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On The Ground Research

A Workshop to Identify the Research Needs of Communities Affected by Large-Scale Mining

April 14-16, 2000, Ottawa, Canada

Workshop Report







Prepared by MiningWatch Canada and the Canadian Consortium for International Social Development (CCISD)

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Cover photos:
Interpreter Silvana Wasitova with Andi Basso Am
Open pit mine at Cerro de Pasco, Peru
Workshop plenary session, April 15, 2000

Back cover photos:
Key Lake uranium mine, northern Saskatchewan, Canada
Landless peasants, Peru
Workshop facilitator Jorge García in action

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On the Ground Research: A Workshop to Identify the Research Needs of Communities Affected by Large-Scale Mining

— Workshop Report —

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Workshop participants:

Front row, left to right: Martin Misiedjan, Judith David, Dennie Frits Pryor, Joe (Smy) Tsannie, Andi Basso Am, Stuart Cryer, Roberto Miranda, Ana Cecilia Nava, Jorge García Orgales

Second row: Beth Manggol, Anto Sangaji, Kevin O'Reilly, Peter Yeboah, Miguel Palacín Quispe, Bernice Lalo, Sayok'la Kindness, Sarah Johnnie, Frances Arbour, Suzanne Doerge, Francisco Ramírez Cuellar, Peggy Teagle, Sara Torres, Silvana Wasitova

Back row: Catherine Coumans, Ben Lefebvre, Al Waconda, William Appiah, Nedjo Rogers, Brennain Lloyd, Joan Kuyek, Phil Shearman, Tony James, José de Echave

"If government decision-makers walked more in the communities where citizens live, they would be more aware of the new winds that are blowing among the lives of those who are excluded from the benefits of globalization. They would see the walls where the poor are writing, in graffiti, a preamble to the new declaration of independence of the Americas." – *workshop participant*

Introduction

In April, approximately fifty people from eleven countries gathered in Ottawa to tell their stories about the devastation that unregulated large-scale mining by Canadian mining interests has brought on people's lives, the lives of their communities, and the land itself. This community of activists and concerned citizens, from around the globe, told their stories, shared their experiences and explored ways to work together to defend their communities against the adverse effects of mining.

These stories make visible the social, environmental, health, and economic effects of large-scale mining development. They tell of displacement of peoples, loss of land and subsistence base, environmental contamination, and social disruption. This is not a comprehensive, objective catalogue of the effects of large-scale mining activity. It is the story of the indigenous peoples, peasants, small-scale miners, and mine workers whose daily lives are affected by the impunity in which these mining companies operate.

The workshop moved beyond the impacts of large-scale mining to tell of the hopes and successes of individuals and communities around the world. More importantly, the workshop participants provided an agenda for joint action and directions for research that is located in the experiences of people living with the effects of Canadian mining development.

The agenda for action is fourfold: (a) building local capacity; (b) raising public awareness in Canada and overseas; (c) building a global community-based network; and (d) holding governments and companies accountable. Participants made a commitment to this ambitious agenda in the hopes of ensuring a better future for their families and communities, locally and globally. For this agenda to succeed it requires the financial, moral and resource support of the Canadian government and the governments of the affected communities, Canadian non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and concerned citizens, and the multilateral organisations concerned with environmental, social, economic and human rights issues.

The 'On the Ground Research' workshop was organised to help local leadership to respond effectively to the impacts of large scale mining on their communities. The participants came from communities affected by Canadian mining interests in Peru, Guyana, Suriname, Mexico, Colombia, Ghana, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, the Philippines, the United States and Canada.

The "On the Ground Research' workshop was organised by a steering committee consisting of MiningWatch Canada, the Canadian Consortium for International Social Development, Third World Network (Africa Secretariat) (Ghana), and Cooper-Acción (Peru). The methodology was participatory, and the participants directed the process with the assistance of a highly skilled facilitation team. The participatory process was crucial for creating collective knowledge and "voice", and the commitment to common action and cause. The workshop closed with an evaluation where participants were asked to express how the experience had changed what they would think, feel, or do. The closing prayer was led by Bernice Lalo, a Western Shoshone elder.

A demonstration of the commitment to follow-up on the workshop action plan was immediate. By the end of the workshop some participants were arranging visits across the globe to see first-hand the impacts of these same companies on other communities. The steering committee met to plan future fundraising and coordination activities for this new network. Most of the participants met with Canadian government officials to request assistance in providing 'safe space' for dialogue between the communities and the mining companies.

All participants left with their first community awareness-building tool, the 'collective memory' — excerpts from the transcript of each of their stories. The workshop was also video-taped, and a short video is being produced. In addition to the workshop, some participants took the opportunity to visit the Innu in Labrador, as well as several Northern Ontario mining communities, to view first-hand the impact mining operations have on indigenous peoples and non-Native communities in Canada. A few participants made use of their time to attend mining company shareholders meetings taking place in Toronto, and still others met with Canadian NGOs and trade unions interested in forging links with them.

Why We Came Together

Mineral exploration and development are increasingly taking place on the lands of some of the world's poorest and most marginal communities. The Canadian government and the mining industry are promoting partnerships between mining companies, the state, and the affected communities. Most small communities are ill-equipped to respond adequately to the power of governments and multinational corporations, or to handle the complex legal, technical, environmental, political and financial burden of protecting their own interests.

The 'On the Ground Research' workshop aimed to bring people together from these communities to consider actions to protect their communities' futures.

"Since I arrived, my presence here has been like being healed from a disease, because all the time I felt that those things happened only to us. I am moved by the fact that those of us present here are people who care about others' suffering. I am aware that it's not differences in race and language; what is important is the commitment and belief in justice and doing what is right. When I return, I will relate your stories and experiences to my friends at home."

"The people gave me a mandate to fight for them for compensation and to enter discussions about the relocation of the village. But as a result of my efforts I was jailed for 12 days to pressure the locals to accept the terms of compensation and relocation. There wasn't much we could do to stand up against these pressure tactics because Inco had the backing of the government."

"I wish to share with you our observations on the negative critical impacts of mining in [our] communities and the various resolutions we had addressed to our health, environmental and mining authorities of our government."

"One of our hopes is that by being present here we will prove to the government that we are not alone in our fight."

"We're not fighting mines; we're trying to fight a mind game with those people who come to tear up the earth. Because if we participate, we're helping to kill ourselves."

We came together to:

- share our common concerns
- learn from the experiences of people in other communities around the world
- identify the impact of large-scale mining on communities
- identify the research needs of our communities to help us respond to Canadian mining interests
- put our ideas into this booklet to share with the people in our community
- develop strategies to build capacity to respond to mining interests
- advocate our research needs to international funding agencies

A Participatory Process

The 'On the Ground Research' workshop was grounded in the experiences of the people who live in communities affected by large-scale mining. A participant-focused process was crucial for creating collective knowledge and a common voice about the experiences of individuals and community members affected by mining. With respect for diversity, the process fostered the naming of common experiences and solidified an agenda for action.

A variety of participatory facilitation methods were used throughout the workshop. These techniques included:

- story telling
- reflection
- feedback
- brainstorming
- small group work
- energising exercises
- group discussion
- collective action development

For the first one and a half days of the workshop, participants shared their experiences. Some participants used slides, overheads, maps and photographs to tell their community stories.

"I just want to say to everyone here that I'm grateful and thankful to each and everyone of you for sharing your stories with me. I don't know if you know how much you have given me. I know it's hard to continue this work. For me I feel revitalised listening to all of you. My brothers and sisters, continue your work."

The Stories

Right, Martin Misiedjan.
Below, Dennie Frits Pryor.



Dennie Frits Pryor, Nieuw Koffiekamp, Suriname

My village is called Nieuw [new] Koffiekamp because some the people there have already been relocated once to make place for a hydro dam. The original community of Maroons, people who are descended from African slaves, was split into three — one part going to the capital, one part to another village and the third to Nieuw Koffiekamp. The people were told that they would have good new houses and electricity, but the new houses were one room only and there were no economic activities in that area for the people. The people were not given any compensation for the move. As it turned out the new village was located on top of a rich gold deposit so the youngsters started to dig for gold.

The area attracted various mining companies who dug holes for exploration, including Placer Dome, but by 1992 Golden Star and Cambior came and stayed. Some villagers took some work with the mining companies but others opposed the proposed mine. As the project advanced the people lost ever more of their rights. Trenches made it impossible for people to go to their usual places. Later the company brought in security forces and police to stop the people from mining. The people do not have rights to the surface or the subsurface of the land they live on. There were confrontations between the security forces and the youth. At one point the people blocked a road but they gave up their blockade when they were told negotiations would start. But the people have not been able to negotiate the right to do small scale mining. The companies' activities are moving ever closer to the village and are now up to the mountain where the village cemetery is located. The people can't go where they need to, to hunt and fish. They are being shot at when they go into areas that are off bounds now. The people have also been told that they will be relocated again in a few years to make place for the mine. As Cambior is weakened by financial troubles Golden Star is looking for a new partner. The only group that is helping the people is Moiwana '86.

Martin Misiedjan, Nieuw Koffiekamp, Suriname

Early in the 1990s Canadian companies started explorations in Suriname because they were welcomed in by the government. Most of these companies explore in indigenous and maroon areas. Some communities do try to work with the companies because they have little information about what will happen if a mine is started. The people need education to build awareness for the future. The people are divided because they think that at some point some company will develop a mine in their area and that a big Canadian company will behave well and be very organised. The people see their only choice as one of negotiating the best deal possible. Nieuw Koffiekamp is only one in a chain of affected communities. The underlying question is what else can the people do to survive. What are the alternative sustainable possibilities? Gold is not the only way to survive, that's what people have to see.



Peter Yeboah, Tarkwa, Ghana

Tarkwa is surrounded by seven mines. There was previously small-scale mining in the area. All phases of mining are happening in our area. When the companies come they change their names to local names so its very difficult to know where the companies are from. Golden Star is one of the companies that has also caused a lot of problems in our area. In Ghana, land belongs to the state, both the surface and the subsurface. Community consultation is supposed to happen but issues around compensation, resettlement and relocation always become problems. The people are stopped from farming and divide and rule tactics are used, right from the very start of negotiations. And in the end the government will grant a license anyway because the companies give the government money.

What we need are the following:

- We need to know "who is who" in mining.
- We need to know who will speak for the community. We have no expertise to go into negotiations, for example if the people do not speak English they are out of the negotiations.

Our problems are: intimidation from the State, the mine, the police, and the security; the mining companies have so much money they corrupt the chiefs and the government officials; resettlement and relocation; and low values of compensation.

We have large family houses with 20 people in a house of ten rooms. But the houses are mud. When they give us a new house it is wooden but four rooms only which they call "equivalent value." Also, at the new place there is no economic activity. It takes time to find the many various jobs people need to maintain a family. And some people were forced to move because the old place was made unacceptable, for example when the school was demolished. Some have decided not to move but to go to court. But 70 children are not going to school now because the school is gone. Also, we cherish our ancestors, we don't joke with cemeteries. We always think the ancestors are guarding us. The resettled community doesn't have the ancestors there because the cemetery is not there. Also, the new houses are shoddy because then contractors cut corners to make higher profits. The environmental effects are especially on our water. The mine is on a hill and the waste goes down the hill so it pollutes the river. There is also militarisation and harassment. So much like this has happened that they started an organisation so that each community can come and present their own issues. TWN helped set that up. It's called the Centre for Public Interest Law. We had a workshop before coming here. Some have experience, some have to learn still. Major barriers are poverty, lack of organisation, and lack of legal assistance. Gold can be mined in a fine way so we can have a better livelihood but it is not happening here.

"Gold can be mined in a fine way so we can have a better livelihood, but it is not happening here."

William Appiah, Accra, Ghana

The government in Ghana makes it so that conditions are good for the mining companies to come here. Very little is paid in royalties and taxes but 80% of the profits can be repatriated. There are also promises of employment, but only a few get jobs — for example, as heavy equipment drivers. This is all the result of the opening of the country through globalization.

In the discussion that followed the presentations by Peter and William, José from Peru noted that the company that relocated the people in Tarkwa, called John Van Nostrand Associates, was discussing the relocation in Tarkwa as an example of successful relocation that can be applied to the people in Peru as well. But José noted that now he knew better. William responded by explaining: "After people saw the shoddy new houses they were disappointed. Also, people were moved at 3:30 am by military forces who forced them into vans to go to the new village. This was done by people who are supposed to protect the people. So please, my friend in Peru, be very, very careful."

Beth Manggol, Boac, Marinduque, Philippines

I am from the island province of Marinduque, Philippines, where Marcopper Mining Corporation operated from 1966 until its mine tailings spill tragedy on March 24, 1996. Placer Dome Inc. of Canada owned 39% of the shares and managed the Marcopper mine until 1997.

I wish to share with you our observations on the negative critical impacts of mining in Marinduque communities and the various resolutions we had addressed to our health, environmental and mining authorities of our government.



Cyanide collection ponds, Iduapriem gold mine, Tarkwa, Ghana.

The Impacts

A total of two hundred million dry metric tons of tailings were dumped into Calancan Bay through surface disposal from 1975-1991. Today its mangroves, sea grasses, corals and reefs are buried underneath a sixty-metre deep sediment of tailings. Two thousand fisher folks had lost their livelihood — they never received any compensation. An evaluation and health

"...The growing opposition of the Marinduque communities to mining projects may be stifled once again, the way it has been under the previous governments of the late dictator Marcos and Cory Aquino. When this happens, then once again the hands of God will unleash another tragedy similar if not greater in magnitude than the Marcopper mine tailings spill of 24 March 1996, to awaken the people and the government to the greed, rapacity, and destruction connected with large scale irresponsible mining."

assessments of the Department of Health recently showed that fifty-nine of fifty-nine children tested in Calancan Bay were suffering from heavy metal poisoning. A SEARCA (joint academic team) report of 1997 showed that the level of copper, cadmium, and lead in the sediments in Calancan Bay had increased beyond the allowable safety standard.

To prevent silt from entering the Mogpog River, Marcopper constructed the Maguilaguila Dam, in 1992, across the Maguilaguila creek, a tributary of the Mogpog River. Sometime in 1993 at the height of the typhoon and accompanying heavy flood, Maguilaguila dam collapsed. Human lives and animals were lost, crops were destroyed and the Mogpog River severely polluted.

On March 24, 1996 there was that tragic and disastrous mine tailings spill due to the collapse of the secret drainage tunnel at the bottom of the Tapian pit that empties into the Makulapnit River, inundating with 5 million tons of tailings Makulapnit and Boac Rivers, destroying the water supply, crops, work animals and fish. Livelihoods of people were lost. Consequently Marcopper shut down its operation.

Placer Dome off-loaded its shares to the Filipino shareholders of Marcopper in 1997, packed up and returned to Canada leaving behind a commitment to clean-up and rehabilitate Boac and Makulapnit Rivers, except through Placer Dome's inflexible proposal to dump the spilled tailings through managed submarine disposal in Tablas Strait, which the people of Boac, other affected communities, the Sangguniang Panlalawigan (Provincial Board) of Marinduque, and the Marinduque Council for Environmental Concern (MACEC) had firmly opposed. Hence, the promised clean-up has not yet commenced.



Marcopper tailings pipelines emptying into Calancan Bay, Philippines.

The Denials

Marcopper/Placer Dome deny that the reported illnesses and deaths in Calancan Bay area had anything to do with the mine tailings dump in the Bay. They said that they are attributable to the fact that Marinduque is highly mineralised.

They claim that the illnesses in Boac and Mogpog, where the rivers are polluted, are due to parasitic worms, malnutrition, and lack of safe drinking water which are common among 'socially disadvantaged' communities in many areas of the world.

Likewise, Marcopper/Placer Dome claim that their proposed Managed Submarine Disposal method of disposing their tailings will not have an adverse impact on the marine environment of Tablas Strait, despite the fact that it is a declared an environmentally critical area.

Since the dumping of mine tailings in Calancan Bay in 1975, the collapse of Maguilaguila Dam sometime in 1993 and the Marcopper mine tailings spill tragedy of March 24, 1996, the MACEC, various NGOs and POs (people's organisations) have addressed petitions to Malacanang (the Presidential Palace), Congress, and the Secretaries of the Departments of Health and Environment asking them to provide medical interventions to the illnesses and deaths occurring in the areas affected by mine tailings and to ban particularly large scale mining in the island province of Marinduque. Likewise, the Municipal Mayors' League of Marinduque, lead by Mayor Roberto Madla of Boac, has passed a resolution addressed to the National government to permanently close Marcopper Mining Corporation.

With the current political leadership of the government that has opened seven million hectares or roughly 27% of the total land area of the country for mining under FTAAs (mining leases), the growing opposition of the Marinduque communities to mining projects may be stifled once again, the way it has been under the previous governments of the late dictator Marcos and Cory Aquino. When this happens, then once again the hands of God will unleash another tragedy similar if not greater in magnitude then the Marcopper mine tailings spill of 24 March 1996, to awaken the people and the government to the greed, rapacity, and destruction connected with large scale irresponsible mining.

Kevin O'Reilly, Yellowknife, Canada

There are two operating gold mines in Yellowknife, located on Great Slave Lake in the Northwest Territories of Canada. Giant Mine, operated by a series of owners over several decades, has been the source of particularly severe social and environmental impacts. There is a high arsenic content in the ore, and in the early years of the mine large quantities of arsenic were released into the air through the roasting process. Cattle were killed from arsenic contamination.

The local First Nations people report that two children died as a result of drinking water melted from snow. There are still high arsenic concentrations in the soils of the area. In later years most of the arsenic was captured on site and included in material backfilled into abandoned shafts of the mine.

The owner of the mine in the 1990s, Royal Oak Mines, was a notoriously nasty operator. Five years

ago there was a tragic strike at the mine. Royal Oak brought in "replacement workers", something that isn't often done in Canadian mine strikes. The community was bitterly divided; the divisions are still felt today. There was violence on the picket lines; nine miners died in a tragic explosion underground. In 1998 Royal Oak went bankrupt, and in a deal with the creditors the federal government assumed liability for the environmental problems at the Giant Mine site. Workers lost severance and pension funds to which they were entitled. Today, the vast stores of arsenic-contaminated waste underground at Giant represent a long-term environmental threat to Great Slave Lake, and no one really knows how to deal with the problem, or how much it will cost.

Manuel Pino and Al Waconda, New Mexico

Our organisation, the Laguna Acoma Coalition for a Safe Environment (LACSE), is a grassroots based coalition of concerned citizens from the Laguna and Acoma Pueblos in New Mexico. Our goals are to educate, empower, and inform tribal members about uranium mining and other environmental issues. We emphasise the effects uranium has had, and continues to have, on our environment, culture, and society so that we can make informed decisions regarding this resource and its impact on our environment, economy and health.

Our Pueblos are located in the heart of the Grants Mineral Belt. The Grants Mineral Belt extends from twenty miles west of Albuquerque, New Mexico right to the Arizona/New Mexico border; it is approximately 90 miles wide and 150 miles long. The area was the most intensely uranium mined area in North America during the years 1948-1990. A majority of the uranium mined went to develop the nuclear arsenal of the Defense Department of the U.S. Government. Half of the nation's uranium supply was produced in this area. The region also holds half of the nation's uranium reserves. Also stored here are half of the country's uranium mine wastes and mill tailings. The world's largest open-pit uranium mine operated from 1953 to 1982 on the Laguna Pueblo reservation. The nation's largest and deepest underground mine operated from 1979-1990 at Mount Taylor. Mount Taylor is sacred to the Acoma, Laguna, Navajo and Zuni Indian Nations.





Kevin O'Reilly (left) and Smy Tsannie.

The nation's largest uranium mill operated for several decades near Ambrosia Lake in the Navajo Nation's checkerboard area. When Laguna Pueblo was approached by the Anaconda Minerals Company in 1952 to develop uranium on their lands, the people were not informed of the dangers of radiation. Unaware, uninformed of the dangers of uranium mining, the Pueblo put their full faith in the hands of the Bureau of Indian Affairs to negotiate in their best interest. Fifty years later Indian people are left with contaminated land, unsafe drinking water, and a growing segment of our population that is sick and dying of cancer.

The Jackpile Mine encompassed 2,400 acres; over its thirty-year life the mine produced 24 million tons of ore, averaging six thousand tons of ore a day, and at the height of production in the late 1970s it was one of the top four uranium producing mines in the world. The mine was located just two thousand feet from the Laguna village of Paguate. As we enter the new millennium we have cancer clusters in the community affecting former uranium miners as well as people who never worked a day in the mines — merely victims of where they live. As a result of this process LACSE has worked with several Indigenous environmental organisations throughout the U.S. to lobby Congress for compensation for uranium workers exposed to radiation. Our organisation has also developed educational programs and curriculum that educates the youth of Laguna Pueblo about the effects that the Jackpile Mine has had on the environment, culture and society. Specifically, students will learn about atomic and nuclear science and radiation, uranium mining and uranium, as well as the specific history of the local Jackpile Mine, and they will apply their learning to make evaluative decisions about the



Manuel Pino. Left, Al Waconda.

mines past, present, and future impacts. Currently we are conducting health studies among mining and non-mining populations at both Pueblos to help us determine the impact of uranium mining and radiation exposure to correlate with our increasing cancer rates. Although at times the odds seem insurmountable, the work must continue to address this legacy of destruction.

One of our traditional Elders once said "To destroy the land is to destroy the people." This is very true in our case.

Andi Basso Am, Soroako, Indonesia

"Before Inco, people grew fruit bearing trees and used the lake for drinking water... [It] has been contaminated by waste from the mine site and there are no other good sources of clean water for drinking or irrigation. All the waste from Inco's housing development is dumped into the lake. The lakeshore is now heavily polluted. Some species of fish are now gone."

Before Inco, people grew fruit bearing trees and used the lake for drinking water. In 1930 German experts came and did studies that showed that the water of the lake was good. Inco came in 1968. In 1973 Inco did the first inventory of lands, flora, and buildings for the place of the mining compound. In 1974 Inco paid out compensation for the affected land and buildings. Some locals refused compensation because the amount offered was the equivalent of the cost of one cigarette.

The people gave me a mandate to fight for them for compensation and to enter discussions about the relocation of the village. But as a result of my efforts I was jailed for twelve days to pressure the locals to accept the terms of the compensation and relocation. There wasn't much we could do to stand up against these pressure tactics because Inco had the backing of the government. As they have rich mineral deposits and other favourable conditions of production, PT Inco has among the lowest nickel production costs in the world.



"No Trespassing" sign at Inco's Soroako operation.

In 1974, the development of the mine and the smelting plant began, as did the construction of a seventy kilometre pipe from Soroako to the coast to bring oil to the mine. They also built a dam which affected the flow of water of the rivers and lakes. The water levels of the Lake have been significantly reduced. The company blames the local people for the lowered water levels. They also built a port, housing and offices. Bechtel Ltd. did the construction.

As of last year Inco has expanded by building two more smelters and another hydro dam. They have also added another open pit mine and they are relocating people. The social impacts are discrimination against local people in the work force. There are 486 families — about 2549 people — but only 140 people work at the mine. There are many excuses given such as that the people do not have the skills or expertise to work at the mine. They also use nepotism to give appointments to friends of the higher people at the mine. The roads to the mine are properly paved but none of the village roads are paved. At night the village is dark but the mine site is well lit. The local children can't attend the schools for the miners' children because they are too expensive.

The local lake has been contaminated by waste from the mine site and there are no other good sources of clean water for drinking or irrigation. All the waste from Inco's housing development is dumped into the lake. The lakeshore is now heavily polluted. Some species of fish are now gone. Some species are less prolific. There is also lots of dust and ash that blows into nearby villages from the mine site. This affects our health. We have attempted to contact university researchers to study the health effects but have had no success so far due to lack of funding.

The company says the dust and ash have no effect, but we don't believe it. Cancer is increasing. We have seen evidence of other diseases as well, like the coughing of blood. We can only report it because we don't know what it is. There are no studies. We never know the truth because only the company does the studies. In the last two years the company has brought over two companies to create artificial rain, but it has not increased the water levels in the lakes. One observation we can offer is that banana plants die without giving fruit. So I'm telling you these things that have happened since 1973.

We have passed on these concerns to the Indonesian government but there is no response. The stumbling block is that they say we stand against progress. Our government has started to change since last year, so we have formed a village organisation which is for the indigenous people of Soroako. We are aware that this issue is bigger than just us and we cooperate with other organisations. Since last March 25th, one of our hopes is that by being present here we will prove to the Indonesian government that we are not alone in our fight. We hope that your experience, dear friends, will help us in overcoming our concerns in Indonesia.

Miguel Palacín, Vicco, Peru

First I will present a diagnostic of my community, then a summary of issues in all the communities in Peru and the organisation of the national congress — the identification of problems, proposals, and an action

plan for the coming three years.

I am from a campesino [peasant] background and I was fortunate to be born in a period of great struggle, when the community was fighting to regain control of its territories. My community is in the Central Sierra of Peru. There is no mining in my community, but we have experienced the terrible impacts of mining. The mines are above four thousand metres of altitude, in a place where two major rivers have their origin. The struggles in Peru have been complicated by the civil war. Community leaders were always accused of being linked with the insurgency, and so many issues could not be resolved until after the end of the war. We have fought to preserve an important lake, which has unique species like the Junín frog. My community lives from livestock raising. We work the land communally and also individually. My community is recognised as the most progressive in the Central Sierra. The second most important activity is transport; thirty to forty percent of the comuneros [community members] own trucks. In 1993 a new Constitution was created in Peru, which had as a consequence the elimination of basic community principles. Until 1993, communal lands were an inalienable right. The state is promoting privatisation of the communal lands to give individual land title.

In the midst of this, in 1992, the company El Brocal began exploration on our lands, and carried out their work without authorisation until 1996. The government passed a law that facilitated land access by mining companies. My community, which values its land rights, has resisted this. We have successfully defeated two attempts on the part of the company to achieve servidumbres [land grants for the purpose of mining]. We have attempted to dialogue with the company, but with poor success.

I personally have been accused of kidnapping, and within three days of this accusation they had a warrant for my arrest. I contacted NGOs in Peru and abroad to post an alert on the Internet. We received support from indigenous people in Canada. After a long process, there has been some resolution.

The company had closed off a canal the community was constructing. The community agreed on a number of conditions for the resumption of dialogue: the opening of the canal, and dropping the charges against the community leaders. The company has entered the community attempting to divide the community, offering work to truck drivers and young people, who are in the majority. The successes we have had are in danger. Vicco, my community, was the first community to resist, out of the hundreds of communities who have had their lands taken by mining interests. The government wants to diminish and undermine our work. The experience at Vicco has served as an example for many communities in Peru.

In November of 1998, with the support of CooperAcción [a Lima-based non-governmental organisation], we gathered together forty communities to analyse the problems posed by mining. We agreed to organise all the communities in conflict with mining, offering the experience of Vicco to the other communities. In 1999 I visited almost all the provinces of Peru, talking with campesinos, organising meetings in each community. We have had nine regional congresses, and put in place resources to hold a national congress. We have achieved the support of five NGOs, and made links in four other countries with similar conflicts: Bolivia, Ecuador, Chile, and Canada. The national congress took place in November, 1999, in Lima, with the participation of 600 delegates representing 1200 communities. There we incorporated a national body of communities impacted by mining. I was elected as the first president. Many people had to travel great distances to participate in the congress.



Smelter in La Oroya, Peru.

There are 5,670 campesino communities in Peru, of which 3,200 are affected by mining claims. In 1992, there were four million hectares of mining concessions, but in 1999 this area had reached twenty-two million hectares. The mining concessions law is unconstitutional, as it violates guarantees to land rights. Mining has contaminated lakes. In Cerro de Pasco the open pit is in the middle of the city. In La Oroya, the smelter is located in the middle of the city. This smelter has been identified as one of the worst polluters in the world. In Tambogrande, mining exploration is taking place in the middle of the town.

Interpreter Michael Carty with Miguel Palacín.



There is no access to information on impacts. Environmental impact studies are not available. Lagoons have been drained. Benefits of the mining don't reach the localities. There is the imposition of a different culture: discotheques, bars, an increase in families headed by single mothers. Mining is entering areas previously not exposed to mining.

The objectives of our national coordination committee are:

- Defence of the land
- Achieve respect for communities' rights to use of natural resources
- Promote communities as direct beneficiaries of mining projects

"There are 5,670 campesino communities in Peru, of which 3,200 are affected by mining claims. In 1992, there were four million hectares of mining concessions, but in 1999 this area had reached twenty-two million hectares."

- Propose constitutional and legal reforms
- Denounce the abuses of community rights before international bodies
- Organise campaigns nationally and internationally against mining

We have weaknesses:

- Absence of the state in conflict areas facilitates the imposition of mining companies
- We have weak institutions due to the political repression and social violence
- There is a lack of knowledge about communities' rights
- Legal and technical tools aren't present
- Companies take advantage of poverty and economic necessity
- There are diverse experiences

We need:

- Support of international groups
- Changes to legislation that favours mining companies
- Rights of indigenous people must be respected: to their land, to information, to decision-making, to autonomy
- We want to incorporate public consultation as prescribed in ILO (International Labour Organisation) Convention 169
- We demand a new role for the state: to be a facilitator, protector, and consensus-builder with citizen participation
- Economic, social, and cultural rights of the communities must be respected.
- Viable proposals in technical and legal areas
- Promotion of sustainable development

In summary, I want to say that if the government decision-makers walked more in the communities where the citizens live, they would be more aware of the new winds that are blowing among the lives of those who are excluded from the benefits of globalization. They would see walls where the poor are writing in graffiti a preamble to the new declaration of independence of the Americas.

Judith David, Bartica, Essequibo River, Guyana

The Omai mine was built in 1992 and entered production in 1993. The agreement that was officially signed stipulated that there would be three tailings ponds; however, they started with only one. An expert said that it was bound to fail. This was known after the disastrous day of August, 1995, when 3.2 billion litres of cyanide-contaminated water spilled. The government of Québec identified this as one of the worst gold mine disasters in history.

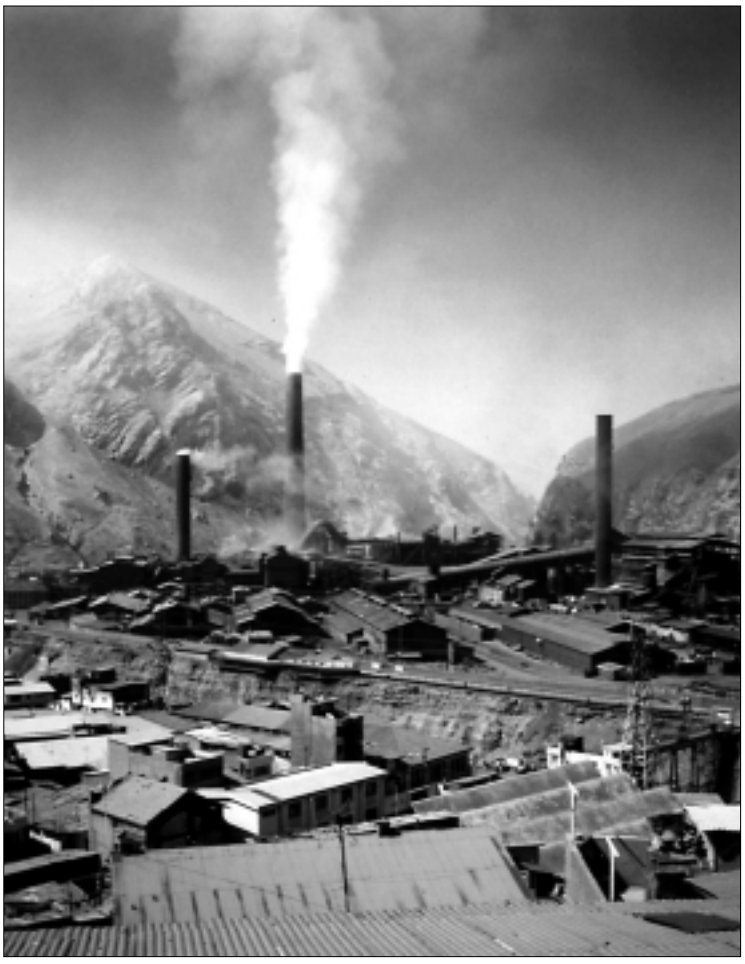
Nevertheless, Omai resumed operations six months later, and is still dumping small amounts of cyanide on a regular basis. People lost their livestock and their land was poisoned. The river is used by the people for domestic use, for transport, and for recreation. People suffered and continue to suffer symptoms like vomiting, skin irritations, and some deaths. Workers at the mine have also suffered. Canadian doctors visit Guyana annually, and in their last report it was clearly stated that the water is highly contaminated with mercury and cyanide, and that this has entered the food chain. The people of my community were able to file a lawsuit in the courts, but this was dismissed by the Canadian court in Québec because they felt it was better heard in Guyana. This case was brought forward with the help of Canadian lawyers and the help of PIRA [Public Interest Research Associates]. The Québec pension fund became the number one shareholder.

Omai has not paid any settlements to communities, except for some individuals who have received the equivalent of $100 US. This was limited to the time that the area was officially declared a disaster area, and people cannot make further claims for damages to fisheries or other impacts. On March 28, 2000, a local judge dismissed a case against Cambior, the Canadian parent company, on technicalities, but there is still a case against Omai. We have demanded clean water sources and compensation. The river is used as the main source of transportation from the villages. In Guyana today, tourism is one of the highest priority areas, and Bartica is one of the areas with the greatest potential, but this spill will have a negative impact on tourism.

Since the spill of August, 1995, the Guyana Research Environmental Network (GREEN) was established (in March, 1999) as an environmental non-governmental organisation by a group of environmental activists. The aims were to raise awareness locally and internationally about the dangers posed by the use of multiple toxins on health and environment. Our

"Omai has not paid any settlements to communities, except for some individuals who have received the equivalent of $100 US. This was limited to the time that the area was officially declared a disaster area, and people cannot make further claims for damages to fisheries or other impacts."

Smelter, La Oroya, Peru.



action plan includes educating people about toxics everywhere in Guyana; monitoring industries and toxic producers to reduce contamination; bringing lawsuits against polluters and government agencies that fail to take action against polluters; and developing an industrial pollution prevention plan for Guyana. Since becoming active last year, we have:

- Garnered local and international support for filing the class action suit against Omai
- Brought more than six hundred claimants to Georgetown to personally represent the sixteen communities affected
- Sought reparation for the more than three thousand people impacted by the disaster zone
- Undertaken a study of residents' health
- Provided social, financial, and medical support for several residents
- Identified and provided support to the most severely affected residents
- Coordinated with local health authorities and local NGOs for a program of comprehensive health screening for women
- Organised and trained grassroots community members in founding a community development corporation that will be community-controlled
- Assisted residents in taking their messages to the media
- Petitioned government agencies on behalf of residents to hold these institutions accountable for achieving justice for the communities
- Established a hotline for people's comments and concerns
- As part of a Washington, DC-based coalition, received support from other member agencies.

As a local grassroots organisation, we are seeking support in financial and other terms. We need volunteers in education, health, and technical areas.

Captain Tony James, Essequibo, Guyana

I am from the headwaters of the Essequibo river, where the forest is still intact. There is small-scale mining in Guyana. The government is encouraging multi-national companies to come in and invest, and this is where we have the Vannessa company, from Canada, coming in and secretly signing an agreement with the government. The government and company are saying that they aren't including indigenous communities in their concession, but we found that this was very untrue. [Shows map] According to this part of the map in Guyana, these blocks in the red all total to 4.1 million acres. These yellow blocks are indigenous communities. These communities are recognised as title communities by the government. But in and around here there are other communities that exist, but are not recognised by the government.

When we became independent, in 1966, one of the conditions was that the government must recognise all Amerindian lands, but to date that has not been so. What you find is that the government gives the communities what they feel like giving. The majority of the lands in the Vannessa concession are lands claimed by the Amerindians. The outcome of small-scale mining: you have jobs coming in, alcohol, prostitution, and other cultures. The communities now are dependent on outside. Like elsewhere, we have no right to sub-surface minerals. Environmental problems that have been experienced by communities include water pollution. Our fishing grounds have been destroyed. Fish can no longer spawn where they normally spawn. Navigation becomes very difficult. The primary use of water is no longer possible.

The Amerindian Peoples' Organization, where I work, is trying to educate the people. But you will find that in communities people are divided on the issues. Firstly, on the land issue. Secondly, whether to accept or not to accept mining activities in and around our areas.

What we need in these communities are resource people to come into our communities, especially like people within this group here, who can relate what impacts mining has had within their communities. Putting together reading material, cassettes, so that people can read and see what is happening in other parts of the world would be useful. Funding is a major part of what we are lacking in bringing people in, because we are far apart. If I invite the Huayhuay people to come to my community, it would take them two weeks to paddle. We have to educate people in alternatives without damaging mother earth. There are prospects for protected areas, extractive reserves, ecotourism, and suchlike activities, which must be indigenous-managed and owned. Because what you find is that people come in and they are the ones managing and we are the ones who continue to suffer.



Captain Tony James.

"We have to educate people in alternatives without damaging mother earth. There are prospects for protected areas, extractive reserves, ecotourism, and suchlike activities, which must be indigenous-managed and owned."

Francisco Ramírez Cuellar, Bogotá, Colombia

My country, like the majority of countries in Latin America, has been subjected to violence due to an incredible wealth that we have.

I want to share with you a study carried out by miners and international organisations. This study was an effort to discover how a Canadian company was able to take control of a gold deposit in Colombia which is one of the richest in the world.

The southern department of Bolivar produces 42 percent of the gold in the country. The municipality of Rioviejo is the largest producer in the country, with 195,783 troy ounces per year.

This [slide] is a document signed between a French owner who sold one of the original mines to a Colombian in the 1950s, and that is where the conflict began. The family that bought the mineral rights has never lived in the area, and Colombian law says that a mine has to be developed and operated directly by the owners. A lawyer working for the family who knew the amount of gold in the mine created the San Lucas mining company, under the name of an individual associated with the Canadian company Corona

"...the paramilitary groups, in cooperation with the US military and other interests, have assassinated more than 350 people in the area of Bolivar where we did our research. As well, they have forcefully displaced 20,000, have burned five villages, and have destroyed hundreds of homes."

Goldfields. One clause said that the family would be paid $150,000 per year as rent for the mine.

At that point, the ministry of mining intervened. The minister was a friend of both the foreign mining company and the lawyer, and asked the lawyer to form a consulting company to help the ministry to redraft the country's mining legislation. When they completed the new mining code, they presented this letter to the minister of mines and energy. The proposed code would have allowed mining in national parks, sites of architectural and historical importance, wildlife preserves, etc.

Another article said that when various applications were presented, the first to be presented to the authority would prevail — beneficial to Corona, since their application was already in place. The same code would have eliminated Colombia's environmental legislation, setting up an office that could be controlled by multinationals, and would have exempted mining companies from all taxation. But all this pales in comparison with what comes later. One year before counter-insurgency programs entered this area, the Congress was already considering a law saying they would aid small-scale miners displaced from their lands. Three months before the counter-insurgency program began, the family and the multinationals sent a letter saying that they are not interested in collaborating with paramilitary groups.



Francisco Ramírez Cuellar.

This [slide] is a report from the Ministry of Mining that says that the mines belonging to the family don't exist in the area. When we continued with our research, we found that there were US as well as Canadian multinationals involved.

We later discovered that, to avoid problems, Corona Goldfields merged with Conquistador mining, based in Vancouver and Las Vegas. All of this coincides with paramilitary activity carried out by Colombians trained at the [US-run military] School of the Americas. We discovered that the American embassy sent a letter asking for information about mining resources to be able to promote opportunities with US companies. Other companies interested in these areas are Greenstone (Canada), and Australian and British companies.

"Our conclusion is that these companies want to change Colombian law, and use paramilitaries to displace small-scale miners."

Our conclusion is that these companies want to change Colombian law, and use paramilitaries to displace small-scale miners.

Drummond (US-based) is producing coal so cheaply that they are putting Canadian mines out of business. This is also an important region of industrial coal mining. And today this is a region where there are many massacres carried out by the paramilitary groups, which are in practice an arm of the Colombian army, itself trained and supported by the US military.

There was a paramilitary operation carried out in the Chocó, in the north, near the Panamanian border, where 5,000 to 6,000 people have had to flee. They want people to flee to make way for another gold mining company. In other areas massacres have taken place. They chopped the head off of a miner and played soccer with the head, and told the people that the multinational would come and provide jobs. This is a nickel mine in an area controlled by a paramilitary group with ties to the CIA.

In this zone [slide] they have assassinated more than 200 people and forced the displacement of up to 10,000.

This [slide] is a gold mine in Ataco. The American Embassy said they needed to build an anti-narcotic base, but in reality they are interested in minerals.

This [slide] is a map of the US military bases in the country. You can see that the bases are distributed in areas with mineral wealth. On these bases, they train Colombian military personnel who later, dressed as paramilitaries, kill our citizens.

In summary, the paramilitary groups, in cooperation with the US military and other interests, have assassinated more than 350 people in the area of Bolivar where we did our research. As well, they have forcefully displaced 20,000, have burned five villages, and have destroyed hundreds of homes. The paramilitary operations in the country as a whole have caused more than 200,000 deaths and the displacement of 500,000 people.

We have made a great effort to produce a video, in English and Spanish, to give you a clear idea of what is happening. It was a significant cost for our union, for which I'll have to pass the hat, but it was necessary to give people here an idea of what is happening. Thanks to popular mobilisation and help from abroad, in particular from Amnesty International, we succeeded in defeating the proposed new mining code.

However, the multinationals now want to get rid of the state mining company, our employer, and want to introduce a new code as bad — as or worse than —

the previous proposal.

We have a number of proposals to present to you, which we will share with you tomorrow, but we ask now for your understanding. They present my country as a violent place, but you can see from my presentation who is causing the violence. We are also painted as a country responsible for narcotics trafficking, but it is the US that receives 80 percent of the earnings from the drug trade.

My people are good people and we want peace, and an end to the murders.

Bernice Lalo, Western Shoshone, Newe Segobia (Nevada), USA

It's hard to come behind someone who has a real issue with assassination of people. But you know, sometimes it's an assassination of spirit. I've given you papers that identify the companies that are there, but I also provided you with a map of where we're located, in the United States, in Nevada. You can see where the Native peoples live, and the mines that are located around the reservations.

We tried to meet with governmental agencies, but they want us to be there so they can say we're participating in the procedure, but they just write down our comments and that's the extent of what they consider consultation. They come to tear down the mountains and make holes in them. For us, the land is who we are.

It's not God. We don't worship these things, but they're part of what we are. It's not as if we could just go somewhere, because the land is part of who we are. For Christians, it's hard to understand that. I met a Mormon yesterday. It was hard for him to understand how we're connected to the land. He said, "You're Western Shoshone. What if we took you somewhere else where you could be happy?"

There's no difference between us and the land we walk on. We don't have written language. Our stories belong to that mountain. Our stories belong to that land where our people are buried. Our names are there. The names of the mountains are names of people, places, stories. They've perpetrated genocide. They've taken our stories that belong to the mountains, they've uprooted the people that are buried there. We've had five hundred years of people coming to destroy us. Many of our people do not speak our language. We're trying to regenerate, but without this language we can't describe who we are, our relationship with the land, our relationship with other people.

With the 1872 Mining Act, they say they have the right to come and mine wherever they want to. There was a big advertisement in the paper from Barrick Gold mine, which said, "Whatever we mine is yours." They said they provide schools, money for all this great stuff. But you know what? Nothing comes back to us. What they mine is theirs, there's no money that comes to us. But they're tearing up everything that we are, everything that we want to be, everything in the future. When the mining companies leave, there'll be nothing for us and nothing for our children except torn up mountains. They call this reclamation, but the mountains aren't there, they're just hills.

Newmont now owns two million acres of land in Nevada. The senators and representatives are with them. Senator Reed is proposing a law that will take Bureau of Land Management land. We say that they've never made a treaty with us in which we extinguished title to the land. Now they're trying to see if they can give us $110 million dollars divided between the tribal members. You know, the higher the money gets, the more attractive it becomes. Each person, they say, will get $20,000. What will $20,000 get? It won't buy a home. We've been there 25,000 years. It's like one dollar for each year.

"As long as there is one intelligent Shoshone left, we have to fight. Because who are we? We will never be anyone else. Who will we be? Who can a person be if they can't be who they were born to be, on that land where they were supposed to be?"

In doing this they're not killing our bodies, they're killing our souls. Like many of you, we're standing up for what we think is right. A forester once said, "why don't you just lay down and give up? The mines are going to get in anyway." I said, "As long as there is one intelligent Shoshone left, we have to fight." Because who are we? We will never be anyone else. Who will we be? Who can a person be if they can't be who they were born to be, on that land where they were supposed to be? We're not fighting mines, we're trying to fight a mind game with those people who come to tear up the earth. Because if we participate, we're helping to kill ourselves. That's it!



Bernice Lalo.

Ana Cecilia Nava, Chihuahua, Mexico

The organisation I'm representing has not had a lot of experience in mining. I come from the state of Chihuahua. Most of the forestry and mining is in the south-western part of the state. There have been problems with the small-scale miners, because they don't have enough money to work the land. We have zinc, silver, copper, gold, and lead. There used to be some financial aid for the small miners, but now there isn't. Canadian, US, and Australian companies that come have a lot of financial power, so the artisanal miners are left with few options. The time required to get a permit to work the land is about ninety days, in comparison with maybe two years in many other countries. This ninety days includes the environmental impact assessment.

There is very little education in the communities about impacts, so they don't know what the potential problems are. Under Mexican legislation, only two of seven laws proposed by the World Bank have been adopted. All projects presented have been accepted, because the government receives benefit from the mining projects. They don't assign an economic value to the damages caused by mining, in cultural or ecological terms. The indigenous people take their land as being sacred, so they are affected. Particular impacts come from use of cyanide and road construction. Many species are facing extinction. Water is scarce and the little water we have is being polluted.

"There is very little education in the communities about impacts, so they don't know what the potential problems are."

The people working to help the communities are the group I work with and the ecclesiastic groups in the area. The small miners want help and we don't know what help to provide.

Phil Shearman, Australia/Papua New Guinea

Papua New Guinea has a large mountain range that extends through the middle of the island and extends down to swamps. The majority of people live in remote villages, and obtain their food and water from the land around them. Papua New Guinea has been blessed and cursed like many of the other places we've heard about. Mining companies have destroyed river systems and cleared forest areas. Cultural impacts have been equally extreme — prostitution, sexually transmitted disease, and so on. Impacts are particularly severe due to the isolation of most of the areas where mining is taking place. The Ok Tedi mine tosses all of its waste into a major river system. The copper-laced tailings will remain in the environment for at least 150 years. The tailings cause major flooding of the lower forests and kill trees and swamps where there were previously important fisheries.

"Papua New Guinea has been blessed and cursed... Mining companies have destroyed river systems and cleared forest areas. Cultural impacts have been equally extreme — prostitution, sexually transmitted disease, and so on."

The major difference between PNG and many of the other countries we've heard about is land ownership. In Papua New Guinea, over ninety percent of the land is owned by the residents. This changes everything, because, when it comes to negotiations around mine projects, it is the local people who have the say. The government is very weak. This has positive and negative results. Potentially, it is positive if the local people are well informed. However, lacking government support, the local communities can be weak and uninformed.

For six years, a small group of us have been working to oppose damaging new projects, with little success. Many communities that receive mining projects on their land are very supportive of the project. Generally, communities receive large compensations. A very small group of people in the immediate vicinity of the mine get large benefits, but the people in surrounding regions also affected by the mining don't get compensation.



Right: The Porgera mine (Papua New Guinea) can be seen behind these houses. Below: Porgera River emptying into the Lagaip River, loaded with tailings from Porgera Mine.

We have been focusing on a new mine proposal, for nickel and cobalt. We started early in the campaign and worked across the board. We undertook a major education program with the communities likely to be affected on the ground, showing videos and taking them to other regions of Papua New Guinea where mines have been in place. The result was that when the mining company arrived to explain the benefits of the mine, the locals didn't believe a word of it. We also worked with the owners of the mineral rights to get them to ask a higher price. We worked with the government. We were able to access scientists to redo a lot of the company's reports to be able to comment on what the mine would mean. We were able to slow down the company in its acquisition of licenses. Each time the company released new reports, we issued critiques pointing out their errors. The key to what we hope has been our success has been tackling this company in the financial sector in Australia.



Through the Mineral Policy Institute [an Australian non-governmental organisation], we sent a report to all stockbrokers in the country explaining the risks implied by the project. We were able to convince the Australian government not to give the company risk insurance. In this way we have been able to hold up the project. We feel that if we can do this for another six months, we will win as the company only has so much start-up money. Having seen the impacts and the lack of benefits that have come from other mining projects in the country, we feel we are justified in our approach.

Brennain Lloyd, North Bay, Ontario, Canada

I'm from Northwatch in Northwestern Ontario. We're a coalition of ecology groups. We're right in the centre of Canada and the oldest mining region in the country. The province of Ontario is the biggest mining producer in the country, followed by Quebec and BC. The two main First Nations are Cree and Ojibwe. We have fifty operating mines and 6,000 abandoned mines in this region. We have about 20 mines that are in advanced exploration. We can't be certain how many of these will come into production. We're dealing with many of the same companies that you're dealing with. Eighty-five percent of the province has ten percent of the people, and so we have little political power.

The current government is a friend of industry. It has changed the mining act and environmental assessment act, and weakened labour legislation. We're also a lower income area with much higher unemployment than in the south. We have mostly gold mines, though there is also nickel, copper, and zinc. Uranium mines are now shut down. Right now, we have exploration rushes for palladium and diamonds in the far north, where there is no electricity or road transportation. They are now building an electricity line. In exploration, they can legally move 10,000 tonnes of earth per day. Major operators are: Placer Dome, Inco, Falconbridge, Battle Mountain, Kinross, Teck, and Goldcorp.

Cominco is the irresponsible owner of an abandoned mine in Timmins, the highest acid-producing mine in Canada. It was a zinc-copper mine in the '40s and '60s. This mine is a very good example of the way the problems grow. Every year the problem gets worse. The plume is spreading, the level of metal contamination is increasing. For thirty years almost no work has been done at the site.

Overall, the problems we have are the same as people have elsewhere: tailings management, dam failure, and so on. We had a major problem with a dam failure at an abandoned mine in 1991. A subsequent study identified twenty-five sites with imminent danger of dam failure, but only one of them has been addressed. In terms of water quality, the rules are not very protective. The companies can't exceed established levels for each of a short list of contaminants. But the tests are not very protective. It's enough if half of the fish exposed to effluents survive. Many of the mines fail the tests. But when they fail repeatedly, in many cases the regulators change the levels in the control order so that the companies can meet the reduced target levels.

I want to close with an example concerning a mine operated by Placer Dome. This mine has an approved closure plan, but the approved plan has many problems that haven't been addressed. For example, they have arsenic trioxide underground. At the time their plan was approved, they said they had a company working on a plan, but that company was in the process of being shut down. They have a neighbourhood that was built on arsenic-laden tailings. In their studies they took four different pathways for arsenic (food, water, soil, and dust), combined them, ran a computer model, and it came out okay. But we don't have confidence in this methodology. The third problem they have is arsenic in the groundwater, which is travelling towards the lake, and they don't know the speed or the concentration or when it will show in the lake or what effect it will have. And this is a company that is operating within all of the rules and regulations in Ontario.

Ben Lefebvre, Timmins, Ontario, Canada

There are about fifty First Nations communities in Northern Ontario, with eighty to ninety percent unemployment. Many of the land rights of these communities have been denied. In the northern mining area, all of the water flows north through these communities. Consequently, they have to eat the fish and hunt the game that has been polluted by mining interests.



Peggy Teagle and Ben Lefebvre.

There's an interesting story in Timmins. It was built on gold mining. In much the same way that your communities have experienced, you lived above and worked in the mines underneath the community. Very recently the community is starting to fall into the mine workings. So they haven't moved yet, but they will have to pretty soon.

Joe (Smy) Tsannie, Wollaston Lake, Saskatchewan, Canada

My name is Joe Tsannie. I come from northern Saskatchewan. We too, as Dene people, are affected by uranium mining. It's across the lake, about 25 kilometres from our community. The mine started around 1974, and we have a new uranium mine that just opened in 1999. The community and the elders have questions about land, water, fish, berries — the traditional food we depend on. The question is, what does the future look like? Are the caribou and fish going to be there for our kids in the future? We're entering into an impact benefit agreement with the government. Who's going to be responsible for the cleanup, and the tailings that will be left for our people? With the surface lease agreement, agreements that are being negotiated, we don't get information on that. And prospecting on our own land. People come onto our reserves and drill big holes, and people are scared that we're the ones that are going to be left there to clean up after they leave.

We need people to train us to do monitoring, education, training, and the government won't cover these costs. We had a spill there in 1989 and in 1985 the community had a blockade on the mine. Nothing really came out of it. They formed a group of people to watch the environment, but it's not really helping in any way. It's just across the lake. When it's windy the dust blows into the lake, and we find dead fish float-

"We had a major problem with a dam failure at an abandoned mine in 1991. A subsequent study identified twenty-five sites with imminent danger of dam failure, but only one of them has been addressed."

"The question is, what does the future look like? Are the caribou and fish going to be there for our kids in the future? We're entering into an impact benefit agreement with the government. Who's going to be responsible for the cleanup, and the tailings that will be left for our people? ...We don't get information on that."

ing in the lake. They do studies on our caribou and they say the levels are not threatening, but we don't know that. The people in our community are not educated, they don't understand it. A lot of our people still do hunting, fishing, and trapping; they depend on that land to survive. When I'm away, I miss the food, I miss the land. A lot of our trappers, their land has been taken away by the mining companies. The companies make some sort of cheap deals to mine on the trappers' land.





Above, Rabbit Lake uranium mine (Saskatchewan) being used for tailings disposal, 1991.
Right, Sarah Johnnie.
Below, depleted uranium bullet as used by NATO forces in the Gulf War, Yugoslavia, Kosovo, etc.



What we're fighting for right now is compensation for our land. After they leave, we're going to be there. We're going to be suffering from these mining companies. I don't know if there's a way to clean up after the mine is there. They try to relocate the fish, find new places where the fish can spawn. But what about the rights that we have in our traditional land? It's Crown land, they say, but it's our land. The only jurisdiction we have is on our reserve land. Our land is very important for our future. The food and animals we rely on should be there for our kids. It should be there.

Sarah Johnnie, Carmacks, Yukon, Canada

Carmacks is where I came from. It's 208 miles north of Whitehorse. In 1995, BYG mining company came into the community, wanting to mine for gold situated seventy miles from Carmacks in the hills. This mine that they were talking about, when they came to meet with the First Nations people in Carmacks, they said they were going to hire seventy people from Carmacks. This mine is situated on permafrost. When they started mining, they didn't think that the permafrost would melt as fast as it is melting now, and this is when they started having problems with their tailings ponds. They were forced to shut down in 1998.

"This mine is situated on permafrost. When they started mining, they didn't think that the permafrost would melt as fast as it's melting now, and this is when they started having problems with their tailings ponds."

They were having constant problems with the environmental health department in Whitehorse regarding this tailings pond. And they also had problems with poor ventilation in the lab where the ore was being analysed. They used heap leaching, saying that this heap leaching was safer than cyanide. People started hearing stories that BYG was dumping effluent into a lake three miles from the mine. There are tracks all around the tailings pond, where animals go to drink. Last year, a group of people shot a moose near the mine to analyse it. The result was that it was safe, but it was recommended that we not eat moose, because they range so much.

Since the mine shut down, the federal government took over and they're trying to figure out how to manage this water that is flowing over, that leads to a major waterway. We were told that by the time it gets to the Yukon River there won't be any toxins entering the water. In the fall, in October, when the lake started freezing up, they told us that they were planning to take out seventeen tonnes to treat before the freeze-up. They were asked by the chief of Carmacks to put a fence around the tailings pond, but we were told the fence would cost $5,000 to $6,000 to put up. The only time we hear anything about BYG is on the news, in the papers. This is an ongoing issue that we are working on and fighting.

What We Have in Common

What Large-Scale Mining Has Done to Our Communities

"Many communities that receive mining projects on their land are very supportive of the project. Generally, communities receive large compensations. A very small group of people in the immediate vicinity of the mine get large benefits, but the people in the surrounding regions also affected by the mining don't get compensation."

"My country, like the majority of countries in Latin America, has been subjected to violence due to an incredible wealth that we have."

"It's hard to come behind someone that has a real issue with assassination of people. But you know, sometimes it's an assassination of spirit."

Change in our Way of Life

- Loss of subsistence way of life.
- Loss of ability to hunt, fish, and gather.
- Loss of livelihood.
- Loss of freedom of movement.
- People are forced off their land.
- Resettlement or relocation that changes our way of life.
- Small-scale miners are displaced.
- There are inadequate housing and services where we are relocated.
- Traditions are not respected.

- Prostitution has become a problem.
- Sacred places are violated and ancestors are not respected.
- Cultural invasion results in a loss of identity, culture, and spirit.
- Loss of language through invasion of foreign languages.
- We are stretched too thin. We are dealing with too many mines, but also with too many other issues in our communities — education, health. This is a threat to our movement. People feel that there is too much to do. They neglect their families and communities, and burn out.
- There is uncertainty of whether the next generation will be able to continue to live from the land

Divisions in the Community

- In many cases the communities are divided by mining development.
- There are divisions between elders and others in the community.
- The governments and companies choose the leaders they want to speak with. They don't give opportunities for the leaders to return to get direction from their communities. This can lead to a distancing of the leaders from their communities.
- Government and the company often take advantage of the low level of education in the community.
- People are bought off and corrupted with money.
- There are also divisions between people who are in favour of what mining brings — jobs and development — and those who are not.
- When you resist, you are labelled as a communist, a liar, a troublemaker, and against progress.
- In the majority of cases we've heard about, the company pays little compensation for changes in land quality and way of life. In some cases, the strategy is to pay a lot to immediate neighbours but not to other affected people. When families get compensation, men tend to manage the money.
- Housing, schooling and jobs are provided to mining camps but not to the community.

Threats to Environment and Health

- When companies leave, they leave a legacy of environmental destruction, and people are worse off than they were before.
- Future generations are at risk.
- Drinking water and groundwater are polluted, diverted, or dried up.
- Soil is removed, buried, and polluted.
- Ash and dust is polluting the air, and there is uncertainty about the impact on people.
- Neither government nor mining companies plan for reclamation; even when they do, it is not carried out.
- There is a rise in cancer rates and other diseases.
- Contamination of food, plants and animals.
- Significant impact on workers and communities through exposure to chemicals and radiation, mine-related injuries and death.
- Ongoing stress and fear over possible mine disasters, harassment and long term health.

Economic Results

- Mining tends to become the dominant activity, to the exclusion of all other activities in the area, and this is dangerous.
- Company promises jobs but does not deliver on those jobs.
- People from outside are hired for the jobs.
- Free market culture — cut costs at any cost.
- Economic activities are lost, which has a different effect on women and men. In some cases men are compensated but women are not.
- Eighty percent of earnings go offshore.
- Companies move to where mining is the cheapest.
- What jobs are created don't last and workers are lost when mines shut down. Also pensions and severance pay are lost.
- There is a high cost of cleanup, but a higher cost of not cleaning up.
- Communities need economic alternatives in order not to be dependent on the mine; but resources are not available to study them.



Sarah Johnnie and Nedjo Rogers.

Violence and Loss of Life

- Paramilitary and police repression leading to false accusations of criminal activity, jailing, massacres and suspicious deaths.
- Private security forces are used to intimidate.
- The CIA and the School of the Americas are involved and often use the drug trade as an excuse to threaten and kill people.
- People killed by mining accidents.

Government Action and Inaction

- The state is not in charge. They are not regulators, but rather facilitators of mining.
- Laws are changed to open doors to multinationals.
- Before these consultations take place, we have to educate the people. The people have to be the ones to stop the mining. The government isn't going to do it for you. They see the money signs.
- We cannot rely on state governments to protect our rights.
- Mineral rights are generally in government hands.
- Price of land set by the government.
- Treason on the part of government officials, who often leave government to work for the companies.
- Controlling education to prevent critical thinking about mining.
- Political repression.
- Governments are weak; where policies and regulations exist, it is not possible to enforce them.
- Governments have not applied legal requirements for consultation.
- Corruption is endemic and fed by the corporations.
- Ideology that those who criticise or oppose mining are "opposing progress".

- A lot of these countries have to pay debt back and one of the reasons that mining is promoted is to be able to have the income to repay debt.

What Keeps Us Going

"...my community was the first to resist, out of hundreds of communities who have had their lands taken by mining interests. The government wants to diminish and undermine our work. The experience (in our community) has served as an example for many communities in my country."

"We have formed a village organisation, which is for indigenous people... We are aware that the issue is bigger than just us and we cooperate with other organisations."

Community strengths identified:
Solidarity – Determination – Identity – Compassion – Allies – Organisation – Love for the earth – Love for each other – Patience – Outrage – Tradition – Education – Commitment – Networking – Courage – Credibility – Family – Memory – Support – Motivation – Values – Mission – Vision – Belief and hope – Sense of humour – Ability to see lies – Community

What We Know

"I feel very moved by the people who have shared their stories. We have heard of repression, where people are displaced for the sole aim of making profits. You have my gratitude and admiration for the work you are doing."

Interpreter Sammy Gamboa with Beth Manggol.



Knowledge identified:
- Knowledge of the reality that is around us
- How to keep the will to confront reality around us
- Traditional knowledge of the land
- Knowledge of the negative impacts of mining on the land, on communities, and on people
- We have shared experiences

What We Have

"We have values, a vision and a mission that we want to build."

"I think and feel that during these days we shortened the distance between us to enable us to act together."

Existing strengths and opportunities identified:
- Sense of territory
- The justness of our cause
- We have the capacity to respond
- Capacity for struggle
- Diversity and unity
- Supporting institutions
- Communication with one another
- Building network
- Love of the land

What We Need

"They've taken our stories that belong to the mountains. They've uprooted the people that are buried there. Many of our people do not speak our language. We're trying to regenerate, but without this language we can't describe who we are, our relationship with the land, our relationship with other people."

Principles identified:
- To know the truth about how proposed projects will affect our communities.
- Right to say no to mining projects that we believe will harm us.
- Ability to be well informed about international mining issues.
- Training and funding to monitor mining activities.
- Methods to educate our communities about mining.
- Recognition of the value we hold for our traditional lands.
- Governments and mining companies to be responsible during and after the life of the mine.
- Fair negotiations.
- Protection of our land rights.
- Create an international network for communities affected by mining to share information and success stories.

What Are The Obstacles

"There is an imbalance of power between community and company, within communities and internationally.

"We are stretched too thin. We are dealing with too many mines, but also with too many other issues in our communities."

"...The ability of companies to reinvent themselves with each new project."

Obstacles identified:
- Power imbalances
- Globalization
- Lack of capacity to deal with mining issues
- Lack of community involvement
- Lack of economic diversity
- Corporate strategies
- Lack of accountability

What We Are Going To Do

"The warmth that people have passed on here is very important. Coming from the other side of the planet

and hearing the stories has galvanised me to continue the work in my part of the world and I thank you all for that."

"I have a lot of mixed emotions. I am ashamed and embarrassed by what the Canadian companies are doing. But I am also moved to action. It gives me more energy to go back and fight my local battles."

"I have only one message for the mining companies: we will oppose you."

It is important to move beyond the impacts of large-scale mining to tell of the hopes and successes of individuals and communities around the world. Working through the participatory process we determined an agenda for joint action and directions for research that is located in the experiences of people living with the effects of Canadian mining development.

The agenda for action is fourfold: (a) building local capacity; (b) raising public awareness in Canada and overseas; (c) building a global community-based network; and (d) holding governments and companies accountable. Following are some of the strategies, tactics and tools needed to turn these words into action.

(A) Local Capacity Building

"The communities must be trained in environmental impact assessment, so that they can contribute or effectively negotiate with mining companies."

"One mistake that lots of organisations still make is that they don't encourage work at the local level."

- Obtain information on the basics of mining. What it means, how it works, the impacts of relocation, potential impacts from active, abandoned, and proposed mines including what happens to communities after the mining company leaves.
- Carry out community health surveys. This has application beyond the specific problems of mining; it's information that any community should have.
- Learn about relationships between small-scale (artisanal) and large-scale (national and transnational) mining in other places.
- Learn strategies and tactics from others. Learn how to share information with mining companies and how to negotiate with mining companies.
- Learn from other communities and NGOs. We need to know who's who in mining and how to track history of companies when they come to a country and change their names.
- Learn how to get information on international best standards.
- Determine methods for sharing information. Put together international stories of what has happened to other communities (reading materials, tapes etc.) so that people can read and hear what has happened in other places.
- Provide training and funding to do monitoring and education.
- Build a local organisation to conduct meetings and local forums to talk to their own people. Community needs to be organised, informed, and mobilised.
- Learn how to organise and to intervene strategically. We need to know how to link other organisations into mining issues, how to negotiate and build ability to do this — particularly when there are different languages.
- Develop technical assistance. This includes getting assistance from the universities, scientists and lawyers, and professional consultants. To find the people who were available.
- Find the learning materials that are produced for communities. Then develop a directory of who they could contact for different things, like a spill in the community.
- Develop tools for communities to monitor environmental impact. Local capacity building for environmental studies, policy making, consultation and networking; learn ways to identify radioactive and polluted areas in our community.
- Build capacity in communications within the community, in economic questions, like valuing existing resources, alternative development plans, researching local development plans; planning beyond the life of the mine.
- Strengthen organisation in the community, forming strategic alliances with unions and others in regions.
- Learn how to use the media.



Anto Sangaji.

A dialogue about consultations and negotiations with mining companies

"'Consultation' is a word that is used by companies and governments when they want to say they have talked with the community. We're not really looking for consultations, but rather negotiations. The companies appropriate our words and ideas during consultation and negotiations."

"You can only have real consultation when the companies and government recognise the rights of communities to say no. If they don't recognise that right, you cannot have consultation."

"In negotiation, community interests are not represented, or are under-represented."

"There is an imbalance of power, between community and company, within communities, and internationally."

"Consultations with communities do not occur or are manipulated. Companies and governments arrive, meet with us, and then leave again. Governments shouldn't feel that one meeting is consultation. We have to take the issues back to our communities. It should be ongoing."

"One important element for consultations to take place is that people have access to information, to make informed choices. The key element is access to information."

"If a company is operating in Suriname and we know that what they're doing there isn't up to the standards of the host country or some other international standard, we can communicate that to the community and thus at least empower them somewhat. We can ask if they are using the best available technology. But it's not just technology; it's also things like effluent contents."



Children outside Ghana Goldfields Ltd. offices, Tarkwa, Ghana.

(B) Raising Awareness in the General Public

We will develop knowledge and awareness at local, national, and international levels regarding the impacts of mining companies on communities.

- Determining the most effective ways to communicate information about mining to people in the community.
- Develop methods to raise awareness that there are sustainable alternatives to mining.
- Identify the leaders in communities, NGOs, unions, religious groups and make sure they are well informed.
- Carry out community and NGO workshops on a variety of issues including: human rights, livelihood rights, potential impacts of mining, impacts of relocation etc.
- Train trainers for mobilisation. There are some representatives from local communities who can take information to other people in their areas.
- Increase media awareness of the community impacts of mining.
- Develop press kits.
- Encourage youth participation. We want to work for the world of our children, but we also have to ensure that the children are involved in this work. A school curriculum on mining so that our children will learn the impacts of mining. Educate youth and teachers on the effects of mining industry; develop educational materials.
- Develop methods that will inform people that they have a right to say no.

(C) Building a Global Community-Based Network

We will develop and strengthen the organisation of communities at local, national, and international levels by learning from one another and building coalitions.

"We have set our feet on a very long journey. If we have commitment we can do much. …If we take steps together and build this network, we will have a network that will be the best in the world."

- Increase access to information technology. Use Internet access, listserves, fax, phone.
- Establish coordinating organisations dedicated to building and maintaining networks in support of communities on an international level.
- Encourage capacity building around lobbying and sharing stories at the multilateral level and among shareholders that own the companies. Need to develop a web of networks that could move from the community level to the shareholders and also the multilateral level (IMF, World Bank).
- Establish crisis networks. When something happens, we need to be able to respond immediately.
- Find funds for travel, workshops and seminars between network participants.
- Nurture access to international media. Take advantage of all the different opportunities available through journalists travelling all over the world.
- Develop a collection of videos, photographs, and ways to share stories. Develop an archives of unpublished mining stories.
- Establish international 'watchdog' organisations to monitor in a proactive rather than reactive way.
- Share information on what companies are doing across all communities. We've heard a lot about bad cases and failures, but we also need to know about successes we've had to be able to learn from these experiences.
- Catalogue the kinds of technical support needed from the network: independent technical support — environmental and health effects testing; trustworthy and comprehensive health studies; good legal advice.

(D) Holding Governments and Corporations Accountable

We will develop methods to hold governments and corporations accountable.

A dialogue about holding corporations and governments accountable

"We cannot trust how the company presents itself. They change their names and have the ability to reinvent themselves with each new project. They are great storytellers about the great work they've done in other parts of the world."

"Major mining companies are getting together to form a club to pool resources for public relations purposes. This is a significant initiative on the part of the major companies to change their images, aimed at governments but also at the public and communities where these companies operate. The power of marketing and publicity should not be underestimated."

"We demand a new role for the state: to be facilitator, protector and consensus builder with citizen participation."

<u>Holding Governments Accountable</u>

- Legislative accountability. Hold meetings with

Senators, and members of the legislature around mining codes. To hold them responsible, use famous international organisations such as Amnesty International.
- Denounce government in the press.
- Rally at embassies and government buildings.
- Use well-respected multinational NGOs to put pressure on governments.
- Use domestic laws that exist.
- Use international human rights laws.
- Put pressure on the home country of the company using international laws.
- Challenge mining legislation based on inconsistency with other legal documents, the constitution, etc.
- Start your own investigations of impacts so the government is forced to pick it up and do it more fully.
- Mass rallies and blockades.
- Insist on transparency on projects that governments and government agencies support.
- Canadians should be able to pressure their own government to challenge mining companies because it seems to have signed almost all international treaties.
- Get stories to shareholders and IMF/WTO/World Bank — not only government representatives.

Holding Companies Accountable

- Use international social and environmental codes of conduct.
- Insist on disclosure of financial issues such as insurance and loans and risk assessments given to insurance companies and lenders.
- To insist on compensation as a form of recognition of corporate responsibility for damage done. Focus on ways of sustainable compensation.
- Take company to court in the country where it's from.
- Take legal action against a responsible individual who's involved in the company.
- Go after consulting firms, engineers, contractors and legal advisors involved with the company.
- Financial and shareholder action.
- Rallies, petitions, resolutions.
- Media pressure.
- Put pressure on government in Canada to hold companies accountable.
- Put pressure on insurance companies, lending agencies (including the IMF, World Bank, Asian Development Bank, Interamerican Development Bank) as these often violate their own codes.



The steering committee: Peggy Teagle (CCISD), William Appiah (TWN), Joan Kuyek (MiningWatch Canada), and José de Echave (CooperAcción).

- Develop the resources needed to do these things:
  - Technical expertise on health, environment, legal issues;
  - Information — on companies (their other projects, social and environmental commitments, ownership structures, etc.), on existing domestic and international standards and legislation, on corporate structures, and their financing;
  - Financial support;
  - Organised passionate people.

International Accountability

- International standards on mining to be developed.
- An international court system, where cases can be brought.
- International indigenous network.
- Learn about international laws and standards applicable to mining to be able to hold companies to them.
- We need to equalise standards, but at a high rather than a low level. €

A Few Closing Words From The Heart

"I have learned that we have shared problems. There is a fundamental rule: those who share common problems have to unite to confront them. We should take a positive feeling from this workshop, based in the fact that we are not alone. There are also many communities that have not been able to come, but deal with the same problems. Returning, I believe that we will all continue the work with greater force, and transmit to our people what we have learned here."

"First, to the people of Canada, many thanks for bringing us all here. Unfortunately, in life there has to be evil for such wonderful feelings of solidarity to be expressed. I would be very happy if you are left with the understanding that the reality in my country is not what you read in the papers but what you have heard here. If any of you are still in doubt, my union has authorised me to invite you to visit us. We can give you lodgings — though not a plane ticket! It would allow you to see our reality and the difficulties that our people live with on a daily basis, not only the suffering but also the warmth and kindness of our people. That would give you a sense that this is really a small planet. We will always be very grateful for what you do for us."

"We will continue to fight for our human rights and our mother earth, and I leave you in solidarity."







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