

GROUNDWORK

COAL KILLS



KILL COAL

In this issue

groundWork is a non-profit environmental justice service and developmental organization working primarily in South Africa, but increasingly in Southern Africa.

groundWork seeks to improve the quality of life of vulnerable people in Southern Africa through assisting civil society to have a greater impact on environmental governance. groundWork places particular emphasis on assisting vulnerable and previously disadvantaged people who are most affected by environmental injustices.

groundWork's current campaign areas are: Climate Justice and Energy, Coal, Waste and Environmental Health.

groundWork is constituted as a trust. The Chairperson of the Board of Trustees is Joy Kistnasamy, lecturer in environmental health at the Durban University of Technology. The other trustees are: Farid Esack, Patrick Kulati, Richard Lyster, Thuli Makama, Sandile Ndawonde and Jon White.

groundWork's SOUTH AFRICAN STAFF ARE:

Director: Bobby Peek

Deputy Director: Gill Addison

Administrative Assistant: Bathoko Sibisi
Waste Campaign Manager: Musa Chamane

Coal Campaign Manager: Robby Mokgalaka

Research Manager: Rico Euripidou

Junior Environmental Health Campaign Manager: Luqman Yesufi

Media, Information and Publications

Campaign Manager: Megan Lewis

Bookkeeper: Gill Waterworth

HOW TO CONTACT US:

6 Raven Street

Pietermaritzburg

P O Box 2375, Pietermaritzburg, 3200

Tel: 033-342-5662

Fax: 033-342-5665

e-mail: team@groundwork.org.za

Web: www.groundwork.org.za

3	From the Smoke Stack
5	Eskom's brinkmanship is killing us
8	Time to get angry about climate change
10	Another chip at our democracy
11	Fracking will be a curse on S.A.
12	Meet Robby Mokgalaka
13	Profile of Katrin Ganswindt
14	Politic of coal is no longer untouchable
16	Waste pickers heard?
18	Zero waste pioneers in Sasolburg
19	Is Eskom public enemy Number One?
20	Meet Luqman Yesufu
21	Don't call us greenies!
22	Tales from the offset
23	Community news
24	Miners shot down



Help us spread the word
www.facebook.com/groundWorkSA



Twitter
[@groundWorkSA](https://twitter.com/groundWorkSA)

AFFILIATIONS:

groundWork is affiliated to the following international organizations:

Health Care Without Harm

International POPs Elimination Network

Basel Action Network

Oilwatch International

Global Anti-Incineration Alliance

groundWork is the South African member of *Friends of the Earth International*

CREDITS:

Printed on recycled paper from *Sappi Fine Papers*

Layout by *Boutique Books – Printing by ArrowPrint*

Cover: "Coal kills, kill coal."

Design by Latha Ravjee, Crystal Clear Illustration



From the Smoke Stack



by groundWork Director, Bobby Peek

Dear Friends

In March this year, groundWork learnt what a "dirty slap" was, and we all cracked up with laughter. It came from the new groundWorker who joined us in February. For many of our Nigerian friends reading our newsletter, you will know what this means but, let me assure you, no one was given one in the office.

Change is not always an easy process. In most cases, however, change brings in new ideas, visions of what could be on distant horizons and shakes up the status quo with which many of us become too familiar. The start of 2014 was a time of change in groundWork. Siziwe Khanyile went on to further her studies and Robby Mokgalaka, from Polokwane, and Luqman Yesufu, from Nigeria, joined the groundWork team. They introduce themselves to us later in the newsletter. We are fortunate to have two people of their calibre and enthusiasm joining groundWork.

Siziwe was with us for nine years. She took over the Air Quality Campaign from Ardiel Soeker. Throughout her time at groundWork she spent lots of time working with community people throughout the country, as well as internationally through Friends of the Earth International and Oilwatch. We worked together with Siziwe in developing our Climate and Energy Justice campaign, which challenges the South African government on their climate and energy injustices. The departure of someone from groundWork's offices is always difficult, but we wish her the best in her studies and her future endeavours, and hope she will stay connected to the environmental justice movement in some way!

During this time we also had Katrin Ganswindt with us from our sister organization, urgwald,

in Germany. Katrin spent much time in the Mpumalanga and Limpopo area, witnessing first-hand the challenge of our coal-based economy. From the old, burning coal fields of Mpumalanga to the unspoilt beauty of the vast open areas of Limpopo bushveld, she spent much time speaking to those impacted by the South African, and the world's, addiction to coal, and those who are trying to push back on this. We hope that she can narrate her experience to the German public that still depends on using coal from South Africa, and indeed other places such as Columbia and the United States. Her story will be part of a bigger puzzle which we hope will be the end to coal and a just transition to a new energy future.

It is not only coal that is taking us to the point of no return. The South African political and corporate elite, like alcoholics seeking to find different ways of keeping the alcohol flowing, keep on trying to find ways of sucking the earth dry of its blood, a reference to oil by the U'wa people of the cloud forest of Columbia People. From Shell's onslaught in the Karoo to frack the area for gas, to ExxonMobil's gas exploration of the east coast of South Africa, South Africa is up for grabs and our government's policies are geared to grease this extraction. Interestingly, it has been reported that Rex Tillerson, the CEO of oil and gas superstar ExxonMobil Corporation, the largest natural gas producer in the United States, is challenging fracking in his own neighbourhood while his company and its compatriots are raking in billions of dollars doing this elsewhere. Maybe he should be living in the Karoo with a holiday house on the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) coast, for then we would be better protected.



In the ExxonMobil case of seeking gas off the KZN coast, the consultant company undertaking the public consultation process, Environmental Resources Management (ERM), were concerned about the request for extended time frames for consultation from the residents and the South Durban Community Environmental Alliance in particular. What did they expect? Some of the consultants facilitating these processes of fossil fuel extraction would consider themselves environmentalists. During this time I received a call from an ERM consultant asking for advice on how to deal with the concerns of the local community, as represented by the SDCEA. I want to scream profanities of the highest order when consultants call and ask for advice, for they should speak directly to those who are affected and are raising concerns. Why should we as NGOs speak differently, or offer insights into community issues that they themselves could speak on. But hey, offered the opportunity, I spoke my mind.

The contentious issue at stake is the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act (MPRDA). This is a problematic piece of legislation that facilitates the destruction of our land in the name of development by allowing the digging out of minerals and fossil fuels. Over the recent few months I have spent much time in Mpumalanga amongst the abandoned coal mines which are still burning and polluting the environment: a liability that we as the people of the country have to pick up, rather than those who extracted the minerals and got rich.

I said to the ERM consultant that it is clear that the provisions for public participation in the MPRDA are inadequate. He agreed. So I suggested three courses of action. Firstly, he ignores SDCEA's call for more participation, for the timeframes according to the MPRDA are set and, considering where real power presently rests – with the government represented by the Department of Mineral Resources, and the corporate sector, represented by ExxonMobil – ERM should just submit the document as is required before seismic exploration can start. Secondly, he submits the concerns of SDCEA and the community with the necessary documents and asks the Minister for an extra sixty days to facilitate meaningful consultation or, thirdly, that he submits the document and suggests to the Minister that the

MPRDA be revised to allow for more meaningful participation. Needless to say, ERM would not want to be seen by companies to be calling for meaningful legislation that provides for a deeper interrogation of so-called developed options, so take a guess which option was followed. A fat load of return for my advice!

During this first quarter we also had the onslaught by industry on our environmental laws, namely the Air Quality Act, which we'd thought was a victory in 2004. Sadly, the law and framework that facilitates this Act allows for exemption, and/or postponement, of meeting the legislation. I guess we were naïve in allowing this clause to be included. While we were in the trenches in the last few months of getting to the final legislation we raised our concern about the use of exemptions, but at no point did we think that industry would ask to be exempt from air pollution standards, as they are now doing. They are making a mockery of our hard fight for democratic legislation. By using the exemption clauses, they seek to circumnavigate further investment to clean up their facilities to meet present and new plant standards. It will be a sad day if government allows these exemptions. But who better than Eskom to lead the charge for this devious approach. Since Eskom made their intentions known, asking for exemptions and postponements last year, a whole group of other industries, from smelters to cement kilns, from oil refineries to mines, have applied for exemption too. Are we going back to the dark days of the Air Pollution Prevention Act (APPA), which gave companies a licence to pollute? As it now stands, the answer is yes.

Finally, on a good note, the Department of Environmental Affairs is undertaking research to better understand recycling and the role of waste pickers in recycling in South Africa. This is a direct result of the South African Waste Picker Association (SAWPA) and groundWork campaigning for the rights of waste pickers over the last seven years.

So not all doom and gloom.

Till next time, when we will be able to speak more about the push back against exemptions and deliver more good news.

For now! ☺



Eskom's brinkmanship is killing us

by Robyn Hugo and Sylvia Kamanje

Eskom is testing the the legal boundaries of the National Environmental Management: Air Quality Act regulations

The right to an environment that is not harmful to health or wellbeing is a fundamental human right for all South Africans. The National Environmental Management: Air Quality Act (AQA) commenced in 2004, with the primary aim of improving ambient air quality, which in turn would improve the health of all South Africans.

In 2010, as required by AQA and after five years of consultation with affected parties, which included Eskom, Minister Molewa published standards which industrial emissions could not exceed, including those from coal-fired power stations. Relevant to coal plants are particulate matter, sulphur dioxide, and nitrogen oxides, all of which have far-reaching impacts on human health at particular concentrations.

As the law stands, Eskom's power stations – major contributors to poor air quality in South Africa – must meet existing plant standards by the 1st of April 2015, and stricter new plant standards by the 1st of April 2020. This delayed implementation allows older plants more time to retrofit the pollution controls required to come into compliance.

Recent events have made it clear that Eskom never had any intention of complying with these standards. In December 2013, more than three-and-a-half years after the standards were



published, Eskom submitted, for thirty-seven calendar days' comment from the 6th of January 2014, draft applications for postponement from compliance with the emissions standards for sixteen of its power plants. Fourteen of these stations are coal-fired, and all are situated within areas declared as air pollution Priority Areas because of existing air quality problems – which exist in part because of Eskom's existing emissions. All applications to postpone compliance with 2015 standards must be submitted to the National Air Quality Officer by the 31st of March 2014.

Eskom has indicated its intention to apply for "rolling" postponements, thereby effectively asking for complete exemption from certain of the standards. The postponement applications are coupled with applications for variations of the conditions of its licences to allow certain stations immediately to emit more than the licences currently allow.

Paraphrased, the main reasons given for Eskom's applications are:

- the benefits of compliance do not justify the non-financial and financial costs of compliance, estimated by Eskom to be about R200 billion in capital costs, before financing charges, and about R6 billion per year in operational expenditure;
- the requirements of the Public Finance Management Act make major capital projects required to ensure compliance with the standards in the required five years impossible;
- the only pollution control measure that allows it to meet the SO₂ standards for its plants (flue gas desulphurisation, or FGD) requires water that is not available; the same FGD will cause more limestone to be mined and transported.

Instead of installing pollution control to comply with national emissions standards, like all other industrial facilities, Eskom has taken the time to develop its own "emissions reduction plan". This plan is based on the assumption of fifty-year life spans for all its power stations, yet Eskom has already indicated that it may extend the life of these plants to sixty years.

The retrofitting schedule in this plan includes:

- FGD retrofit for only one station, Medupi, starting in 2021 and ending in 2027 (the same Medupi that is not even up and running yet);
- no retrofitting at all for seven of the fourteen coal-fired power stations. On a sixty-year lifespan, the earliest that decommissioning on any of these stations will commence is 2030, and the last one in 2048;
- low NOx retrofits for another three stations, starting in 2019. On a sixty-year lifespan, the earliest that decommissioning on any of these stations will commence is 2039, and the last one in 2056; and
- fabric filter plant retrofits for five power stations.

Experts advise that Eskom's plan would mean the emission of an estimated 28 000 000 tonnes of excess sulphur dioxide, 2 900 000 tonnes of nitrogen oxides, 560 000 tonnes of particulate matter (a mixture of very small particles and liquid droplets) and 210 tonnes of toxic mercury over the remaining life of the power plants. The excess SO₂ emissions alone are equal to Eskom's entire emissions for fifteen years at current rates.



Greenpeace International Energy Campaigner and coal expert Lauri Myllyvirta has undertaken a detailed assessment of Eskom's current health impacts. He estimates that as many as 2 200 to 2 700 premature deaths are caused each year by the air pollution emissions from Eskom's coal-fired power plants, including 200 deaths of young children.

Eskom's emissions are also continuously making us less intelligent: current emissions of mercury are associated with the loss of 45 000 IQ points each year. These impacts are already estimated to cost South Africa R30 billion each year.

Turning to the health impacts of Eskom's "emissions reduction plan", Myllyvirta estimates that the excess emissions are projected to cause, over the life of the power plants: approximately 20 000 premature deaths, including approximately 1 600 deaths of young children; and a projected loss of 280 000 IQ points due to mercury exposure.

The economic cost associated with the premature deaths, and the neurotoxic effects of mercury exposure, is conservatively estimated to be at least R220 billion. Coincidentally, this is comparable to the amount Eskom estimates to be the cost of compliance with emissions standards.

It should be clear to all who read this that Eskom is holding South Africans to ransom, forcing both government and the public to sacrifice the lives, health and intelligence of our children – what Eskom casually refers to as "the benefits of compliance". If we don't, we are told, entire power plants will have to be shut down, and the economy brought to its knees.

Eskom already has a shocking history of non-compliance with environmental legislation. Eskom has been cited repeatedly in the National Environmental Compliance and Enforcement

Reports; in the 2010-11 report the DEA remarked: "Eskom has become one of the utilities in relation to which we have seen an increase in the numbers of contraventions of environmental legislation... This is extremely concerning in that Eskom has well capacitated environmental personnel who are dedicated to ensuring compliance at most of its power generating facilities." Since 2009, Eskom has paid more than R3.2 million in fines for illegal activities. In 2012-13, DEA listed their inability to prosecute Eskom as one of the reasons for changing the law that exempts organs of state from criminal liability.

In the absence of regulators who are forcing Eskom to implement retrofitting at existing plants and proper pollution controls at new plants, we are leaving our air quality and our health in the hands of a repeat offender – an institution that has relied on its special monopoly and state-owned status to avoid criminal prosecution, and to force South Africans time and again to choose between electricity supply and health. This is a false choice that flies in the face of our Constitution and our air quality laws.

Any limited postponement granted to Eskom must be subject to the most stringent conditions, including a much-accelerated plan for installation of effective pollution controls, and the immediate start of a comprehensive, peer-reviewed, publicly available study to assess the impact of Eskom's emissions on South Africans' health and well-being.



Robyn Hugo and Sylvia Kamanja are attorneys at the Centre for Environmental Rights' Pollution & Climate Change programme.

This Opinion was first published in the Mail and Guardian on Friday, 21 February 2014.



Time to get angry about climate change

by Mike Childs and Bobby Peek

We each need to take individual as well as collective action to get government to take climate change seriously

We rightfully get angry when innocent people are abused or their lives are wrecked. South Africa's democracy is built upon the struggles to stop the abuse of not only people of colour, but also the poor and vulnerable. We expect the people responsible to be brought to swift justice. Yet this week's publication on climate change impacts by the world's top scientists begs the question: why do the bosses of the fossil fuel companies get honoured by the establishment rather than face justice for their role in worsening climate change at great human cost?

The new International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) published its report this week and it is clear: the poorest and most vulnerable people in the world are already being hardest hit by climate change and will be in the future; climate change that's caused predominately by burning fossil fuels.

Here's how the IPCC says climate change harms the most vulnerable people:

Extreme weather – “Climate-change-related risks from extreme events, such as heat waves, extreme precipitation, and coastal flooding, are already moderate and high with 1°C additional warming. Risks are unevenly distributed and are generally greater for disadvantaged people and communities in countries at all levels of development.”

Food – “Climate change has negatively affected wheat and maize yields for many regions and in the global aggregate”, whilst further climate change brings “risk of food insecurity and the breakdown of food systems linked to warming, drought, flooding, and precipitation variability and extremes, particularly for poorer populations in urban and rural settings”.

Water – further climate change brings “risk of loss of rural livelihoods and income due to insufficient access to drinking and irrigation water and reduced agricultural productivity, particularly for farmers and pastoralists with minimal capital in semi-arid regions.”

Health – “Throughout the 21st century, climate change is expected to lead to increases in ill-health in many regions and especially in developing countries with low income, as compared to a baseline without climate change.”

Fisheries – “Risk of loss of marine and coastal ecosystems, biodiversity, and the ecosystem goods, functions, and services they provide for coastal livelihoods, especially for fishing communities in the tropics and the Arctic”.

So what can we do about this?

Frankly, it's time to get angry and respond to elite political power and corporations who continue to ignore the facts and act in ways that continue to place the poor in harm's way. One has to get angry when, despite South Africa's dubious lead role in contributing to climate change, corporations such as Anglo American, Vedanta, and BEE companies such as KiPower (owned by Kuyasa Mining) continue to peddle the burning of coal in the name of alleviating poverty and providing access to energy. This is a load of hogwash. It neither alleviates poverty nor contributes to access to energy for the poor. What it does do is sell environmentally-damaging energy cheaply to corporations and increase South Africa's greenhouse gas emissions.

We have to get angry when we read about children with malnutrition in drought-ridden areas and people's houses being flooded. These grave



injustices get heaped on the poorest in the world by the fossil fuel giants and the corporate elite.

Research published last year found that ninety companies are responsible for two-thirds of polluting greenhouse gases; all but seven of these are oil and gas industries. In South Africa, thirty-six members of the energy-intensive users group consume 40% of South African electricity and, together with Eskom, are the leading polluters in South Africa.

Instead of South Africa moving away from fossil fuels and using the abundance of sun that we have, the political decision makers continue to push for fracking in the Karoo, more coal-fired power stations and exploration for gas and oil off our coastline.

Government must wake up and smell the roses, before the stench of sulphur becomes overbearing – as in the many townships where people burn coal and other fuel indoors because they do not have access to meaningful electricity provision.

If this makes you angry, there's something you can do about it.

Tell the government you don't want fracking for shale gas in your area. Tell them to leave the coal in the hole, oil in the soil and gas under the sea. We need a just transition for workers from a fossil fuel economy to a new economy, not mainstreamed on extraction. For if we do not stop this now, the negative impacts of climate change are going to result in conflicts over food and resources as people's ability to grow crops is destroyed by droughts and flooding. Africa is already prone to internal conflict that is depicted as ethnic violence and xenophobia. We need to be beware that if government's unwillingness to act responsibly now is not met by us challenging government in all spheres to ensure a democratic voice is heard and followed, the current situation will lead to heightened conflict in the near future, and the South Africa we hoped to achieve post-1994 will



Friends of the Earth Europe **RESCOOP EU** **CLIMACT** **CEO** **CLIMATE WATCH**

be a mirage on a drought-prone landscape in a world impacted upon by climate change.

It is about taking action (not only through voting) to ensure that there is solidarity built between all people in South Africa so that we can understand that the quest for wealth accumulated by the elite is not only at the expense to the poor today but they are the ones who will be most hard hit by climate change in the future if we continue on a fossil fuel burning energy trajectory.

Mike Childs is Head of Policy, Research and Science at Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland.



Another chip at our democracy

A statement by the anti-fracking coalition

Minister of Mineral Resources Susan Shabangu's comments that government is going to be moving ahead "decisively" on shale gas exploration in the Karoo is in stark contrast to what people in the Karoo want. As part of their constitutional rights, they are asking for agrarian transformation, employment and decent jobs, decent levels of affordable basic services and infrastructure, and, at a minimum, the basic goods of human life, starting with the most basic levels of goods like nutritious food and safe and comfortable accommodation. This is what is needed for the Karoo, not a plan for fracking that is extractive and will leave the Karoo with a toxic environmental and social legacy.

It is critical that government listens to those who will be the most vulnerable to the impacts of fracking. It is not about "a public campaign to visit communities who may be affected to explain what will happen", as the Minister says will happen. It is about doing the right thing for the well-being of the people of the Karoo and their natural environment. Telling people what will happen is an agenda of the elite who will benefit from the extraction of gas from the Karoo basin.

This is an undemocratic agenda, and undemocratic process. We urge government to *properly consult* the people in the Karoo and work out an inclusive developmental strategy that will improve the livelihood of people in the Karoo. The people of the Karoo need to be given space to come up with a developmental plan that suits them, and a plan that will benefit them over a long period of time. Fracking will not benefit the majority of the people in the Karoo: like any other extractive industry, only a few, high-profile individuals will benefit from it. In the long term, their natural environment, upon which they rely, will have been lost to the profit of outsiders.

Minster Shabangu's agenda, and indeed government agenda, is clearly articulated in the Minister's address to the IHZ McCloskey South

Africa Conference 2014, held in Cape Town on the 29th of January, where she promised that investments in fossil fuels (coal was the reference) will be protected by government when she stated that changes in the Minerals and Petroleum Resources Development Bill will "protect the sanctity of investments in the context of national development imperatives". This is what fracking is about in the Karoo: creating wealth for the elite and ensuring that this happens with government protection in an undemocratic manner.

We recognize that people of the Karoo are connected to the world by the global crisis we face on the destruction of nature, the failing economic system and an ever-more ruthless system of capital accumulation that dehumanises peoples' labour. Globally, people are pushing governments to say no to fracking; we will again become a pariah state.

The struggle in the Karoo is embedded in responding to three challenges: ensuring an agro-ecology based on agrarian reform and food sovereignty; securing the Karoo's scarce water resources; and ensuring that people have a direct say in how energy is produced and used in the Karoo through the approach of energy sovereignty that is non extractive.

We believe the government should develop a meaningful and locally-based response to the proposed fracking for gas in the Karoo and ensure that people have a clean, healthy environment where they live and work.

Endorsed by:

*Southern Cape Land Committee
groundWork, Friends of the Earth South Africa
Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference,
Justice and Peace Department*

*Southern African Faith Communities' Environment
Institute*



Fracking will be a curse on S.A.

Leading academics and researchers recently wrote a letter pointing out the downside of fracking

Many benefits have been proposed from fracking and President Zuma has called it a "game-changer" for the people of the Karoo. Experiences in many parts of the world where fracking has been practised for some years, however, suggest that these benefits may be overstated. Indeed, in some contexts, privatized profits with socialized costs, disrespect for the rights of people and the environment, and a failure to fulfil extravagant job-creation claims has spurred much public resistance to fracking and a crop of recent critical publications in the social science and humanities literature.

There are important warnings and lessons for South Africa, where it seems that the progression from exploration to exploitation of shale gas in the Karoo is inevitable over the next decade. There is much that scientists don't know about the extent of this resource, and the environmental, health and socio-economic impacts of fracking and current international research suggests that caution is advised. The need for high-quality research for evidence-based policy and practice, in South Africa and elsewhere, is therefore both urgent and extensive.

But, without stronger forms of environmental governance that heed the lessons from elsewhere, along with the investigative resources and capacity to ensure compliance with environmental law, it is likely that the exploitative history of extractive industries will be repeated in South Africa and we will have learnt nothing from the hard lessons of others promised all the benefits of fracking. If so, the "blessing" of Karoo shale gas envisaged by

Minister Dipuo Peters may well turn out to be a curse on the land and its people for decades to come.

We therefore strongly endorse the call by the Coalition of the Southern Cape Land Committee, groundWork, the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference and the Southern African Faith Communities' Environmental Institute (Cape Times, the 14th of February 2014) for the government to consult meaningfully with the people likely to be most affected by the proposed fracking in the Karoo. We also call for strengthening of the evidence base on which policies should be adopted. It is absolutely critical to have strong governance mechanisms that provide for comprehensive policy development, transparent values in the criteria on which evaluations are made, and independent structures not beholden to vested interests. Finally, decision-makers need to compare the set-up costs to the fiscus of fracking infrastructure with those of sustainable energy infrastructure.

James Irlam, Senior Lecturer, Primary Health Care Directorate, UCT

Leslie London, Professor, School of Public Health and Family Medicine, UCT

Lesley Green, Associate Professor, School of African and Gender Studies, Anthropology and Linguistics, UCT

Dr. Kevin Winter, Lead Researcher, Urban Water Management, UCT

This letter was first published in The Cape Times on Wednesday, the 19th of February 2014.



Let's put the planet
first in 2014



Meet Robby Mokgalaka



Robby Mokgalaka is newly appointed as Coal Campaign Manager at ground-Work. He was born and raised in a small town of Phalaborwa in Limpopo. He was brought up in a Christian background. Christian convictions are therefore guiding values in his everyday life.

Robby completed his matric at his village school and pursued his dream of becoming a lawyer. He acquired a Bachelor of Art, majoring in Philosophy and Law, from the then University of Natal. Thereafter, he obtained an LLB from the same institution. Although he has a legal background, he has spent much of his time working as a researcher. He was employed as a research manager at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) by the School of Psychology, while studying and working as a fieldwork coordinator for Human Science Research Council (HSRC) at the same time.

He later was employed as a research assistant by UKZN at Westville campus. After a long run as a researcher in different organizations, he decided to start practising law with Legal Aid. Helping the financially humbled communities developed in him a passion to help bring positive change in people's lives. During his time as an attorney at Legal Aid, he was driven by a desire for justice for the people. What was rewarding in his effort was seeing a smile on people's faces after assisting them.

This experience enhanced his passion to fight for justice for the people who couldn't afford to help themselves. Although for him the kind of a job he now has at groundWork is a less-travelled road, he embraces it as another form of justice to fight for, for the benefit of the poor communities.

The fact that people are being exploited by the financially muscled corporates, and the fact that their rights, entrenched in the constitution, are being

abused, makes Robby determined to fight against the exploiters' activities and let the disadvantaged enjoy their rights.

Eskom is the main suspect in the picture. For so many years Eskom has been freely operating without being mindful of environmental regulations. The area of Mpumalanga has been declared a priority area due to the high level of pollution caused by Eskom in their activities. They have ignored the negative health impacts experienced by the communities due to pollution.

Even after promulgation of the National Air Quality Act in 2004, whereby the companies were given time to comply with the emission regulations standards, Eskom chose to apply to be exempted from emission standards. They have again applied for postponement until 2025 to comply with the standards. Other companies with smaller financial muscles than Eskom are trying to comply with the regulations, but Eskom claims to have insufficient money to buy the machines to minimise pollution caused. Willing to comply as they claim to be, it is ironical that they are planning to open more mines which are going to cause more pollution than the pollution already existing. Their belligerence has to meet with the combined force of resistance from different stakeholders. So, therefore, it is Robby's objective to help see to it that these unhealthy activities by Eskom are discontinued and the health of the people is protected.

Robby's belief is that if we don't help those who are oppressed, we are just as bad as the oppressors, so it is our duty to make the change we wish to see.

The campaign against pollutions caused by coal complement his passion. This is the kind of work which stimulates his sense of creativity without a limit. He is therefore determined to see this project as a success.

Robby is inspired by listening to good music, as a therapy after a stressful subject. His hobbies are watching soccer (a game in which he was once both a player and a coach), playing chess, watching cricket and watching the geographic channel on television. ☺



Profile of Katrin Ganswindt



My name is Katrin Ganswindt and I work for the human rights and environmental advocacy organization known as *urgewald*, in Germany. We watch the overseas projects of financial institutions, such as the World Bank, European Development Bank (EDB), and private

German banks, and other German businesses. If a local group, organization or single stakeholder is engaged in a project where one of these companies is involved, we support the struggle by putting the subject on the agenda in Germany. That might be a World Bank loan for the Medupi coal-fired power station, with which we confronted the German executive director of the World Bank, an energy company importing coal from a mine which is affecting local communities, or a loan from a private bank for a new mine.

I am involved in the subject of coal within my organization as I was active in energy issues as an activist before I joined *urgewald*. As part of the movement for an energy transition towards renewables, we managed to prevent a coal power plant at the Baltic Coast and we raised awareness for the extension of a nuclear waste facility at the same place, which is on hold for the moment. When I came across the work of *urgewald*, I found their approach "to follow the money" useful and interesting at the same time: they are tracing what the banks actually use the money that we store in our bank accounts for, and thereby hold financial institutions liable for their investments. Three years ago I applied for an internship during my studies as an ecologist and got hired on the spot.

My actual research in South Africa is focused on two subjects: one is to observe what impact the coal mines in South Africa have on the local population, and the other is the case of Coal of Africa Limited (CoAL).

The former is interesting as Germany will shut down all its hard coal mines by 2018, but is still far from phasing out burning coal. Hence the black gold needs to be imported. Though the numbers have declined in recent years, South Africa was our number one supplier for a couple of years before 2005. One of my aims is to go back home and speak about the long-term effects of coal mining that we Germans just export to other countries now, thus bearing witness to the true cost of coal. As well, I want to meet people who struggle locally against the mines and people from the NGO scene to exchange ideas and understand what human rights and environmental activism mean in a country so different to mine.

The latter case is about a new coal-mining project in Vhembe district in the Limpopo province. CoAL has already opened one mine there, which is temporally closed now due to many reasons. In short, the economical feasibility of the project and the environmental impact had been miscalculated. Furthermore, the public participation process was a farce. The newly proposed project in Makhado is on a larger scale and the company doesn't seem to have learned much from their recent failure. As there is local opposition which can be supported, I am here to investigate and put together a report for the major investors, one of which is the Deutsche Bank – Germany's largest private bank.

So far I have travelled to parts of Mpumalanga and have got to know a few people from the local struggle there. Also, I have met people involved in the movement against the Makhado project. I am glad to experience how our international partners, *groundWork* for example, do not only supply us with information but also ensure that we get to connect with people on the ground, taking me around and introducing me to everybody. After having already been in South Africa for one month, I am excited about the few weeks I have left and already sad to leave so soon. ☺

Link: Recent study on investment in coal mines worldwide – Banking on Coal http://www.urgewald.org/sites/default/files/banking_on_coal.pdf



Politic of coal is no longer untouchable

Resistance to KiPower hots up

In the face of KiPower, a proposed 2 000MW independent coal-fired power station, justice movements in the Highveld are starting to organize amongst themselves to start fighting South Africa's reliance on coal head on. Thomas Mnguni, from the Greater Middleburg Residents' Association, is part of this grouping and he tells us what has been happening on the ground in a place that has the dirtiest air in the country, if not the world.

Could you compare the EJ movement in the past to what it has become today, particularly with news about a new coalition forming?

Previously, the air pollution activities linked to coal in the Highveld were coordinated by the Greater Middleburg Residents' Association and these were usually hooking up with local communities to introduce them to the idea of environmental justice. But it wasn't structured and we didn't have a plan or any guidelines we were following. We didn't have a collective decision-making process and therefore we had a lot of conflict. This was a learning curve for us and we agreed that we needed to change this.

I would prefer to call it an alliance, rather than a coalition. Now, groups are coming on board and everything is becoming properly coordinated. We are working on our structure, looking to finalise it this month and have an interim committee for now. We have groups from Witbank, Carolina, Breyton, Middleburg, Ogies, Springs and Delmas. Our main objectives are to ensure that all groups work together; to speak within the Priority Area in a unified voice; that all our struggles, namely environmental justice struggles, are more effective than they were before; and to develop strong links amongst the groups and connect with others throughout country. Now that we are moving towards an organized structure, we hope to make a greater impact in the activities we undertake.

The interim committee has decided that emphasis will be on coal and energy. We will make several divisions or focus areas that will look into land, water, air pollution (indoor and outdoor), health impacts, climate change, and the rehabilitation of old mines and sink holes.

Why is the alliance resisting KiPower?

The coalition is resisting KiPower because it is proposing to burn coal discards (waste coal) and low grade coal that has a high sulphur content, resulting in increased air pollution and health issues. We live in an air Priority Area – a pollution hotspot as it was termed in 2003 – that is already not meeting air emission standards, so this new coal-fired power station will only contribute to these currently elevated levels of pollution. We have to tie this to health because the chances of us ever getting healthier are slim with this kind of industry being built.

There is a community that lives near the Delmas colliery which will most likely have to be relocated to make room for KiPower. They don't want to move: they want better services, and they will lose their livelihood of farming which employs 280 people in the area. Communities have already complained to authorities about the mines and the trucks creating dust and air pollution, but nothing is done about it. Even if we wanted KiPower, they would not act any differently to how coal fired power stations are operating elsewhere.

Delmas already has water constraints; it was previously without water for two days, forcing people to rely on water from polluted streams. But drinkable water will go to KiPower. In contrast to our constitution, industry gets clean water first and the people get it last, or not at all. The plant will contribute to emissions, leading to global warming and contradicting the South African government's commitment to cut down emissions.



What was the result of your recent meeting with the consultants working on KiPower for Kuyasa Mining?

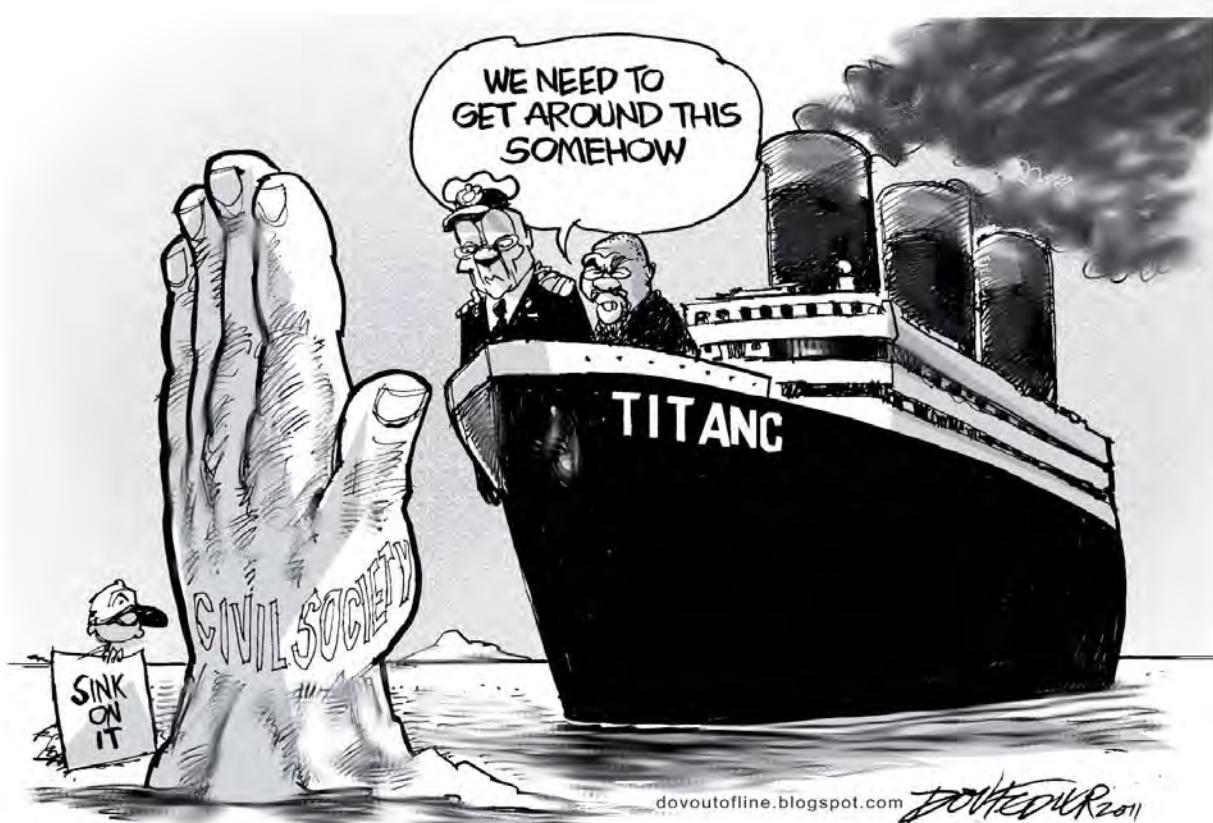
We had brought people from nearly all the communities in the area. What we picked up was that we weren't talking the same language as the consultants, as they were talking about Corporate Social Responsibility and vaguely about labour. They were noncommittal about how many people will be relocated or get employed by KiPower. A public meeting is there to ensure that people are educated on how a development will impact on their lives, an open consultation process. The consultants brought us a general presentation, so they can put on paper that they've done the consultation.

It was good that we raised this and we believe that in terms of the law we have recourse to say that they were not observant of our concerns. Consultants need to go to each community to explain what these impacts are. Their estimation is that three thousand temporary jobs will be created during the construction phase and 150 to 200

permanent jobs thereafter. Of great concern is that they admitted they will import skilled labour, and take only unskilled labour around the area for temporary jobs. One of the managers from Kuyasa said, "Kipower is not about Delmas but about the country," and this made us very emotional.

We will continue to develop communities' understanding of the impact of KiPower on their health, water and livelihoods, and what we want as a collective. There has been an informal agreement for us to formulate a strong, visible campaign against KiPower because of us working in an area where there are many service delivery protests happening. Water is an issue where we can connect with these other struggles. If our campaign is unified, it will seek to address the issues in all the areas, as we all have been exposed to coal mines and coal-fired power stations, and issues amongst us are similar. In the past, mines have been untouchable, falsely promising jobs, and we need to now stand up against this. ☺

Like government, the private sector is allowed to bulldoze through public participation processes on developments.



Waste pickers heard?

by Musa Chamane

The Minister of the Department of Environmental Affairs takes heed of waste picker's demands

As you will remember, in last quarter's newsletter, the South African Waste Pickers' Association (SAWPA) had protested against the waste-to-energy incinerator proposed by Enviroserv for the Chloorkop landfill in Pretoria. A memorandum was

handed over to the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA), highlighting SAWPA's demands for the government to, firstly, not give Enviroserv the go ahead on this project and, secondly, ban incineration in South Africa.

The minister's recent response to the waste picker's concerns makes it clear that Enviroserv's application is being considered as a possible alternative to dealing with waste in the Ekurhuleni region. However, there are many downfalls to incinerators. Denmark, whose government funded much of South Africa's environmental governance development – and pushed incineration with this – has, in fact, changed track from incinerating about 50% of its waste to more zero waste type strategies like recycling. The age of incinerators in the developed world has come and gone. South Africa should not go that route; we have been lucky to have learnt about these problems from other countries.

In places like Gulf County, Florida, an incinerator has caused huge community unrest due to its toxicity and the destruction, from pollution, it has caused to the environment. Incinerators are giant, hungry garbage gobblers. Feeding them requires mega tonnes of waste, which contravenes the Waste Act 2008 that promotes waste minimisation. Incinerators can try to solve the issue of waste disposal, but it should be made clear that there are problems that are caused by incinerators, such as respiratory diseases from constant exposure to unclean air. Not only this: burning of waste releases toxins and chemicals and those may end up in food plants and water consumed by humans. Critically, waste incineration does not reduce the volumes of waste as much as proponents suggest it may, and it results in municipal waste being transferred into toxic ash waste.



Hundertwasser
Incinerator
Spittelau in
Vienna in winter
Credit: 123rf.
com





Recycling offers people an opportunity to earn money, while helping to deal with the problem of waste going to landfill.

Credit: groundWork

For any municipality, waste recycling should be an obvious choice in dealing with waste effectively, as more jobs can be created through recycling. The proposed Chloorkop incinerator is likely to take more than three thousand jobs away from waste recyclers.

It is good that the minister recognizes waste pickers in South Africa and seemingly she is taking their role in society very seriously. As a result of groundWork and SAWPA's long campaign for the rights of waste pickers, the minister has commissioned a study on waste pickers to find out the exact numbers of waste pickers in the country and how they work and earn. In countries such as Brazil, India, Columbia and Egypt, waste picking is seen as a respectable job, as they understand that recycling every bit of waste in the country means there won't be a need for landfills, which are filthy, smelly and expensive. Recycling creates more jobs, saves natural resources such as trees, and decreases the need for extractive

industries. The present government can actually create full time jobs through the formalisation of the recycling industry; actually, the half a million jobs that were promised in the state of the nation address could be created. Recycling never ends because packaging materials will always be there and, although it won't make waste pickers wealthy, it will assist them in raising their children, as waste pickers are doing in Brazil, India and Columbia.

SAWPA is adamant that the proposed Chloorkop waste incinerator will be resisted and that it will never get a licence from government. Waste pickers insist that they need jobs and housing instead of expensive incinerators. Apparently, the area that is earmarked for this incinerator is zoned as a residential area and therefore, houses have to be built there instead of an incinerator.

SAWPA are waiting to hear the response from the department about the proposed incinerator. ☺



Zero waste pioneers in Sasolburg

Members of the South African Waste Pickers' Association (SAWPA) have various projects around the country that are moving towards creating a zero waste culture in their localities. One of these projects is in Vaal Park, Sasolburg, where the waste picker cooperative working on this landfill has got government and industry on board to help implement their plan for separation at source of recyclable materials in the area. Simon Mbata, a member of this cooperative and spokesperson for SAWPA, tells us more.

At what stage is the project?

We recently had a meeting with stakeholders (representatives from national and provincial Departments of Environmental Affairs, local and district municipalities and industry) where we presented our work-plan of what we want the project to look like. They were so impressed with our professional work-plan, and couldn't believe that waste pickers had put this together. Now that all the stakeholders are happy with it, we must wait for Fezile Dabi District Municipality to finalise the implementation of the work-plan. Our project won money from the International Labour Organization (ILO) and Harmony Gold Mine, which we will use for a truck.

Our work-plan is a model based on the collection and selling of recyclables directly to the market, cutting out the middlemen who seek to take away some of our income. It focuses on separation at source; however, it does not include organic waste, which we recognize as problematic. Once we begin developing infrastructure with the municipality, we believe we will be able to move towards composting organic waste with a bio-digester. The process has been slow, but our spirits have been lifted with the approval of the plan. We have even been approached by other groups with a view to funding our work.

Why is it important to SAWPA?

SAWPA represents a community of people who have been previously – and in some cases continue to be – undermined by society and waste authority officials. This project has built confidence in us as waste pickers. We have to sacrifice days of work

to make these processes happen, but it is worth it as it breaks the barrier between waste pickers and government and industry, to make sure middlemen do not enter. The model is not only a business model; it covers all sectors such as environment, waste management and providing employment and income for people working within local economies.

What are the challenges facing this project?

Waste comes with politics, particularly around how much money people can make. The municipality has a duty to act in relation to the Waste Act, and we had to take the initiative to make this happen so that it does not become completely privatised.

There is a need to adapt the process to include organic waste, in a one-system, one-day collection scenario. A big problem is finding the market to sell recyclables to. Industry is so "mafia run" that they don't know how to determine prices, and even though they claim to support recycling, they leave you in the hands of this kind of loose market that is not regulated.

Why is a project like this important for Sasolburg in particular, and waste management in the country in general?

We have won what we've been fighting for for five years. It has helped us build respect for waste pickers. For the time being, we will only collect packaging and not organic waste. But we believe we will find funding for this to become a truly zero waste project. However, it is always important for waste pickers to not become involved with funders who force them in a direction or for a purpose that does not uplift the cooperative and SAWPA's agenda of independence and zero waste.

It sets history in South Africa, where waste pickers, government and the private sector are working under conditions defined by the cooperatives themselves. There is no existing model that integrates the informal sector within the waste management sector; our model does this because it is about re-use, recycling and the promotion of jobs. If each municipality does this, then each municipality will create jobs. ☺



Is Eskom public enemy Number One?

by Rico Euripidou

Atmospheric emissions limits must be strictly imposed and plants that cannot meet emission standards must be phased-out alongside a transition to renewable energy

Over the past six months, Eskom has consistently proved to be the “worst of the lot” of the corporate climate and air pollution gangsters that are holding our country’s long-overdue transition into a more responsible environmental regulatory regime to ransom. They are required to meet minimum emissions standards (MES) which were promulgated in 2010 with the intention to bring the over-industrialised air pollution hotspot priority areas (the Vaal Triangle and the Highveld) into compliance with our ambient air quality standards. At the time that these MES were being compiled, all major industries were given an opportunity to participate and collectively negotiate appropriate standards – however we now realise that some industries actually never intended complying with MES. Eskom are leading the way and are effectively holding a gun to the South African public’s head and saying that if they have to meet these minimum emission limits then they will plunge us into darkness because the costs are too high.

Eskom further maintains a hard-line position, claiming that they are not responsible for most ambient air quality exceedances in the pollution hotspot priority areas (coincidentally where the majority of their coal-fired power stations are located) and instead it is the unregulated small industries and poor households that burn fossil fuels indoors that are responsible for the majority of particulate matter pollution exceedances. These are the very same million odd households that are located near and around Eskom’s power stations, over which its transmission lines run, but which cannot afford to pay for the electricity that Eskom generates! Eskom further maintains that its tall stacks mitigate local exceedances and that, as long as particulate matter levels remain below the South African national standard, it cannot be

held accountable for the public health impacts from their emissions. This all flies in the face of the global peer reviewed health literature on air pollution which clearly confirms what the World Health Organization has recently determined: that there is no safe level of particulate matter exposure, and that any excess emissions will have a subsequent health impact and cost to society.

In response, Eskom states that “failure to grant the applications will have significant negative implications for electricity supply in South Africa, including making electricity even more unaffordable for the communities that continue to rely on domestic fuel as an energy source. Moreover, if the applications are refused, Eskom’s power stations would be forced to either shut down or operate illegally and without control over their emissions, neither option being in the national interest”.

Granted, our local economy is energy intensive. However, while Eskom is the monopoly electricity supplier and generates power chiefly from coal-fired plants, we will never move beyond our current Catch 22 predicament. Eskom must not be allowed to continue as a public entity that fundamentally acts against the public interest (nationally and internationally). If we do not choose a different path, Eskom will instead plunge us into the “heart of darkness”, a place of continued unfairness, cruelty and corruption perpetrated by the very same entity that is meant to serve the public interest. Like a battering ram, Eskom will break down the doors of resistance, allowing all other large, polluting industries waiting in the shadows to seek the same exemption from meeting the MES. Indeed, some, such as Sasol and Engen, Natref, South Africa’s worst polluters, have already applied. ☒



Meet Luqman Yesufu



Yesufu Alegebema Luqman is the Junior Environmental Health Campaigner for groundWork South Africa. In this role, which he assumed in March 2014, he is tasked with leading an outreach effort that will engage the healthcare fraternity to promote the global green and healthy hospitals (GGHH) concept through the provision of encouragement and support, thereby encouraging them to join and actively participate in the GGHH campaign. Originally from Nigeria himself, Luqman grew up in an army barrack in Lagos. However, his was one of the few families in the barrack whose father was a nurse in the army. He remembers thinking that he didn't really like the military aspect of his dad's life, but he admired the patience and care his dad had for his patients.

Luqman went into high school with the desire to read medicine or nursing, but things changed quickly because he had an inner fear of needles, so, after graduating with a degree in microbiology, he decided to obtain his masters in environmental health. During his graduate study, he received a scholarship from the International Prevention Research Institute (IPRI) to undergo a certificate training course in Epidemiology and Global Health at the University of Dundee in Scotland. Luqman describes his experience during the program as "life changing". He says he began to develop a global perspective of the health challenges facing the world; especially the environmental health challenges, and this motivated him to carry out his postgraduate research on "Work environment noise levels and auditory status of generator users in Nigeria".

He has presented papers in 2012 from his research work at the third ASPHA AGM and fourth Global Summit of Schools of Public Health, held in Accra, Ghana and the Ibadan Sustainable Development Summit held in Ibadan, Nigeria. He currently has four publications in international peer-reviewed journals.

When asked about his career success, Luqman advises that he has never shied away from responsibilities or challenges and he has developed the ability to learn on his own and share knowledge, which he believes has worked to his advantage. He stresses that the best way to stand out in any organization is to be hardworking and sincere. He states that he has striven to be very effective and result-driven in all the organizations he has worked with.

One defining moment of Luqman's career was when he began his first job as assistant team leader, oil spill remediation, in Zenith Energy Nigeria Limited. It was then he realized that it was not about him and what he could do to remediate the oil-polluted land and water, but it was about the environmental situation these people were living in and what it meant to their health. Today, Luqman says, these people are his inspiration. He has never looked back and thus, when the opportunity to work for an environmental justice organization came around, he grabbed it with both hands.

Luqman maintains that it's important to keep the right perspective and to remain humble, and he often reminds himself of the humble and disciplined upbringing he had while growing up in the military barracks. Without doubt, it was this discipline, hard work and desire that got Luqman to where he is today as he looks forward to a great experience in groundWork South Africa. ☺



Don't call us greenies!

by Megan Lewis

Engaging with the media proves a little more tricky than anticipated

Five years have passed and thus another national general election brings with it politicians making the same promises, billboards with cheesy slogans, rallies, food parcels and a media that is wrapped up in reporting the banter for us, blow-by-blow style. Perhaps I chose the wrong time to start my engagement sessions with media around environmental justice, as the very reason I started it was to combat the glut in coverage of political squabbles and disregard for community environmental justice issues! But now that I've taken the proverbial plunge, I have to keep swimming, no matter what the water is like.

The pilot of these "Environmental Justice media engagement" sessions was in Pietermaritzburg, parallel to our Community Partner Planning meeting and, therefore, I had all the speakers at my fingertips. I had reporters from four local newspapers, three of those being community supplements to *The Witness*, and the other a journalist from the main newspaper itself. I most likely will not be using the word "engagement" again, as most news editors and journalists were completely befuddled by it. So, despite my good intentions of showing that they would not be lectured to, but would be expected to be a part of the learning process, I think sticking to "training" might just be easier in future.

Members from all our community partners spoke about their organizations, the challenges they face and how all these localised environmental issues will eventually lead to climate change if not stopped. Watching the various presentations take place, I could see these journalists, having to work within the parameters of the local, trying to figure out how this would be applicable to their work. Nevertheless, in their written evaluation of the session, one journalist described how the link between all these struggles for environmental justice was made clear. And it made an impact on

her, as groundWork will now have a monthly piece in the Maritzburg Fever, linking a broader issue to the local.

The key person who bridged the gap was a senior reporter from *The Witness* who I asked to present; what he spoke about was both interesting for us the activists and relatable for the journalists. He described modern journalists as "experts for the day", as "beat reporting" has fallen away due to financial constraints – amongst other reasons – and so journalists no longer become specialists in a field. Also, environmental issues are deemed only applicable for a certain Living Standards Measurement (LSM), as they are seen as "greenie" issues, mostly associated with the white middle and upper class in South Africa. News editors do not see these as newsworthy issues, unless it involves people in some way. Having Stephen Coan present opened up the discussion – the engagement part! – and I feel everyone learnt something from the process.

At the end of March, we will be presenting groundWork's perspective of the local and global "Environmental Crisis" at a conference of South African and broader African Labour Community Media Forums of the Workers' World Media Production, an organization that works to build media for communities that represent community and, in particular, worker issues. They deal with issues such as occupational health, safety and environment, marginalised workers and others; they have a half hour slot every Wednesday on SA FM; and they have an education and training aspect to their work. Of course, they have strong affiliations with labour unions and are working with us to help show the interlinking of environmental justice and labour struggles.



Tales from the offset

by Greenfly

A Grimm tale for the modern day

A very important CEO went into the forest to hunt birds. He aimed to kill half the birds in the forest, but the feathery little things kept hiding behind branches, leaves and flowers. So he knocked down half the forest, killed all the birds and built a factory. But he was no ordinary CEO. He was very sensitive and cared deeply about forest conservation. So he said, "We will save the other half of the forest and, since half a forest equals half a forest, this will offset the half we have reclaimed for GDP."

All his retinue of corporate managers, government ministers and civil servants gasped. "Such is the wisdom of our noble CEO," they said, "that he kills half the forest and does no damage."

A second CEO was as important as the first, which you could see because he wore suits of the same quality and price. It said so in his corporation's key indicators: "The respect due to our CEO and corporate brand is indicated by the price of his suits." Being very important, his factory belched smoke across the whole region until one day people who breathed the smoke said, "That's enough now!" One unfortunate thing led to another, until some state functionary drafted a law that said the factory could only belch half as much smoke.

The CEO's CFO¹ said, "We have such fine suits, and the very best cars besides. Where's the respect? The law be damned."

"No, no," said the CEO. "The law be offset. We'll make it part of Corporate Social Responsibility so anyone who questions it will be depriving the very people we are polluting. Some cheap education on domestic energy and people's responsibility for their own health should do it."

The retinue of corporate and government officials all chimed: "O wonderful is the man whose good deeds rise above the law."

A third CEO with an important suit said, "We must have a market solution to silence the cry of 'pollution'. That way the deal is done between people who matter. My factory smoke is for sale to anyone with mirrors who matters. Under the first hat is all my smoke, behind the second mirror is smoke that isn't, so one minus the other flies out from the third offset, government owes me a million bucks, and the magic of the market makes coal clean."

The shareholders cheered and said, "We'll have another dividend!"

One government official said, "How does that work?"

The CEO said, "You do want investors, don't you." That was an instruction, not a question. "Now, where's my million bucks?" ☺



¹ That's the chief financial officer, who is also marvellously important.





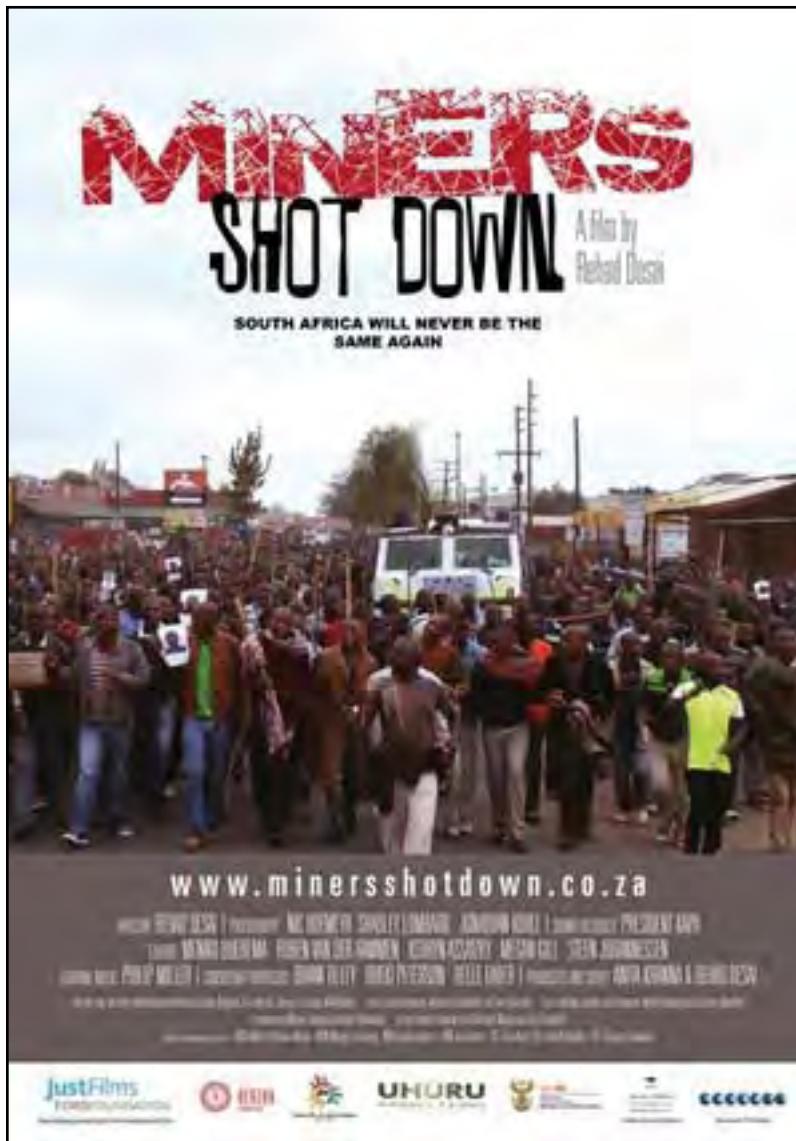
Between the 28th and 31st of January, groundWork and our community based partners from across the country and attorneys from the Centre of Environmental Rights met in Pietermaritzburg for our annual planning meeting.

The objective of the meeting is to review our work from the previous year and to identify what we wish to achieve for the current year and what support is needed. The gathering is always one where we get to work in solidarity with each other, sharing victories and ideas to move past challenges.

Excitingly, this year we announced the Environmental Justice School groundWork is holding in the middle of the year. Participants will come from these organisations and we have already begun the application process.

Forward with environmental justice, forward!





Miners shot down comes with a very particular message, and it comes at you unashamedly hard. It is clear in this film who renowned director, Rehad Desai, has decided are the victims and the villains. Narrated by Desai, it tells the entire story leading up to the 16th of August 2012, when over forty rock drillers at platinum mine, Lonmin, in Marikana, were gunned down by police. The miners were asking for an increase in their wage, which at the time was R4 000 or just over 250 Euros, barely enough for one person to live a dignified life on, never mind the families that these husbands and fathers had to care for. Desai likens this tragedy to the massacre in Sharpeville in 1960 in South Africa, where the police force, an organ of the State, was used by government to suppress a peaceful protest held in resistance to the Pass Law. The difference at Marikana was the collusion between the State and Lonmin managers, and how the police force were used to eliminate the threat posed to capital.

It tells us, in chronological order from the 10th of August to the 16th of August, the events that were left out of the mainstream media's reporting. This information will now help South Africa understand how big the problem is in our society, that people have nothing and are not protected by their government. One of the

interviewees, a mineworker involved in the strike action who has since been left disabled as a result of his injuries sustained on the 16th of August, tells the camera, "Poverty forces you to forget your ambition and become a rock driller like your father". When people are at such levels of desperation, they will wait out on a koppie for days until the managers of the company for which they work come out and meet them to negotiate. However, Lonmin managers never did come out, despite them telling Joseph Mathunjwa, president of labour union, the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU), and the miners, that they would on the 16th of August. There was a window of opportunity to resolve the matter; instead an huge number of police and weapons arrived on the day, with the mandate to carry out an apartheid-style massacre.

For more information on how you can donate to the Marikana Support Campaign, organize screenings or purchase the DVD, visit www.minersshotdown.co.za

