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# COMMUNITY VOICES

Mining is an important venture for the economy especially for resource rich countries like Zimbabwe. Often hidden behind these economic benefits are environmental, social and cultural impacts that fall on communities in mining areas. The voices of these affected communities are normally hushed by our thrust for profit, development, direct foreign investment and overall economic benefits.

Here are some of the community voices on the impacts that mining has had in their lives and that of their communities.



Zimbabwe Environmental  
Law Association (ZELA)

A portrait of Jane Muyambo, a woman with dark skin and braided hair, wearing a pink and white striped short-sleeved shirt over a white tank top. She is looking upwards and to the right with a thoughtful expression. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

# JANE MUYAMBO

*“I lost two cattle because they drink from the contaminated river. As someone who is not employed losing cattle had a huge impact on my life.”*



**My name is Jane Muyambo, I am 40 years old and live in Mangwadza village in Buhera south. I am a widow with two children who both live with my brother in Harare.**

Mangwadza is an area that receives low rains and therefore we rely on water we get from Singwizi, Save and Odzi rivers. The water is now contaminated yet we use that water to survive so as our livestock. Since Diamond Mining Company (DMC) came to our society they have not brought desirable changes besides misery. DMC discharges waste into the Singwizi river which flows into Save.

I lost two cattle because they drink from the contaminated river. As someone who is not employed losing cattle had a huge impact on my life. Cattle are very important for us but now many villagers are losing their cattle whilst some have miscarried or simply gave birth to unhealthy calves. Also the muddy water traps livestock and a couple of beasts have drowned in the river.

I wasted a lot of money trying to get treatment for my cattle. What pains me most is that I did not receive any compensation for my cattle from the ones that are responsible for polluting the rivers.



# DORCAS CHIADZWA

**My name is Dorcas Chiadzwa and I am a 41-year-old widow living in Chiadzwa village. I live at my late parents' house. I have one son who graduated recently with an Information Technology degree at the University of Zimbabwe.**

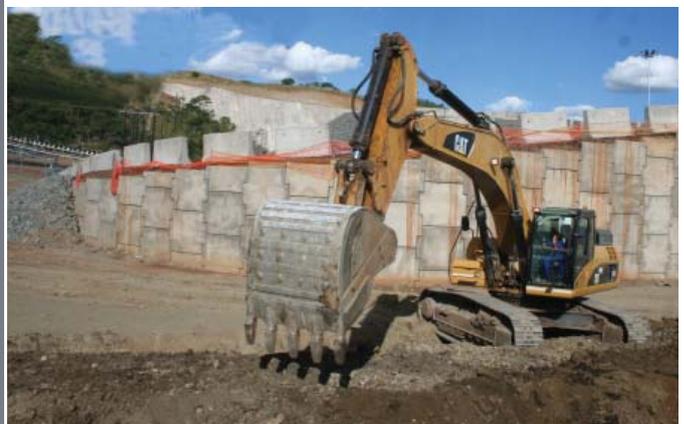
I had hoped that as a villager of Chiadzwa where mining companies are operating my son would get employed. My son approached DMC and they failed to employ him saying that he is over qualified and they will not afford to pay him.

I was looking forward to my son taking care of me given the sacrifices that I made for him to get his degree. Given that this area is arid it is difficult for me to get anything from farming. These mining companies who seem not interested in employing the locals at all were our only hope.

They do not employ women as well as men, for women they say their operations do not allow for women to work whilst for men their excuse is that most of the locals are former illegal miners so they will steal from them.

So the truth is we will continue languishing in poverty whilst we live in the midst of diamonds which we hear brings a lot of money for those mining it.

*"I had hoped that as a villager of Chiadzwa where mining companies are operating my son would get employed. My son approached DMC and they failed to employ him saying that he is over qualified and they will not afford to pay him."*





**My name is Malvern Mudiwa and I was born in Chiadzwa, Betera village. My father had shops as early as the 1960s at Mutsago growth point.**

I myself started some business in Harare's high-density suburb of Glen View before going to England between 2001 and 2003. I can safely say I fared well with my businesses.

When I learnt about Diamonds in Chiadzwa I swiftly decided to invest in my home area by having shops and early in those days (before diamond mining

# MALVERN MUDIWA

*“What is sad is that with the coming of mining companies we thought these roads would be tarred so will our social and economic standing improve.”*

was formalised) my businesses were very lucrative.

Ever since diamond mining was formalised through the Joint Ventures between mining companies and the government, my business has been suffering.

The people who used to buy from my shops are no longer liquid to afford to buy as they used to.

The roads have also become so bad than what they used to and slowly we are losing the little we had. My car like any of those from my area is slowly wearing off because of the damaged roads. What is sad is that with the coming of mining companies we thought these roads would be tarred so will our social and economic standing improve.

My right for free movement has been taken away ever since the mining operations began, today I am required to move around with a clearance. This clearance is supposed to be renewed every fortnight with the police and I am supposed to go to Mutare with the car for the clearance process, something that is costly for my struggling business, as I need at least US\$50 for a trip to and from Mutare.

I once asked the Minister of Mines on what was the government's plans on rehabilitating the area and the roads that are being damaged by the mining companies and his response was that government will take action as soon as the companies commit to the US\$10 Million under the Marange-Zimunya community share ownerships trust.

My question is how will these mining companies fulfil these commitments when they are downsizing operations, some have gone for four (4) months without paying workers. I wonder how did we get duped as a country?





**My name is Fortunate Siziba, I stay in Zvishavane in Mapirimira Ward 6 under Chief Mapanzure.**

On 27 January 2001 around 8pm I was walking back home after spending a couple of days fishing at Kazhambe. When I was walking back home floodlights from a chrome mine workshop affected me. I had spent a couple of days away from home and I did not know that there was now a deep open pit that was not protected. This is a road that we used often. I fell into this pit and it was 17 metres deep. Madata mining company was doing the chrome mining under a tributary agreement with ZIMASCO.

My life has never been the same as a result of that fall into that pit. I am now partially blind. The whole left side of my body is now weak and I cannot effectively work to fend for myself. In addition, I am unable to sexually satisfy my wife as my body is now weak.

When I fell into the pit, the person that I was walking with ran to the workshop and asked for assistance. The people at the mine workshop came with a front end loader and took me out of the pit and carried me to Mapanzure Clinic in Zvishavane where I was transferred to, first, Mpilo Hospital, and finally, the United Bulawayo Hospital (UBH). My father was paying for my hospital fees. The mine did not take care of anything else.

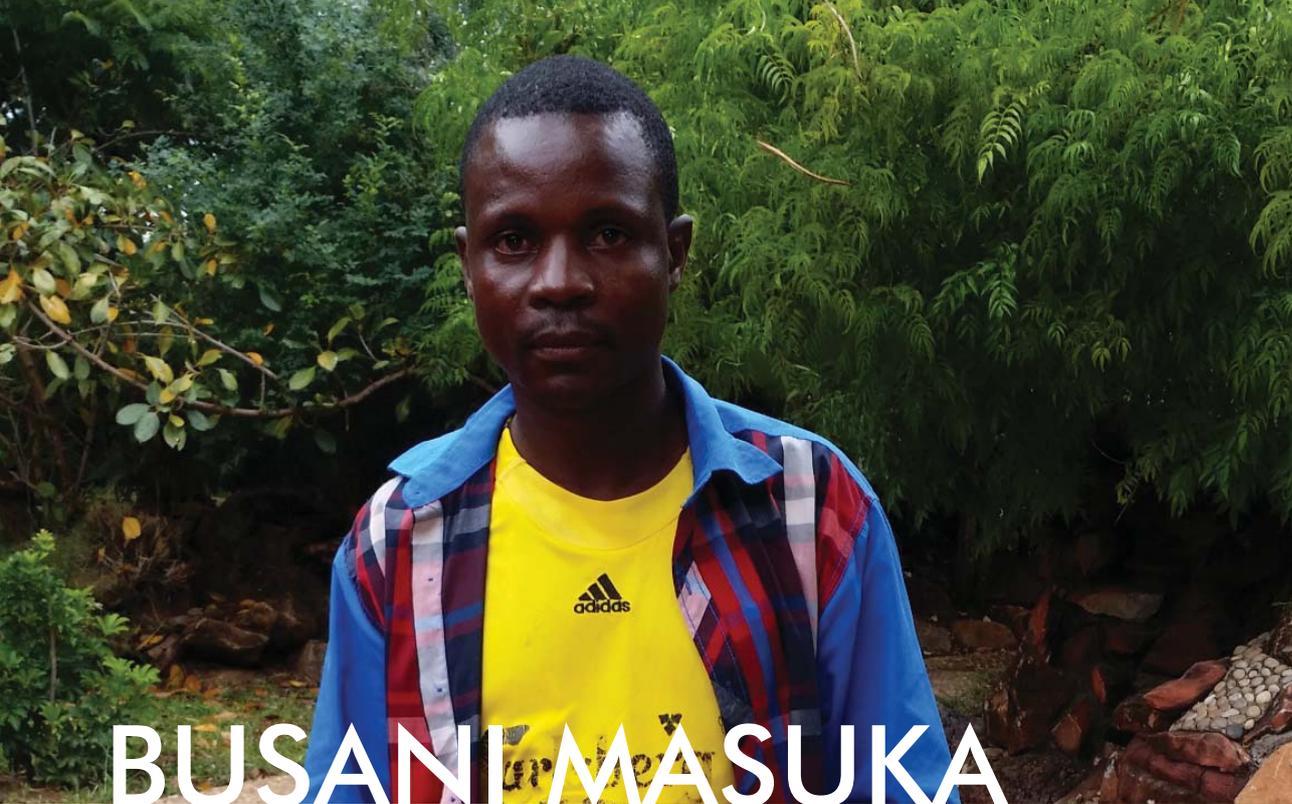
When I had partially recovered, I was just called when the mine was closing and relocating to Lalapanzi. They showed me to people (as witnesses) that had gathered and promised to assist me but nothing has come of that to date.



## FORTUNATE SIZIBA

*“ I fell into this pit and it was 17 metres deep.”*

*“My life has never been the same as a result of that fall into that pit. I am now partially blind. The whole left side of my body is now weak...”*



# BUSANI MASUKA

*“I have 2 beasts that fell into deep open pits that are a result of chrome mining by a company led by Chinese nationals in October 2012 and August 2011.”*

**My name is Busani Masuka and I have been a victim of chrome mining. I come from Zvishavane in Mhondongori Ward 5 under Chief Wedza.**

I have 2 beasts that fell into deep open pits that are a result of chrome mining by a company led by Chinese nationals in October 2012 and August 2011. I talked to the Chinese miners and they stated that I should talk to ZIMALLOYS. ZIMALLOYS referred me back to the miners on the ground. I am not alone in experiencing this tragedy. Some neighbours also lost their cattle.

Since then it has been back and forth and there has been no compensation.

I do not even know the name of the Chinese mining company. When the Chinese representatives of the chrome mine came, they did not mention the name of their company or have a meeting with the community to introduce themselves. We only saw them mining.





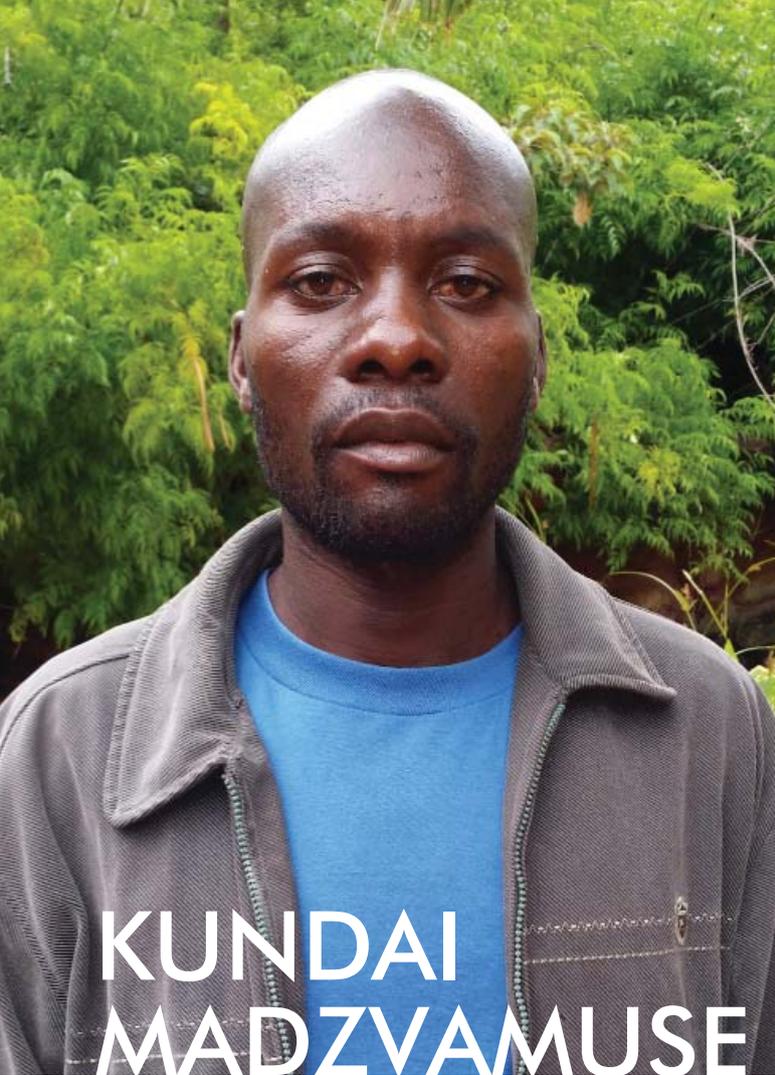
**My name is Misheck Sibanda. I come from Shurugwi in Ward 19 under Chief Nhema.**

I have an 8 year old nephew who is in primary school. My nephew and his friends went to herd cattle and while there, they went to a rubbish dump where Unki dumps its waste. They picked up a fuse of a mine explosive that had not gone off. As children they wanted to experiment and play with it. They thought this fuse was a light bulb or something that can work with a battery. They came back to the house and in the absence of adults he tried to connect it to a motorcycle battery and it exploded and he was seriously hurt and almost lost his arm. He was taken to Gweru general hospital. A report was made to Unki and Unki has since disputed that this was their explosive.

However, we are convinced that this was an explosive from Unki. The problem is that as a family we are even afraid of going to Unki to pursue the case.

We have been footing the medical bills by ourselves and this has been a huge burden on the family.

*“They picked up a fuse of a mine explosive that had not gone off. As children they wanted to experiment and play with it. ...in the absence of adults he tried to connect it to a motorcycle battery and it exploded and he was seriously hurt and almost lost his arm.”*



# KUNDAI MADZVAMUSE



**I am Kundai Madzvamuse and I come from Mhondongori Ward 5 in Zvishavane, which is under Chief Wedza.**

In 1992 I lost 5 beasts. It was a drought year and the chrome mining pits had accumulated water. These pits were not protected or fenced off. Cattle could go inside the pits but could not go out. Desperate for water, my cattle got into the pit and died while inside.

The open pits do not just pose a hazard to cattle and other livestock but have become areas where criminals hide. The year 2008 was a difficult year economically and the rains were also very poor. In Mhondongori Ward 5, around our homesteads, we had managed to farm and get a reasonable harvest. So people would sell their crops and go into town to buy foodstuffs and other groceries. These thieves or criminals lie in wait around the open pits and prey on people going into town or travelling back to the homesteads. They would take money from you if you were going into town or take groceries if you were travelling back from town. My aunt, sister and a neighbour were robbed and raped. Some of the cases of this criminal activity have been reported although the rape cases were not reported for fear of shame and victimisation.

The deep open pits are a result of chrome mining that was happening on the claims held by ZIMASCO and ZIMALLOYS.



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