residents living close to mines are exposed to air pollution. The wind, especially in August, blows across tailings or slimes dams scattering chemically treated dust. Although mines have attempted to grow grass on these dams, many dust patches remain. (Right) Over the road from the Xstrata compound lie huge mounds of refined chrome dust.



Each deep level mine has its own ventilation shaft which draws out gases from the underground into the atmosphere above ground, and pumps in clean air. People living in homes around the shaft breathe in these emissions. Here an Impala ventilation shaft stands in the middle of Luka without consultation with villagers. Disused shafts lie rusting next to it. About 80% of residents near mine activity have respiratory problems of some kind.

