

HOW TO ENGAGE MINING COMPANIES TO TRANSFORM CONFLICTS RELATED TO THEIR OPERATIONS

OVER THE PAST EIGHT YEARS, SEARCH FOR COMMON GROUND (SEARCH) HAS BEEN WORKING WITH THE MINING SECTOR TO ESTABLISH SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS PRACTICES IN TANZANIA, GUINEA AND MADAGASCAR. AS SUCH, SEARCH HAS COLLABORATED WITH ACACIA MINING (OWNED BY BARRICK GOLD) IN TANZANIA SINCE 2011, WITH BASE TOLIARA IN MADAGASCAR SINCE EARLY 2019, AND WITH COMMUNITIES AFFECTED BY MINING IN GUINEA (AS WELL AS COMPANY REPRESENTATIVES AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES THERE) SINCE 2018. THIS PEACEBUILDING ENGAGEMENT HAS YIELDED SEVERAL KEY LESSONS:

LESSON #1: VALUE FOR MONEY. PEACEBUILDING WORK CAN POSITIVELY IMPACT COMMUNITIES AFFECTED BY MINING, AND COMPANIES CAN GET CONSIDERABLE RETURN ON INVESTMENT FROM FUNDING IT.

SEARCH'S PROGRAMS DIRECTLY CONTRIBUTED TO A DROP IN THE NUMBER OF TRESPASSERS AS A RESULT OF SOFTER POLICE RESPONSES ON BARRICK/ACACIA MINES IN TANZANIA, FROM 85,884 IN 2014 TO 948 IN 2018, WITH THE NUMBER OF FATALITIES DROPPING FROM 17 TO 31 [1]. COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS NOTICED THIS REDUCED VIOLENCE, WHICH CONTRIBUTED TO A VIRTUOUS CYCLE THAT INCREASED TRUST BETWEEN COMMUNITIES AND SECURITY FORCES OPERATING AROUND THE MINING SITES. AS SUCH, SEVEN YEARS AFTER SEARCH'S INTERVENTION IN TANZANIA BEGAN, ABOUT 70 PERCENT OF COMMUNITIES LIVING AROUND ACACIA MINING SITES BELIEVED THAT ACACIA HAD SHOWN "INCREASED TRANSPARENCY AND COMMUNICATION," AS WELL AS "INCREASED UNDERSTANDING OF THE MOST RELEVANT COMMUNITY ISSUES, INTERESTS, AND NEEDS" [2]. SIMILARLY, IN GUINEA OVER 95 PERCENT OF SURVEYED RESPONDENTS SAID THAT SEARCH'S ACTIVITIES IMPROVED THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF THEIR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES VIS-A-VIS THE MINING COMPANIES [3].

THE NET RESULT OF *THESE IMPROVED RELATIONS BETWEEN COMMUNITIES AND SECURITY FORCES IS THAT THE MINING COMPANIES ARE ABLE TO SPEND LESS ON SECURITY AND STILL ACHIEVE BETTER RESULTS*. SEARCH'S WORK ALLOWED ACACIA/BARRICK TO REQUIRE FAR FEWER SECURITY PERSONNEL AT THEIR MINING SITES (6 IN BUZWAGI, 7 IN BULYANHULU, AND 30 NORTH MARA [4], WHILE IN GEITA, WHERE SEARCH WAS NOT ACTIVE, ANOTHER MINING COMPANY NEEDS TO EMPLOY 200 SECURITY OFFICERS FOR A MINE ABOUT THE SAME SIZE AS BUZWAGI [5]). MOREOVER, BY 2019 ACACIA'S "PRODUCTION STOPPAGES [HAD] DROPPED TO 8 PERCENT OF WHAT THEY WERE IN 2014" [6]. ACACIA'S REDUCED COSTS AND INCREASED REVENUES THEREFORE FAR EXCEEDED THE AMOUNT IT INVESTED IN THESE PEACEBUILDING PROGRAMS.

LESSON #2: LONG-TERM COMMITMENT IS KEY.

BARRICK/ACACIA IS THE MINING COMPANY SEARCH HAS BEEN WORKING WITH LONGEST, AND THE RESULTS OF THIS WORK CLEARLY DEMONSTRATE THE IMPORTANCE OF LONG-TERM PARTNERSHIP AND COMMITMENT TO PEACEBUILDING ON THE PART OF MINING COMPANIES. SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE OVER THE COURSE OF SEVEN YEARS WITH BARRICK/ACACIA, BUT THESE RESULTS TOOK TIME. TRESPASSERS ON THE MINES DECREASED TO 6408 IN 2015, 1512 IN 2016, AND (WENT UP SLIGHTLY TO) 1560 IN 2017, BEFORE FINALLY REACHING 948 IN 2018 [7]. AS WE SAY AT SEARCH, PEACE IS A PROCESS, AND DURABLE RESULTS TAKE TIME.

LESSON #3: COMMUNITIES NEED ACCESS TO ACCURATE INFORMATION AND EFFECTIVE CHANNELS FOR VOICING CONCERNS TO MINING COMPANIES AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

COMMUNITY MEMBERS MUST BE FULLY INFORMED ABOUT ALL MAJOR ASPECTS OF A MINE IN ORDER TO MEANINGFULLY CONSENT TO THE MINE'S OPERATIONS. THIS INCLUDES ALL ENVIRONMENTAL, ECONOMIC, AND LEGAL ASPECTS OF THE MINE. THUS, IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT COMPANIES EXERCISE TRANSPARENCY AND FULLY INFORM ALL STAKEHOLDERS ABOUT ALL MAJOR ASPECTS OF THEIR MINES, INCLUDING THE STRIDES MADE BY MINING COMPANIES AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES [8, 9].

THOUGH COMMUNITY MEMBERS AROUND BARRICK/ACACIA'S MINES WERE IMPRESSED BY IMPROVEMENTS IN THIS REGARD OVER THE COURSE OF SEARCH'S WORK THERE [10], FRUSTRATIONS REMAINED WITH REGARD TO THE INACCESSIBILITY OF BARRICK/ACACIA' COMMUNITY RELATIONS OFFICERS [11]. THIS KIND OF INACCESSIBILITY PREVENTS COMMUNITY MEMBERS FROM GETTING THEIR QUESTIONS ANSWERED, AND THEREFORE FROM MAINTAINING TRUSTED RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE MINING COMPANY. IN MADAGASCAR, A STUDY HAS FOUND THAT BEYOND MERELY GETTING THEIR QUESTIONS ANSWERED, COMMUNITY MEMBERS NEED FORUMS TO MEANINGFULLY COMMUNICATE WITH THE COMPANIES AND EXPRESS THEIR CONCERNS ABOUT ISSUES THAT AFFECT THEM. THIS STUDY RECOMMENDED THAT BETTER MECHANISMS BE ESTABLISHED FOR COMMUNITIES TO SHARE THEIR GRIEVANCES WITH THE COMPANIES [12], A RECOMMENDATION THAT WAS ALSO MADE IN TANZANIA AND GUINEA [13].

LESSON #4: INVESTMENT IN SUSTAINABLE ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOOD PROGRAMS FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS SHOULD BE SUPPORTED.

MANY MINING PROJECTS INVOLVE PERMANENTLY DISPLACING FARMERS AND HERDERS FROM THEIR TRADITIONAL PLANTING AND GRAZING LAND, SOMETIMES LEADING TO TOTAL LOSS OF LIVELIHOOD. MINING COMPANIES MUST THEREFORE INVEST IN CREATING ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOODS FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS, AS BOTH BARRICK/ACACIA IN TANZANIA AND BASE RESOURCES IN MADAGASCAR HAVE DONE IN THE COMMUNITIES WHERE THEY OPERATE [14, 15]. THESE PROGRAMS CAN ALSO ALLOW COMMUNITIES TO CONTINUE SUSTAINING THEMSELVES ECONOMICALLY EVEN AFTER MINES CLOSE AND TAKE THE MINING JOBS WITH THEM. THE WORK OF BASE RESOURCES IN KENYA GIVES A PARTICULARLY GOOD EXAMPLE OF HOW THIS CAN BE DONE. IT CREATED AN APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM TO TRAIN PEOPLE TO GET JOBS AT THE MINE [16], PROVIDED SCHOLARSHIPS TO THOUSANDS OF STUDENTS [17], AND CREATED A \$900,000 COTTON GINNEY WITH SIX COTTON GINS, MEANT TO FOSTER SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT [18]. THIS FOCUS ON LONG-TERM LIVELIHOODS HAS GONE A LONG WAY TOWARD WINNING OVER THE COMMUNITY AROUND ITS MINE.

LESSON #5: ENDURING CHANGE CAN ONLY BE ACHIEVED IF THERE IS COMMITMENT ACROSS ALL LEVELS OF THE MINING COMPANY.

SEARCH'S EXPERIENCE SHOWS THAT THE LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT OF THE STAFF OF THE MINING COMPANY ACROSS DEPARTMENTS IS PARAMOUNT TO ACHIEVE ENDURING CHANGE. IF ONE DEPARTMENT IS VERY SUPPORTIVE WHILE ANOTHER IS NOT FULLY ENGAGED, THE PROGRAM WILL NOT BE ABLE TO INTEGRATE RECOMMENDATIONS AND FINDINGS FROM THE FIELD AT ALL LEVELS. COMMITMENT OF THE WHOLE COMPANY, ACROSS ALL LEVELS, IS THEREFORE NECESSARY. THIS WAS ACCOMPLISHED SUCCESSFULLY WITH BARRICK/ACACIA.

LESSON #6: CAPACITY BUILDING IS NECESSARY TO ELICIT COMMITMENT TO THE VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES ON SECURITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS AROUND MINING OPERATIONS.

THROUGHOUT ITS WORK IN THE THREE COUNTRIES SEARCH PROMOTED THE UPHOLDING OF VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES ON SECURITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS (VPSHR) THROUGH TRAINING OF POLICE OFFICERS AND PRIVATE SECURITY OPERATIVES DEPLOYED AT MINES SITES. SEARCH ALSO BUILT THE CAPACITY OF LOCAL LEADERS, INFORMING THEM OF THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES REGARDING VPSHR, AND SUPPORTED THE MINING COMPANIES WITH TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING ON VPSHR. COORDINATION AND CONSULTATION MEETINGS WERE ALSO HELD ON A REGULAR BASIS BETWEEN SECURITY OPERATIVES AT THE MINES, MINING COMPANY OFFICIALS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT, IN LINE WITH THE STANDARDS SET IN VPSHR REGARDING INTERACTIONS BETWEEN COMPANIES AND PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECURITY.

1. SEARCH FOR COMMON GROUND, "ADVANCING SUSTAINABLE PEACE AND SECURITY IN TANZANIA," 2019, P. 29.
2. IBID., P. 39.
3. SEARCH FOR COMMON GROUND, "EVALUATION FINALE DU PROJET: BOKÉ HÈRY," MARCH 2019, P. 18.
4. IBID., P. 28.
5. IBID., P. 28.
6. IBID., P. 29.
7. SEARCH FOR COMMON GROUND, "ADVANCING SUSTAINABLE PEACE AND SECURITY IN TANZANIA," 2019, P. 35.
8. IBID., P. 43.
9. SEARCH FOR COMMON GROUND, "EVALUATION FINALE DU PROJET: BOKÉ HÈRY," MARCH 2019, P. 5.
10. IBID., P. 39.
11. IBID., P. 11.
12. SEARCH FOR COMMON GROUND, "RAPID ASSESSMENT: PROMOTING A PACIFIC COLLABORATION BETWEEN ACTORS CONCERNED ABOUT THE ACCESS BLOCKADE TO THE MINING SITE AND TO THE JETTY AROUND THE ACTIVITY AREA OF THE MINING COMPANY BASE TOLIARA," JUNE 2019, P. 10.
13. SEARCH FOR COMMON GROUND, "ADVANCING SUSTAINABLE PEACE AND SECURITY IN TANZANIA," 2019, P. 10.
14. IBID., P. 38.
15. AFRICA MINING MARKET, "BASE TITANIUM AWAKENS KENYA'S COTTON INDUSTRY WITH KSH90 MILLION PROJECT," 6 AUGUST 2018.
16. KTN NEWS, "BASE TITANIUM MINING COMPANY IN KWALE OFFERS TRAINING AND APPRENTICESHIP FOR AREA RESIDENTS," 6 DECEMBER 2018.
17. COAST WEEK, "SOUTH COAST BASE TITANIUM MINING FIRM OFFER GENEROUS SCHOLARSHIPS TO 200 KWALE COUNTY FORM ONE STUDENTS," 9 DECEMBER 2019.
18. AFRICA MINING MARKET, "BASE TITANIUM AWAKENS KENYA'S COTTON INDUSTRY WITH KSH90 MILLION PROJECT," 6 AUGUST 2018.