

Keywords:

Communication, dialogue, artisanal and small-scale mining, reflect and act

## OVERVIEW

### IIED Sustainable Markets Group and Communications Group

**Project name:**

ASM: Blueprint for dialogue

**Project leaders:**

Abbi Buxton, Sian Lewis and Sue Broome

**Time frame:**

October 2014 to December 2015

**Budget:**

£45,000 for communications work;  
£130,000 for the whole project

**Communications objectives:**

To collect and project voices and perspectives from marginalised communities to inform and build support for global and national debates about artisanal and small-scale mining.

## SUMMARY

We designed a multi-channel communication strategy to start building trust and engagement between three key stakeholder groups — governments, large mining businesses and artisanal and small-scale miners — and gain their commitment to a dialogue process. We particularly wanted to make sure that artisanal miners, often left out of discussions, would be willing and able to participate in the dialogue, either directly or by telling their stories through communications outputs. Achieving this required close collaboration between researchers and communications staff.

## THEORY OF CHANGE

Mining is a tough industry. To support the project goal of getting all three interested groups around a table to talk about critical issues for the artisanal and small-scale mining sector, we devised a three-stage communication strategy for the first year. First, we aimed to achieve the buy-in and commitment of key opinion formers and influencers who could drive change within their own organisations and act as supporters of a future dialogue process. Then we planned to engage a broader, but still specialist, group of representatives of our three audiences to gather and share

# Achieving commitment to dialogue

## How innovative communications helped with buy-in to dialogues around artisanal and small-scale mining

We knew that establishing a meaningful dialogue between governments, large-scale mining companies (LSM) and small-scale and artisanal miners (ASM) would not be easy to accomplish, given the sector's power inequalities and politics. The following is a reflection on the communication strategy and activities in the first year of a longer process of engagement.

### Defining the strategy

IIED researchers and the Communications Group worked together on a detailed audience mapping exercise, laying the foundation for an ambitious, phased communication strategy for the first year. Phase one involved personal engagement by researchers with a small group of 'movers and shakers' from the three audiences, first via individual interviews and then as a group in a visioning workshop. We wanted to build trust and mobilise a group of people who had not been brought together before, including artisanal and small-scale miners themselves.

With phase two we planned to engage a broader — but still niche — group of ASM, LSM and government representatives to start unpacking contentious issues and to gather a full and inclusive range of perspectives.

The final stage was both global and digital in nature, aiming to raise the profile of the forthcoming dialogue

series and mobilise a wider network of ASM/LSM/government people who might want to participate.

As part of phase one, we produced a photo exhibition and short video interviews with artisanal miners in Tanzania, to add to the voices of the two ASM participants from Peru and Mongolia at the April 2015 visioning workshop. To do this, we commissioned a photographer/cameraman to go to the Geita District to meet miners and collect their stories. The resulting outputs were powerful and informed the workshop debates, but the trip was logistically complicated and costly and we were not able to repeat the exercise in other countries at that stage (the concept was developed to support a dialogue in Ghana in early 2016). Although we also used the images and stories to compile a [series of photo stories](#) on the IIED website and a [longread combining images and video](#) (shared more than 150 times), we would have liked to have captured even more of the diverse nature of ASM to share with this particular workshop audience.

### Engaging with new audiences

A key activity of phase two was '#ShareASM' day on 25 June 2015, where we invited members of the target audiences to share their work online. The aim was to provide a neutral space where people from government mining departments and mining companies, as well as small-scale and artisanal miners

information. Finally, we wanted to communicate with a global audience interested in mining and sustainable development to build confidence in the proposed dialogue series and establish it as a legitimate tool in the change process.

## KEY LESSONS LEARNT & INNOVATIONS

- A multifaceted communications and engagement project such as this requires strong collaboration between communications specialists and researchers to make sure any strategy remains coherent and well timed. This can be challenging, and trust needed to be built between colleagues who were using different tools, methodologies and approaches. The benefit of agreeing on a varied, well-staged approach was that we could play to our combined strengths and maximise impact.
- Collecting materials from and reporting back to the mining community, the #ShareASM day and the visual representation of ASM stories at the visioning workshop were all innovations through which we started to build trust, gained new audiences and triggered dialogue. This kind of intensive communications work is costly and care must be taken to set realistic budgets.
- Reporting back to the mining community that had been willing to share its stories with global audiences increased the miners' interest and engagement in the dialogue process, particularly their participation in a future national dialogue.

## PARTNERS' VIEW

*Very good as a scene setter to establish a voice... the innovation in communications helps to reframe the way people participate.*

Participant at visioning workshop held in April 2015

## FURTHER READING

To see this collection of work and more:

[www.iied.org/towards-inclusive-responsible-mining](http://www.iied.org/towards-inclusive-responsible-mining)

Support for this project provided by the Ford Foundation



Employees work deep within a tunnel at the Nsangano Gold Mine, Mawemeru village in Geita District, Tanzania. An image from the specially commissioned set of photos.

Brian Sokol/Panos Pictures

themselves, could raise issues, share in identifying solutions and develop a vision for a more inclusive, sustainable and productive mining sector. We had a good response and the posts were shared with tens of thousands of Twitter users. A summary of the day was posted on [IIED's Storify site](#) and gained 339 views.

Pre-promotion of the day, preparing specific content and managing the day itself were significant tasks for two staff members, but IIED gained 130 Twitter followers with a specific interest in ASM and we continued to engage with them via a Twitter list over the course of the year. We were also able to blog about the day on the [GOXI website](#), which provided an entry point for engaging with people working on governance issues in the extractive industries.

Shortly after this, the project team successfully gained funding for the first in-country dialogue.

Using existing channels — such as the IIED newsletter and the International Institute for Sustainable Development's energy mailing list — to reach a global audience and raise the profile of the forthcoming dialogues (phase three), we communicated with 30,000 people and gathered names of those interested in hearing from us again.

## Valuable reporting back

We wanted to try something we are not normally able to do: report back in person to the Geita District miners from whom we had gathered the images and stories in phase one. This was important for the project's credibility.

The visit was extremely valuable. "We heard you were coming back but thought it was a joke", one community member said. Two IIED staff shared information

about progress on the mining dialogues project itself and how the Geita stories had played a part. This helped the miners to see themselves as knowledgeable project participants, taken seriously by others. The photos and stories were presented as a video and a photo book in English and Swahili. We were also able to gather further views, including from local large- and small-scale mine managers. There was an appetite for a dialogue in Tanzania: more than 40 people gave us their mobile phone numbers in order to stay in touch with the ongoing work.

Being able to prioritise and allocate budget for strategic communications and engagement gave researchers and communications specialists the opportunity to work together in a way that is not usually possible. Certain aspects of the project management were challenging, but the work was central to developing relationships with stakeholders in this field, some of whom were new audiences for us. While only the start of an ongoing engagement process, it laid the foundation for considering ASM issues through inclusive in-country dialogues.



## Knowledge Products

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