

Mining in Partnership

An Empowerment Agenda

Esther Reed examines the tensions between benefit and damage to local communities in mining operations, and goes on to explain the function of the Mining in Partnership initiative in resolving these tensions. She then looks at the relevant theological and biblical insights and the problem of political dysfunction. She concludes by looking at the challenge to the churches.

Mining in Partnership: An Empowerment Agenda is an initiative with and for seminary students, priests, church pastors and other leaders who want to think theologically about mining, and about how to prepare theologically, spiritually and practically for engagement with the industry. *Mining in Partnership* comprises resources for teaching and reflection that are intended to inform, support and encourage Christian leaders in places where mining is taking place or might be planned.

A range of experts have already contributed 'Further Reading' that comprises teaching resources, articles, prayers and liturgy, and represents a diversity of perspectives and views.

All may be viewed at <http://www.mininginpartnership.org>
Please make contact if you would like to contribute too.

Blessing or Curse?

It cannot be assumed that countries with large mineral deposits should consider themselves blessed. Mining activity within a country does not always result in local sustainable businesses, education and health infrastructure, and other forms of investment that contribute to a nation's wellbeing.

'The natural resource curse' is a familiar phrase that the Archbishop of Canterbury used during a Day of Reflection on Mining with the industry and church leaders. When years of mining produce nothing for local communities in the long term, the blessings of the earth's natural resources do not sow the seeds for future development but bring harm and misery. '[T]here has to be a change', he said 'in the endless cycle in a country where the first discovery of minerals or hydro-carbons leads to inflation, followed by deferred

hope and impatience, and then by corruption and division and, finally, by disappointment and failure.' (Ecumenical Day of Reflection on Mining, 7 October 2014 p. 7)

Natural Resource Wealth

Some countries and regions benefit greatly from their natural resource wealth. Natural resources provide critically important sources of revenue generation for many countries. Families and individuals might want the jobs, spin-off businesses, and infrastructure that mining can bring.

Every context is different. Too often communities have been afflicted by poisonous pollution from mine sites and plagued with other problems arising from mining. In too many places the environmental impact of mining has been devastating, with water supplies contaminated and local bio-systems disrupted. Too often the social and cultural effects

