2019 Core Values Awards Members At large Submission: Project of the Year

Ivanplats Mine - Bonega Community Trust, Sustainable Livelihoods Through Asset Mapping
# Case Study Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Ivanplats Mine - Bonega Community Trust, sustainable livelihoods through asset mapping</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organising Group</td>
<td>Communication and Stakeholder Engagement Unit South Africa, Aurecon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Mokopane region, Limpopo province, South Africa</td>
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<td>Key Question / Problem</td>
<td>How do we best consult with communities and the most affected individuals to facilitate a process of project identification that will result in community owned initiatives and sustainable development?</td>
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<td>Sample Methods</td>
<td>60+Focus group meetings in 20 communities, 8000 enumerator surveys, other committee meetings and workshops</td>
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<tr>
<td>Results</td>
<td>Sustainable, community-led projects identified in every community, community networks formed, unique knowledge database of each area created</td>
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<td>Impact Level</td>
<td>Province wide</td>
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<td>Time Frame</td>
<td>1 year</td>
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<tr>
<td>People Engaged</td>
<td>8000 community households + 3000 people from focus groups as well as: Ivanplats, TAC, various leadership structures. (~11 000 people, +14% total population of area)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Web Link</td>
<td>Not applicable for this project. Only on the Aurecon internal intranet</td>
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The Problem and Challenge

Ivanplats is an international platinum mine. As part of its community outreach, Ivanplats established an umbrella trust for community projects. The Bonega trust runs in partnership with 20 communities that surround Ivanplats’ mining operations in Mokopane Limpopo.

Community development in South Africa faces a variety of challenges. Historically, companies have rolled out projects without community consultation and have not succeeded at promoting sustainable development. Since communities are not properly consulted the projects are not what the community actually needs, they are what companies think the community needs. This leads to projects being abandoned or having no meaningful impact.

Due to a lack of consultation and consideration of the needs and interests of communities, people grow disillusioned and hostile towards companies. This is especially the case for mining communities. The predominant feeling in mining communities is that companies are here to extract their resources, create an environmental mess, disturb livelihoods and leave them with nothing. This situation has had very unfortunate results. Violent protest action is commonplace. People get hurt, assets are destroyed, and development is frozen. This is particularly disheartening as those who are most in need of development and those most affected by mining operations descend into ever lower state. This, in turn, fuels resentful attitudes and a cycle of despondency sets in.

Aurecon’s Communication and Stakeholder Engagement team was chosen by Ivanplats and Bonega trust to facilitate a process of project identification within 20 affected communities for community benefit, for funding by the trust. The team had to create a new approach to bring about much-needed change. The only way selected projects could make a meaningful impact and lead to lasting development was if communities themselves had the primary role in identifying and running projects. The projects had to leverage the strengths and skills that already existed within communities in order to respond to the particular needs therein.

Our challenge was: How do we best consult with communities and the most affected individuals to facilitate a process of project identification that will result in community owned initiatives and sustainable development?

The Role of Public Participation

Public participation is the focal point around which the success of this initiative hinged. Public participation, in the South African context, is uniquely challenging. This is due to historical oppression and severe widespread poverty as well as a general mistrust of government and organisations. Public participation, within the impoverished areas where our team was operating, had to be tailor made to successfully navigate potentially tense engagements. Accordingly, the team developed a comprehensive method for consulting as many community members as possible in addressing the key challenge.
Public Participation Methods

The following strategy was used to ensure maximum meaningful public participation in rural localities: Our team began by engaging in various committee meetings with Ivanplats and the Bonega trust. This built a trust relationship with our client. We also gained a better understanding of the area we would be working in and the different dynamics that would play a role in our task. We then engaged with tribal authorities that governed the various affected localities. This was a crucial step in getting permission to enter areas and consult with communities. Authorities were excited about the nature of the project. With their blessing we could begin engaging the community.

The Bonega trust has created what is known as the Trust Advisory Council (TAC). The TAC is the trust overseeing body that consists of representatives from every affected community. The team conducted an initial meet and greet with TAC members, after which we facilitated a two-day long workshop in order to familiarise TAC members with our process and lay the ground work for our community engagement. TAC members were inspired by our approach and we obtained crucial information regarding affected communities. TAC members further assisted the team by selecting attendees for our community focus group meetings.

Focus group meetings were our first major form of community engagement. Focus group sessions would introduce communities to our method and begin the process of documenting information for project identification. Due to venue constraints in various communities and for the sake of maximum participation, meetings had to be limited to 50 people per group and 3 groups per community. This is still a relatively small chunk of each community, thus attendees for the focus group meetings had to be representative of diverse population groups. This was achieved due to TAC member’s familiarity with their communities.

Focus group sessions consisted of community members of various age groups, multiple business and community forums as well as community leaders. The sessions produced impactful results. Community members developed deeper relationships with each other by sharing personal stories. A better understanding of the area was gained through community mapping exercises. Assets of all kinds (financial, natural, physical, social and human) were identified in each community and in participant’s own lives. Numerous potential projects and their respective champions were identified based on these assets and community member’s skills. People were stunned by what they already had at their disposal and networks started to form immediately. The feedback that we got was incredible, many remarked that this process was changing their lives.

Enumerators for conducting surveys in the affected communities were identified through the focus group sessions. The survey process was aiming to engage with as many people in
affected communities as possible in a four-month period. It was a landmark achievement for the project to utilise community members themselves to be at the forefront of this research method. This empowered the community and made people more open to the research process. The training and use of local enumerators is one of the many evidences of successful public participation and the role of the public shaping the course of engagement. Community members carrying out the bulk of the research is a massive step for inclusive public participation and community empowerment in South Africa.

The Aurecon team prepared a comprehensive community survey that was uploaded onto smart phone devices and managed via the Aureconforms™ application. Enumerators were each given a device and had a full days training on how to effectively carry out the survey process and upload survey information to the cloud for further analysis. Each enumerator had a fieldwork supervisor from Aurecon that oversaw the process. Fieldwork supervisors and enumerators met on regular occasions throughout the 4-month survey period and made numerous phone calls and messages to keep in contact and manage potential crises. The result was 8000 individuals/ households engaged in the survey phase.

Overall, 3000 people from focus group meetings and 8000 individuals/ and or households were engaged via these methods of public participation. In total, we managed to reach over 11 000 people.

**Uniqueness of the Project**

One unique feature of the project was the attempt to address gender-based and other kinds of inequalities prevalent in communities by means of an all-inclusive strategy of engagement. Existing cultural structures in the area place heavy emphasis on older male decision making, influence and leadership. In a respectful manner and without any intent to undermine cultures, the team empowered women, especially younger women. Women now have more of a voice and role in the community’s future and their own lives. As a result of our process, most communities will have women project champions running initiatives in their communities. This was not due to discrimination against men but rather a greater desire and willingness on the part of women to get involved in projects. Identified projects will bring greater cohesion and a higher level of respect between genders through mutual effort on said projects. The empowerment of women and a push towards equality is a vital factor in the overall development and growth of any community. A bird who has one wing that is broken cannot fly no matter how strong the other wing is.

The team also overcame other boundaries. Notwithstanding the tenuous relationship between tribal authorities, organisations and government, incumbent rural leadership structures have been known to stifle progress for the sake of self-benefit. This was communicated to us by community members themselves. Due to this unfortunate dynamic, projects identified have been structured to run in such a way that they are fully owned and run by individual community
members and groups with various skills on a joint-volunteer basis. Smaller, more feasible projects will then begin to snowball into larger initiatives as they start to make greater community impact.

No group of any kind was left out or discriminated against in our engagement. All genders, ages and religions were treated equally and were made to feel included in a manner befitting the overall improvement of the community’s quality of life. The process further united the community in a spirit of togetherness. Vulnerable groups and community members that felt they did not have a voice were made to feel important and part of the process, we ensured that they knew that their input would be part of decision making.

Our method of engagement has set a new precedent for the practice of public participation in the area. Public participation has now become the preferred culture within communities and will shape how they engage with each other towards progress in future.

The main differentiator that makes our approach unique from previous development efforts is the use of ABCD. **Asset Based Community Development** is a method of transformation that shifts old mindsets attached to needs and lacks to new hopes of resources and empowerment. As mentioned before, the incumbent top-down approach to development in South Africa has done more damage than good and left people feeling despondent, surrounded by irrelevant projects. ABCD seeks to improve communities by enhancing awareness of the abundance of assets already present within them. Due to historical oppression and over reliance on government, community members often feel useless, focusing only on what they lack. ABCD activities in our focus group sessions uncovered a wealth of assets in affected communities. The vision of the ABCD method is to make use of these assets to begin a process of self-betterment, by focusing on what one has in order to address what one needs. With this new mindset a community can begin to address what is needed from a position of self-sustained strength.

A new understanding brought about by the ABCD process is that assets are everywhere and in all different forms. Asset registers are no longer limited to buildings and equipment. The very spirit that breathes life into the machine is now included - the people themselves and the unique skills that they bring to the table. Due to the ABCD method, projects were identified on the basis of the capabilities already within communities, thus there will be no delay in starting these projects. In the later stages of the process, external entities and investors are more likely to partner with communities that already have well thought out, structured projects. Ultimately, initiatives are sourced from, as well, as run and owned by communities. This is the essential key to making lasting and sustainable impact.

A further exciting development is that this comprehensive process of grassroots participation and data capturing has resulted in the creation of **knowledge databases** in previously unknown or undocumented areas. The most thorough of Google searches cannot unveil the kind of information that has been unearthed from hours and hours of engagement with rural...
communities. Communities no longer feel left out of the larger mix they are now an essential ingredient. The process has created databases of local knowledge from which we can source both the materials and the people needed to bring about true transformation and growth that is much needed in South Africa.

This data is available in the form of a live, interactive dashboard that collates and displays results in various graphs and illustrations. Such information will be beneficial to future projects in these localities and will fast track further initiatives that are rolled out. Data includes, but is not limited to: information on assets, land availability, land use, crops, herbs and animals, community member demographics, champions and leaders as well as needs and problems in the area. New avenues of development and previously unthought of opportunities are likely to become possible due to the emergence and codification of this information. This result was far beyond project expectations.

Project Results

As a result of our engagements, projects specifically designed to meet the above-mentioned criteria were identified for community benefit in each area. Projects were developed with extensive community input and were based on available resources and skills to ensure maximum sustainability and impact, especially where most needed. Projects themes include: farming (of crops and animals), building, repairs, skills development, services for the elderly, very young, disabled and orphans, recycling, rehab centres and a variety of services and start-ups linked to community assets, in alignment with mining industry needs for future job security.

Regular evaluation and supervision by the Aurecon team kept the process on track during all phases of the year-long initiative. Multiple occasions arose where challenges threatened to derail the successful continuation of the project. Due to thorough project management as well as the extensive networks and relationships we formed through hours of engagement, even the biggest hurdles were overcome and transformed into successes.

Please see Uniqueness of the Project above for more information on knowledge databases, a further result of the project. The Aurecon team is also actively involved in securing future engagements by offering the client our services in taking projects to the next level and facilitating the multi-phase development rollout. We must ensure that the potential of a year of intensive engagement is brought to fruition for the community’s benefit.

Alignment with IAP2 Core Values
Aurecon’s method of engagement ensured that those most affected by mining operations were intimately involved in the decision-making process. Success was, in part, due to following correct protocol regarding how the community preferred to be engaged within the unique South African context as well as the groundbreaking ABCD method.

Projects were identified primarily on the basis of public participation. The strategy behind public participation and the ABCD method ensured that sustainable decisions were made and that the needs and interest of the community were met and considered. At all times during the process, community members were assured of the necessity and importance of their input regarding project identification. Community members were appreciative of this new approach and recognised the value in the process. A positive attitude prevailed throughout engagements as people were hopeful that development was finally being done the right way.

The right of those involved to be considered in decision making is what defined our engagement process. ABCD is a leader and differentiator in this regard. The selection of community owned and run projects is the main contributor to a sustainable process of development as opposed to previous top-down, unsuccessful initiatives that lacked the public's participation.

Engaging with the community in a manner that they prefer is crucial within the volatile South African context. If communities are not happy with how they are engaged, they will not engage and may even stop the project altogether. Far from becoming yet another failure in the long history of community development initiatives, Aurecon’s ABCD method achieved unprecedented results and levels of public participation.