

The future of mining in Africa

 By [Nicci Botha](#)

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One of the key threads that emerged from Mining Indaba 2016 is the need for mining companies to engage all stakeholders - especially local communities - as partners in their endeavours.



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The Development Partnership Approach was formed under the auspices of the Kellogg Innovation Network (KIN), and is a platform for on-going collaboration between the Kellogg faculty at Northwestern University in Chicago, corporate innovation leaders, non-profits and government.

What it does

The Development Partnership Approach is designed to fundamentally change the extractive business model of the mining industry from insular and reactive to an integrated and proactive development partnership, delivering on environmental and social shared purpose.

A different way of thinking

Peter Bryant, senior fellow and honorary co-founder of KIN, says, “The approach offers a different way of thinking when it comes to communicating with communities, countries and indigenous people, and having a shared purpose and shared value.”

He explains that mining companies are experiencing a rapidly diminishing social licence to operate, and no country is immune as there has been a shift in power to local communities.

“Every person everywhere is finding a voice through social media – this diminishes borders and allows for the growth of advocacy groups. The mining industry is struggling to exist in this space,” Bryant says.

Three pillars

The approach adopted by KIN allows the mining industry to nurture an environment for a social licence for them to exist.

This is based on three pillars:

1. Shared outcomes
2. Flourishing ecosystems
3. Competitive communities, countries and companies.

Early adapter

One of the early adapters and strong advocates for the Development Partner Approach is mining giant, Anglo American.

Chief executive Mark Cutifani, says that the footprint caused by mining is relatively small, but it cannot be underplayed, as by the very nature of geology, it affects the flora and fauna.

“The mining industry supports about 45% of economic development, but we do need to be super-sensitive to local communities. As a mining company, we bring capital, infrastructure and skills. But can we apply these in a way that will help the community achieve what they want to achieve?” he asks.

100-year plan

“The first thing is to start listening. How do the communities see themselves in the future? How do we start a 100-year community plan?” he explains. Cutifani says that what has emerged is that many of the conversations are culturally defined and not defined by geographical borders.

“It’s also important to remember that no matter what a person’s socio-economic circumstances are, what every human being wants is to lead a meaningful existence. So it is important to establish what that means in each community rather than just assuming to know what they want,” he says.

Tracking progress

“We track the number of protests and projects held up because we did not secure a license or reach an agreement with the community.”

“Those measures demonstrate whether or not we have good relationships with communities and governments. Some companies just build walls to keep everyone out. We do not. We build relationships with the local community — they are our front line,” Cutifani explains.

Mining Indaba 2016 took place at the CTICC in Cape Town from 8-11 February. For more info, go to www.miningindaba.com.

Nicci Botha has been wordsmithing for more than 20 years, covering just about every subject under the sun and then some. She's strung together words on sustainable development, maritime matters, mining, marketing, medical, lifestyle... and that elixir of life - chocolate. Nicci has worked for local and international media houses including Primedia, Caxton, Lloyd's and Reuters. Her new passion is digital media.

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