



HIGHLIGHTS OF 2018

groundWork is always a 'crazy' busy place. 2018 was no different. It has been an exciting year with a new strategy developed for the next 3 years to challenge for environmental justice, under the themes of Open Democracy and a Just Transition. We have chosen these thematic framing areas as we are bearing witness to violence against civil society by government and corporations, the use of 'divide and rule' by corporate power. Undemocracy presently rules. In this context the Transition is happening now, as workers and families lose their livelihoods and the elite make off with the profits of a decaying coal industry. We have to fight to make it a Just Transition!



- **Bobby Peek** reflecting on the past year

We had two key events that will shape our 2019 and beyond. Our internal opportunities review has led to exciting internal restructuring to accommodate growing opportunities for environmental justice action. Our strategic planning meeting in September led to formalising our team approach to our campaigns. The result is various campaigns and campaigners are working collectively as teams and the Highveld is the first focus area for this collective work.

We have exciting staff and trustee changes with Tsepang Molefe joining us as our new Media, Information and Publications Campaigner. We would like to thank Sandile Ndawonde, Thuli Makama and Jon White who supported us for many years and we welcome on board Mawande Mazibuko, Relebohile Moletsane and Judy Bell. We are privileged to have them share their time with us.

Finally a big thank you to the very many community groups and partners we work with which are scattered throughout South Africa and Africa. We have had a big presence in Africa in 2018.

We hope that you all have a good rest over this holiday season and that we come back refreshed and ready to get into the trenches to fight for environmental justice, democracy and a just transition.

FRACKING WILL JUST NOT FRACK OFF



Yes, you're probably wondering why we calling this a highlight. The then Acting Minister of Environment, Derek Hanekom, with his head buried in the sand dismissed the appeals by various organisations opposing fracking. A week later Rhino Oil and Gas decided to [apply for more of our land to frack](#)! Thanks Derek! But critically people are not taking this lying down. In [October](#) and [November](#) we together with various NGOs and people's organisations said [#banfracking](#) for this is "Our Life, Our Water, Our Sea, Our Air, Our Land".

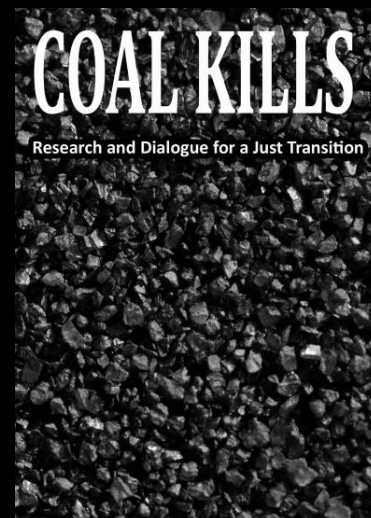
DRAKENSTEIN SAYS NO TO INCINERATION

The Drakenstein municipality issued a statement on 31 May 2018 terminating the waste incineration project proposed for the town of Wellington. This comes after a few years of resistance and campaigning with the local community groups in the area. Unfortunately while the municipality has terminated the project, the EIA has continued and received a positive record of decision! You can [read the municipality's statement here](#).



COAL KILLS... WE CAN PROVE IT

There is no doubt about this. In 2015 we took politicians on a toxic tour through some of the coal fields in Mpumalanga. In front of us we saw the land destroyed, the water polluted and the air full of sulphurous gases coming out of burning coal mines. They said they wanted evidence that coal is killing people. We thought it was ludicrous that they should be asking for this. It is all so evident. But with the push for coal growing we realised that we must produce the evidence. We did this with the [Coal Kills](#) report that presents research and a dialogue for a Just Transition. Politicians cannot now say they never knew. When our politicians are retired with their fat pensions they must remember millions are suffering for they did not have the guts to take action to secure a just future for all.



ZERO WASTE EXCHANGE WITH MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS



In November this year groundWork planned an exchange between waste officials from different municipalities to visit the waste picker led zero waste project in Vaal Park, Sasolburg and Vanderbijlpark. The Vaal Park recycling centre has equipment for sorting and storing of the different waste streams and does door to door collection from a community that is practising separation at source. Needless to say that the visiting officials were quite impressed at how far we can go if we empower these types of solutions instead of redundant technologies like incineration.

Next stop... Zero Waste.

SAWPA HAS AN OFFICE



The South African Waste Pickers Association (SAWPA) now has an office in Vanderbijlpark. The SAWPA has more than a 1000 registered members in more than 50 municipalities and on 71 landfill sites throughout South Africa.

LEAD IN PAINT STANDARDS REVISED



Credit: UN Environment

The standards for lead in paint have been revised from 600ppm to 90ppm. This is great news. Let us hope there is no exemption or postponement loophole, as our Department of Environmental Affairs has become notorious for.

EJS 2018 - BUILDING ACTIVISM AND ACTIVISTS

This year we held our Environmental Justice School at Red Acres in Merrivale in the beautiful Midlands (which is about to be explored for fracking, but let's not get started on that, focus!). As always, we spent four weeks with wonderful activists campaigning for environmental justice. Students from past schools are excelling in the various spaces they are working. In community organisations, NGOs, further studies and representing South Africa throughout the world. Well done on them. This year's school was the fourth of building cadres for activism!



WORKING WITH GOVERNMENT - NOT FIGHTING THEM

As part of the [Global Green and Healthy Hospitals](#) and [Tekano](#) programme to build collaboration between stakeholders for better and safer health care, groundWork [collaborated with the City of Cape Town](#) to Train Health Professionals (Doctors, Nurses, Pharmacist, Environmental Health Officers and Waste Managers) on best available practices for climate change and health, waste management and air pollution.



CROSS-REGIONAL SOLIDARITY

Promise Mabilo from Vukani Environmental Movement in the Highveld, where she and others challenge for a Just Transition, attended a climate camp with BUNDjugend, Young Friends of the Earth Germany. Promise spent two weeks in Germany as part of a youth programme within Friends of the Earth International.



30 YEARS OF EJ FOR ELA

Earthlife Africa celebrated 30 years of Environmental Justice in August 2018. Makoma Lekhalalaka and Liz McDaid won the Goldman Environmental Prize for their ongoing resistance to nuclear energy and in particular the court case victory against the secret nuclear deal.



ANOTHER YEAR OF NO NEW COAL FIRED POWER STATIONS!

Together with Centre for Environmental Rights and Earthlife Africa (JHB) we work under the campaign banner of Life after Coal and we successfully have delayed Thabametsi and Khanyisa, two new proposed coal fired power stations.



GAIA AFRICA IS GROWING

The Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives has grown in the past year and now has 26 active members in 12 African countries, there are also 3 new zero waste projects in South Africa, Ghana and Tanzania. Exciting times for our region.



ADOPTION OF ALTERNATIVE WASTE TREATMENT TECHNOLOGIES BY GGHM MEMBERS



Healthcare (medical) waste treatment is a very tricky business. If not done properly it will cause harm to both people and their environments. GGHM member hospitals are beginning to embrace a more sustainable model of dealing with medical waste. Both public and private health institutions are leading in this – Khayelitsha Hospital in the Western Cape has adopted the Newster Treatment unit, saving money in the process. More recently, Netcare Limited has adopted a Tech4life equipment which was installed at their Montana Facility in Pretoria. The machine basically cuts the medical waste into small pieces where it is then chemically treated. This waste can then be sent to landfill.

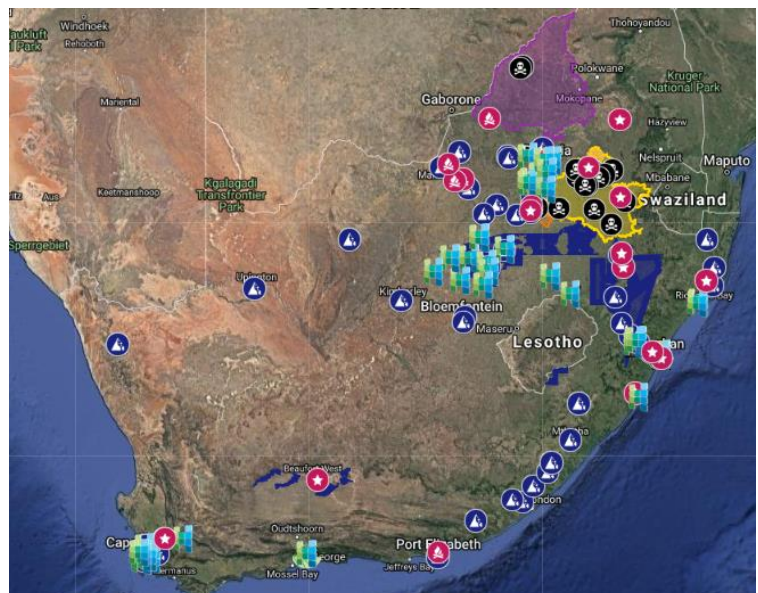
MABOLA - LEGAL VICTORY

Together with a coalition of 8 NGOs supported by the Centre for Environmental Rights the proposed Mabola coal mine was challenged. The [North Gauteng High Court in Pretoria has set aside a 2016 decision](#) allowing the mine to be developed in the Mabola Protected Environment near Wakkerstroom, Mpumalanga.



FOOTPRINT OF OUR NGO & COMMUNITY PARTNERS IN SA

Over the years, community environmental justice activism has grown in South Africa. There are many such EJ groups throughout the country. These are some of those groundWork works with who work through the lens of environmental justice. [Visit the groundWork Battlemap for the full extent of our work.](#)



COMMUNITIES RESISTING MINISTER MINING!

Despite the ample evidence of the destruction of mining on people and the environment, the new Minister of Mining (Mineral Resources) remains hooked on mining at all cost. After Asbestosis, Silicosis, black lung disease and the destroyed land and water, there is still a belief that mining is a development plan for South Africa. What it is, is a get rich scheme for a few connected elite Communities have been clear from Newcastle to Xolobeni, from the platinum belt to Fuleni and Somkhele, they do not want mining. Gwede Mantashe, Minister of Mining (sorry Mineral Resources) felt their anger when they confronted him. People are still waiting for responses to various memorandums!



RESISTANCE AGAINST TOXIC DUMPSITE CONTINUES

Communities in KwaNdengezi, Plantations, Hillcrest, Dassenhoek and surrounding areas continue to make an uproar against the toxic dumpsite in Shongweni. Even the DEA official came out and said Enviroserv must stop dividing and polarising the community and politicising the issue.



OCEANS NOT OIL

We have teamed up with concerned individuals and a coalition of organisations worried about the impact of escalating oil and gas prospecting activities in the form of seismic surveys and exploration wells on the East Coast of South Africa and its consequence to marine life, climate change and people's livelihoods.



WE'RE LOOKING FORWARD TO 2019



A LUTA CONTINUA!



groundWork