

Life in the Mining Community

By Khanyisile Matsaba

Mining is and has always been the backbone of our economy as the community of Allanridge and Nyakallong under the Matjhabeng Local Municipality. The existence of the mining industry has had both the positive and negative bearing that can only be felt after the closure of the mines.

Employment was on the rise during the heydays of mining and the economy was booming then.

The environment and the agricultural sector are the ones that now bear the heavy brunt of the negative effects of mining. The health of the residents is at a high risk of acid mine drainage. The Harmony One shaft that is situated just adjacent to Nyakallong has been releasing chemicals into the Voelpan dam that has overflowed into residential areas.

Most of the houses that are situated near the dam are half submerged in the water and residents had to vacate their houses. The mine drainage is not only affecting the lives of the residents but is also damaging infrastructure. The water contains a very high volume of a toxic chemical called uranium.

The sewerage pump is damaged, and the sewer is flowing into the streets, causing more health hazards.

The R30 road that passes between Allanridge and Nyakallong was swept away and completely damaged leading to accidents but fortunately was renovated late last year.

The shaft has been operational since 1995 and has been the only source of formal employment in the private sector for locals and its downscaling has contributed to the rise of mass unemployment.

The community is not only having issues with Voelpan but that with employment and ignorance of the mine on this issue.

This article was submitted as part of the Imbila Yesu publication produced daily for the duration of the Winter School in 2024 (14-20 July 2024). It appeared in Edition 4, released on 19 July 2024. You may republish this article, so long as you credit the author and Karibu! Online (www.Karibu.org.za), and do not change the text. Please include a link back to the original article.