



Protecting Your Community Against Mining Companies and Other Extractive Industries

A Guide for Community Organizers

2009

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Introduction

Mining and other extractive industries are among the most destructive activities on the planet, especially for indigenous and farming communities. The minerals, metals, fuel, and timber that extractive industries seek are very profitable, so resisting them requires hard work.

Although mining companies are powerful, they are also vulnerable. There are ways to stop them. It may take years, but the results are worth it. At stake is the cultural survival and well-being of your community, your environment, and your ability to make a living — now and for years to come.

Many communities facing these challenges have organized against the companies by forming local, national, and international activist networks. They share information and work together to stop the harm that extractive industries cause. And in many cases they have succeeded in stopping the mining or reducing its impact.

About this guide

This guide describes aspects of the mining process, the dangers you and your community face when mining companies seek to operate in your community, and the many ways you can fight back. It is intended for use by regional/national leaders who can work with local community leaders to plan local actions, and who can also do work at the governmental, national, and international levels.

There are likely more actions described here than resources available to carry them out. Don't get overwhelmed. Rather, treat the guide as a menu of options. Start by choosing those that you think will require the least effort and be most effective for your situation. The effectiveness of these actions will depend on the local situation and on national and regional idiosyncrasies.

We provide examples of communities who fought back successfully. Our hope is that with this guide and their examples, you too can succeed in protecting your community against these dangers.

This Guide is Not Only For Mining!

Although we refer to mining companies, most of the tactics and countermeasures described here also apply equally well to other extractive and exploitative activities, such as: oil and gas, minerals, logging, all kinds of polluting industries, and big hydroelectric dams. Most activities proposed by large corporations, although they promise local benefits, ultimately devastate local communities and damage their surroundings. They need to be resisted.

Acknowledgements

Most of the material in this Guide came from the experience of the organization DECOIN, www.decoin.org (Defensa y Conservación Ecológica de Intag / Intag Defense and Ecological Conservation). Founded by author Carlos Zorrilla, DECOIN successfully fought off two attempts to establish an open pit copper mine in the lovely and fragile Intag cloud forest region of Ecuador. We are grateful to the many colleagues and friends (too numerous to list here) who helped review and research this guidebook and who provided photos and funding for it.

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Feedback wanted

We are considering printing a second edition later this year, which would include any relevant modifications that seem appropriate. We welcome comments, suggestions, and corrections that you think might be helpful the next time around. Please send to [action\(at\)globalresponse.org](mailto:action(at)globalresponse.org). Thank you.

1. About Mining

1A. Definitions

Underground mining, also called subsurface mining, involves digging and drilling into the ground to remove the desired minerals. This form of mining disturbs the earth less but is often more hazardous to the mineworkers.

Open pit mining, also called open cast, open cut, and strip mining, disturbs large areas of land and wastes a lot of groundwater, leaving huge amounts of solid (often poisonous) waste and huge holes in the earth.

Cyanide heap leach mining (for gold and silver) involves spraying a cyanide solution (a deadly poison) over the ore and collecting the dissolved metals from the bottom of the heap. Spilled cyanide can quickly kill people as well as fish and other aquatic life, and poison drinking or irrigation water.

Mountain top removal involves blasting away mountaintops using explosives to reach the minerals sought. The practice can produce a huge volume of waste materials, which are often dumped into adjacent valleys and streams. The two most common minerals mined this way are coal and limestone for cement production.

Placer mining, also called alluvial mining, involves dredging rivers and sifting out the valuable minerals.

Small scale mining is placer or underground mining, done individually or in small groups. Usually sifting is done by hand, often by panning. Mills may be used to crush the ore. Small scale gold mining uses mercury (a highly toxic metal) and can severely contaminate water and crops.

Riverine and Submarine Tailings Disposal involve the dumping of dangerous mine waste into rivers, lakes, or the ocean, causing serious health and environmental damage. The practice is prohibited in most rich nations.

1B. Typical Steps in the Mining Process

Note: the steps and sequence listed here may be different in different countries.

Prospecting

Prospecting involves taking rock samples and stream sediment to gauge an area's mining potential. In some countries it requires no government permit. It is the least damaging of all mining activities, but if trails are built to access pristine areas, people can use them for poaching, timber extraction and even land-squatting.

Exploration

This is a much more intensive, organized, and larger scale form of prospecting. Exploration activities include anything from taking water, rock and soil samples from the ground, to drilling hundreds of meters into the subsoil with elaborate drilling equipment. The objectives are: discovering the whereabouts of the metal resources, analyzing their metal content, and deciding if they are economically viable to exploit. Impacts can include contamination of water resources originating in mining camps and drilling sites, to severe impacts created by building road access to transport the drilling equipment. Social impacts can be similar to those during the exploitation phase. The exploration phase may last for months or years.

Concessions

In most countries, before starting any legal exploration, a mining company has to obtain a mining concession or permit from the national or provincial government. This allows them to build roads into an area and begin drilling and taking samples in order to determine the quality and location of the mineral resources. To facilitate this, a company may try to buy surface rights before starting. Sometimes the government may take or expropriate the land itself to make it easier for the mining company to develop its mine.

Terms of Reference (TOR)

After the concession has been obtained, a TOR document may be required. It specifies how the project will be defined, developed, and verified. It is the basis for future decisions and describes a common understanding of the project's scope among stakeholders.

(Note: The TOR may also be called a Plan of Operations (PoO).)

The TOR document lays out the social, economic and environmental elements the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) will study. The TOR document authorizes the company to prepare the EIA. Not all countries may require this document, or in some cases it may not be done in a public setting.

The Terms of Reference are supposed to define the following:

- Vision, objectives, scope and deliverables (i.e. what has to be achieved)
- Stakeholders, roles and responsibilities (i.e. who will take part in it)
- Resource, financial, and quality plans (i.e. how it will be achieved)
- Work breakdown structure and schedule (i.e. when it will be achieved)
- Success factors/risks and restraints.

However, unless pressed, the government and/or mining companies may fail to include some or all of the above.

In some countries, public hearings are required in order to determine which elements the TOR should take into account. This may be one of the first opportunities for communities to intervene in the mining process.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

If the TORs are approved, the next step is the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). Extractive companies typically hire other firms to do the environmental assessment. This process could last several months to over a year depending on the project and environmental conditions.

The EIA is an assessment of the possible impacts — positive and negative — that a proposed project may have on the natural and social environment. Its purpose should be to uphold social and environmental standards. Oftentimes, however, it is seen just as a document to comply with national laws. The International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA) defines an environmental impact assessment as “the process of identifying, predicting, evaluating and mitigating the biophysical, social, and other relevant effects of development proposals prior to major decisions being taken and commitments made.”

Before proceeding with mining activities, companies must first get approval of their EIA, usually from the Ministry of Mines and Energy, the Ministry of the

Mining companies are very much aware that they must also get the approval of the local communities before going ahead with projects.

Environment, or an equivalent governmental body. This is generally referred to as the environmental license.

Environmental impact assessments can be controversial. But if done impartially and with qualified personnel, they can be a useful tool for communities (See Section 2E).

More often, the EIA leaves out or underplays negative social and environmental impacts of the exploration or exploitation activities. An EIA may neglect a local development plan or activity that could be impacted by the extractive activity, or it may not mention threatened, endangered or rare species or important archeological or spiritual sites, that would make its approval more difficult. Sometimes contractors save time and money by copying another EIA, making the study irrelevant. These all provide opportunities for challenging the EIA.

Social license

Mining companies are very much aware that they must also get the approval of the local communities before going ahead with projects. This is referred to as the “social license.” It is not an official requirement in most countries, but even though a company obtains its EIA, most investors would be wary of investing in a project if the mining company didn’t have the approval of the local communities.

Mining companies are often willing to spend millions of dollars and make endless promises to try to obtain the social license. They promise to build schools or bridges, provide scholarships, and jobs — whatever they think will appease a community. Sometimes these are official agreements signed by the company and the local municipal government and/or the state or national government. Sometimes it’s more informal. While some promises are kept, many are not. A company may continue to make gifts to keep the population pacified. But in the process, they may create social havoc, violence, and deep divisions within communities and families.

Exploitation

The exploitation concession or license allows the company to begin full scale mining. It usually requires its own EIA. In some countries, there are separate exploration and exploitation concessions. In others, there is only one concession, allowing companies to carry out all mining activities — from exploration to exploitation and even smelting operations.

Exploitation is the most destructive and dangerous part of the process and will usually go on for many years. During exploitation, minerals are removed from the earth (or rivers in placer mining) and processed to extract the metals from the rest of the material. Open-pit mining involves making huge craters up to 4 kilometers across and 1.5 kilometers deep. Each crater can generate tens of millions of tons of mine waste per year, some of which can contain toxic heavy metals. During the exploitation phase, communities may be uprooted and resettled, and their livelihoods and culture destroyed. This is when large amounts of poisonous materials are used and dumped, and when fishing grounds, drinking water, and irrigation water are poisoned. See 1C for more details.

Cleanup: mine closure and post-closure operations

This is the final step after mining is finished. It should be (but often isn't) well-funded to make sure any actual or potential contamination problems are taken care of properly. It may involve reforesting all the mined out sites, replacing the topsoil, or even filling in the open pits (highly unlikely). The Environmental Impact Statement (or the Management Plan) should contain detailed plans on how the company will rehabilitate the impacted areas. Good rehabilitation plans include the in-perpetuity treatment of water to keep it from contaminating aquifers or surface waters.

Many countries require companies to set aside hefty financial guarantees before starting exploitation in order to pay for clean up and remediation, but too often this is not done. The company will likely resist spending time or money on this, since it brings them no profit, and can cost hundreds of millions of dollars to do it properly. More often they will neglect it and will not be honest in revealing the health effects of contaminated water, soil, and air. They must be forced by organized community pressure to do a proper cleanup.

1C. Impacts of Mining on the Community

The primary interest of these companies is profit. Bringing economic or other benefits to the local population and protecting the environment are not important to them. Those benefits are provided (if at all) to the minimum extent possible, and usually only under pressure.

When a mining or other extraction company comes to visit your community, you may expect nice talk and wonderful promises. "Corporate Social Responsibility" (CSR) is the new sheep's costume that mining companies now wear when coming into communities or convincing governments to accept their industries.

The primary interest of these companies is profit.

They talk about responsibility, yet reject free, prior and informed consent. They offer to be partners with the communities, yet they directly or indirectly attack, discredit and/or intimidate organizations and individuals who question or oppose their projects, and then replace them with ones they can manipulate. They brag about new technology, but never mention the reduced work-force needed, the permanent impacts on the environment, nor the poisoning of water resources. And they never mention what happens to communities and the local economy when the minerals run out.

To governments, companies offer visions of huge potential income, but leave out the real costs of rehabilitation, impacts on health, and the billions of tons of earth and vegetation poisoned by cyanide, arsenic, lead and other lethal substances. In painting their false version of development, they don't mention the natural and social wasteland they leave behind.

If they are allowed to begin mining, you may expect any or all of the following impacts:

Environmental impacts

Unrestricted mining operations almost always bring environmental disaster. To build the mine and its access roads, companies destroy forests, reducing the region's biological diversity and wildlife habitat. As forests are destroyed, communities may no longer find edible plants, medicinal herbs, fish, game, or

plants used for construction and utensils. Construction creates noise, dust, vibrations and erosion that affect animal, fish and human populations. During the mining operations, air and water are frequently polluted with toxic chemicals leading to disease and death of birds, fish, animals and humans. Even after the mine is closed, heavy metals usually continue to leach into the groundwater and rivers for centuries, poisoning fish and the animals and birds that feed on them.

In West Papua, Indonesia, the destruction caused from the Grasberg copper and gold mining site is so massive that you can see it from space. In the Philippines, toxic mine waste, spilled into the Mogpog River, killed all aquatic life and gave rise to

During the mining operations, air and water are frequently polluted with toxic chemicals leading to disease and death of birds, fish, animals and humans.

flooding that destroyed the rich farming areas along the river. In 1995, the Omai gold mine in Guyana (belonging to the Canadian company Cambior), spilled four and a half million cubic meters of cyanide-contaminated residual minerals into the Essequibo River. Eighty kilometers of the river were declared an environmental disaster zone.

Environmental destruction is not limited to poor countries. In Spain and Hungary, “latest technology” mines have caused widespread contamination of river and sea resources, killing millions of fish, while impacting municipal drinking water, tourism, fisheries, and the industries depending on them.

Mining requires enormous amounts of water. To produce the gold in one wedding ring, for example, requires 8,000 liters of water. Mining often dries up the local water supply very quickly, making agriculture and livestock production difficult or impossible. Drinking and cooking water become scarce as well.

Mining can also cause massive deforestation, which can reduce rainfall, dry up the local climate, destroy habitat for foraging, fishing and hunting, and force birds and animals into extinction. For example, the toxic fumes produced by the Norlisk smelting complex in Russia have destroyed 350,000 hectares of forests.

Another impact, important for indigenous peoples, is the destruction of cultural, archeological, and spiritual sites.

Health impacts

All phases and all types of mining can have serious impacts on human health. These impacts are closely linked to environmental impacts.

Dust and air pollution cause respiratory illnesses and irritated eyes and skin, especially in children.

Drinking water and irrigation water are frequently poisoned, sometimes for centuries. Bad water from mines can poison crops dozens of miles away from the mines. Water contaminated with toxic substances like mercury, lead, arsenic and cyanide can cause a wide variety of serious ailments, including cancer and birth defects. Food irrigated with contaminated water can cause similar health problems. Pollution from small-scale artisanal mines as well as large-scale mines can cause serious diseases among the miners, their families, and downstream communities.

Copper smelting produces toxic fumes that can destroy vegetation and cause many illnesses and birth defects in humans. (Sometimes mining companies are forced to use expensive filters, but usually not in poor areas.) Uranium mining can expose workers to dangerous levels of radioactivity leading to cancer and other chronic diseases.

Underground mining is especially dangerous because of accidents that trap and sometimes kill mine workers. Death and debilitation from silicosis and lung cancer, black lung disease, cave-ins, explosions, floods and other accidents are all common.

After the end of mining operations, health effects often continue for decades.

There are other, indirect, health risks posed by mining operations. There is a greater risk of water-borne and other infectious diseases. The loss of crop land and the drying up of water resources can lead to decreased food supply, malnutrition, and cultural disruption.

It is difficult to prove that mining is the direct cause of a specific person's illness, so it's difficult to sue a company for health problems. That is why it is so important to **prevent** the environmental contamination that can cause illness.

The company may deliberately try to disrupt and weaken a community's ability to organize effectively against them.

Social impacts

The impact of mining on your community can be devastating. The more presence an extractive company has in your community, the more disruptive it will be. If they are allowed to explore in your territories, the likelihood of social disruption dramatically increases. It may then take many years to re-build the social, cultural and spiritual structures and bonds that were the community's real wealth.

Mining companies often bring hundreds of single working men into the local community, giving rise to serious social and health problems. Alcoholism, prostitution, sexual assault, rape, and venereal diseases are unfortunately very common in and near mining communities.

Loss of livelihood: Agriculture and fishing can be severely reduced due to contamination or drying up of water supplies. Local food production drops as mining jobs replace agricultural ones. Sustainable activities like tourism are affected because the area is no longer attractive to tourists. The community becomes impoverished as the cost of living rises sharply due to high wages going to a small portion of the populace.

Effects on women: Migration and social disintegration destroy traditional safety nets, and women are especially affected. When men work away from home, women are left to handle finances, support the families, and manage the land. The stress on families often causes domestic violence and marital breakups. The men can bring venereal disease home.

Community breakdown: Communities and indigenous groups have ways of coping with social or natural disturbances or stress, including group solidarity, general trust of one's neighbors or leaders, unwritten social rules, strong family ties, cultural identity, and traditional leadership or governing structures. The company may deliberately try to

disrupt and weaken a community's ability to organize effectively against them.

Human rights violations: The company may employ local people to falsely accuse anti-mining activists of committing crimes. It may employ thugs or paramilitary forces to intimidate, threaten, injure or even kill people.

In the Philippines, indigenous people were driven out of their homes at gunpoint by guards hired by a Canadian mining firm. And a mining company in Australia forced local farmers to sell their land at a price determined by the company.

Other negative impacts: In addition to the examples above, a mining project often results in:

1. Increase in crime
2. Land trafficking¹
3. Displacement of hundreds of families
4. Militarization and the appearance of armed groups

Effects of small-scale mining

While this manual mostly discusses large-scale mining projects, small-scale and artisanal gold or diamond miners often cause equally severe environmental and social problems. They can contaminate water resources with toxic substances such as mercury, affecting not only local populations but people and communities hundreds of kilometers away. Mining towns, whether created by large or small scale mining, are often riddled with crime and plagued with inadequate infrastructure for education, sewage, health and other social services. And the cost of living in these communities is usually much higher than in surrounding areas. The presence of single men in these settlements is a common occurrence, leading to prostitution and the spread of venereal diseases. In some cases, high-value minerals, such as gold and gems, help finance armed groups, creating a more violent and insecure environment. Due to all these and other factors, small-scale mining communities are often subjected to widespread social and environmental breakdown.

¹ Land trafficking occurs when the extraction company offers to buy land as a way to secure access to their concessions, or as a way to buy out potential or real opposition members. This also leads to community disintegration, in that people will often sell and leave.

2. How to Fight Back

The actions described in this section are best used before mining concessions are granted, but they can also be valuable later, even if exploration or mining has already started.

As you carry out your work, remember that while it is important to be active, it's more important to be safe. There are personal risks involved: you and your family may be the target of smear campaigns, death threats, and other ploys meant to weaken your resolve and make you give up the fight. Occasionally, activists fighting extractive industries have lost their lives. Though most companies will not risk their reputation or the future of their projects on such drastic actions, a few will not hesitate. Remember also that your work can stir up opposition from the local population who may see their false hopes for progress or quick money thwarted by your actions.

Prevention first!

The duration of the struggle and its impacts on the community are, in large measure, determined by two factors: (a) how quickly you can mobilize against the threat, and (b) the strength and resilience of your community.

It is helpful to think of an extraction company as a disease, and your community as your body. As in any real disease, the longer you delay taking measures to stop it, the more it can spread and cause damage. The disease must be treated as soon as possible to prevent it from spreading.

It is much easier to head off a company's assault BEFORE exploration takes place. After they build roads, explore, discover resources, and spend money, stopping them is a longer, more difficult battle. There is also a psychological advantage that companies gain from having large investments in a project,

It is much easier to head off a company's assault BEFORE exploration takes place.

because at that point people might say "it's already happening" or "the project is inevitable."

If exploration begins and the company finds profitable deposits of valuable metals or petroleum, the regional or national government may become much more interested in exploiting the resources. It is not unusual for governments to violate their own laws, or create new ones, in the hope of obtaining income from taxes that are promised from mining.

However, communities that organize themselves well can influence the process at every step, from preventing projects from starting at all, to getting compensation, to safely shutting down (decommissioning) projects after they have been operational.

2A. Prepare

For the important task of preventing companies from exploring (or finishing their exploration), you first need to become informed yourself, then publicize the threats by spreading the word to others, and then mobilize the community. If concessions have been granted and exploration or mining has started, the following actions are still useful to limit the damage. Many of the following actions can be done at the same time. Pick those that seem most appropriate to your situation.

Become informed

To find out if a mining company intends to apply for an exploitation concession, look for articles in your local or regional paper, or notice rumors — don't

- The creation of one simple wedding ring can generate 20 tons of toxic waste.
- A tiny bit of cyanide, the size of a grain of rice, can kill a person. A commercial gold mine may use many tons of cyanide.
- Many rivers have been made dead of any life due to toxic mine waste.
- Mining kills and injures more workers than any other industry.
- Much mining is done in very poor countries where people are least able to resist it.

dismiss the tales you hear at your local hairdresser's, pub or other gathering place. Strangers may arrive in cars to look around, and surveyors with technical equipment may start to case the area. This is when you should start to dig for information.

Identify the safeguards and constraints for companies to operate contained in laws, the constitution, and international treaties. Find out the legal procedures for acquiring concessions.

If available, get a copy of government maps showing mining areas and the status of concessions. See if a company is in the process of acquiring concessions in your area. If it is, start alerting local communities and governments, but make sure you have reliable information. Find out how much your local government officials know, and if they are willing to help.

Go to the Ministry of Mines web site and get as much information as possible on the project. If that doesn't work, ask for this information from the Ministry of Mines (or its equivalent) directly. You will need an official document requesting it, and for this you may need a lawyer or the help of an organization in the capital. If there are regional mining directorates, it may be faster to get information from these — but always leave a paper trail. That is, request information through paperwork, and make sure that the officials stamp your copy of the request with the date and a signature for future reference.

If a company already has a concession, research what steps are necessary before they can take the next step. Get copies of any and all available documents.

Your country may have a National Development Plan that may identify areas where extractive industry activities are allowed or planned. It will be useful to have this document to establish whether your community is within one of these "extractive development" areas, so you can start alerting and educating all stakeholders (communities, local governments, development NGO's, etc.) about the impacts of extractive industries.

Once you have alerted your friends and neighbors, try to organize some of them to help you research the next steps ahead.

You would be surprised how many valuable resources you may have around you — i.e. retired government officials, savvy lawyers, computer experts, graphic designers, surveyors, journalists etc. Each of them is a valuable resource to help you identify the

safeguards and constraints for companies to operate, to find out the required legal procedures, and to efficiently prepare to defend your community.

You would be surprised how many valuable resources you may have around you.

Know your enemy: Dig for details about the company involved. Who are they? What is the company's country of origin? What are they planning? Who are the major shareholders? What is their record? To find answers to these questions, check out the company's web site as frequently as possible (if it's only in English, get someone to help you translate). Share this information with groups and communities. Detailed information on the company and major shareholders is important at later stages. In digging for details about the company, the importance of using the Internet cannot be overstated. Find other websites that also post information about the company (see the Resources section).

Research the company's history of social and environmental practices to know who you are dealing with, and to present your community and government with evidence of patterns of bad behavior. If possible, contact other communities where this company has operated. See Resources sections for good sources.

Plan: At the start, you may want to think about how to best focus your limited energies and funding to make the greatest impact and maximize your chance of success. Write the plan down, and discuss it with those you trust, asking for their input. But be cautious that the plan doesn't fall into mining company hands — make few or no copies. Write down updates as needed.

Be flexible and able to quickly adapt your plan to new situations and new input. These written plans are a way to realize what has been achieved and to realize what needs closer attention as the campaign moves on.

2B. Build Local Opposition

Mobilize

Create a local organization if one is not already in existence. *A strong local organization is absolutely*

crucial to success. It sometimes starts with one or two persons concerned for the welfare of the communities or the environment, and builds from there. It may help to enlist the support of religious or civic leaders. Try to ensure that it is made up of honest local individuals, preferably respected leaders of your community or area.

Keep key people informed about meetings and other important events the company may host. Some communities live in areas without phone service. It is imperative that people can communicate and respond to situations quickly — and *make sure the company knows this*. If there is no phone service, obtain walkie-talkies and give them to key people in the area. Make sure the equipment is well taken care of and the network of communication is working well.

Inform the community

As you find out about the company, the mining processes, impacts, history of similar mines, etc. spread that information to the community via pictures, brochures, books, videos and pamphlets. Go door to door talking to people in your community and nearby, and work to convince them of the need to organize and mobilize against the project. All this helps to create a “critical mass” of public opinion against mining and in favor of sustainable development and community well-being.

Then meet with neighboring communities and local entities such as local governments, productive groups, and women’s organizations — anyone whose well-being may be imperiled by an extractive project.

Get copies of the mining, petroleum, or other relevant legislation and bylaws (such as environmental legislation) to the leaders as quickly as possible so they can become familiar with them. Perhaps a knowledgeable person in law can help simplify it and make the language understandable.

Circulate printed material, mostly pictures, showing the impacts, and addressing some of the illegalities. (You may include the pictures at the end of this guide.)

Arrange field trips to other mining sites so people can see the environmental and social damage with their own eyes. Invite people from mining-affected communities to speak at local events, sharing their experiences. If possible, also bring in or visit people with communities or groups that have successfully resisted such projects.

Community Consent. One of the most powerful instruments in protecting communities from devastation caused by extractive projects is the right of communities to give or withhold their consent to a project. This is called the right to Free, Prior Informed Consent (FPIC). For it to be meaningful, the consent needs to be given free of pressure from government or industry, prior to the beginning of any activity that may impact a community’s environment or social well-being, and must be informed — that is, with sufficient information delivered in a region’s native language so the community can make a proper decision. That means that communities have the right to know what is being proposed, and they have the right to say no.

Some national laws and constitutions guarantee a people’s right to FPIC. The World Bank’s Extractive Industries Review concluded that all potentially affected communities, indigenous or not, have the right to FPIC. Tribal and indigenous peoples have this right in countries who have signed Convention 169 of the International Labor Organization, or the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

In areas where there is a tradition of reading, print a simple handout sheet explaining the rights of communities and the obligations of mining companies. Emphasize the fact that people and communities have rights, and that the companies’ rights are not any more legal than individual or collective rights. Knowing they have rights backed up by your country’s constitution, international treaties, and/or national laws helps empower people to oppose the mine. For example, no company can legally trespass onto private property without the owner’s permission, and a concession gives the company rights only below the surface.

List the procedures the company must follow. For example, find out if companies may be legally required to share information and documents with the communities when requested, hold public forums, and consult with communities to obtain their free and informed consent (FPIC) before obtaining a concession.

Use local media

Create a simple community newspaper (or print articles in an existing paper) and/or post bulletins around the community. Get interviewed on radio programs or create your own.

Show (and give away) videos of the social and environmental impacts of mining and cases of successful resistance. Audio visual material is often more effective than written material in getting the message across.

Work hard with local government

Get them on your side. Educate them about the possible risks of an extractive project (health, social, environmental, economic, cultural impacts that might occur, possibly affecting the area's potential for tourism revenue).

Avoid alienating government officials. Give them the benefit of the doubt, work with them, give them as much information as possible, keep them informed about meetings and trips, and try to get people elected who are on your side. Make sure local governments understand that extractive projects can sometimes destroy local development, for example, an area's tourism appeal. In some countries, local governments have enough power to stop major projects.

Widen your base of support by not limiting yourself to one political party.

Example: Because they had the backing of their local governments, DECOIN in Ecuador was able to push through a very good environmental law declaring the local county to be an “ecological county” — the first in Latin America. This law prohibits most mining in that area. The county government also created a “Municipal Protected Area” directly over the mining site.

There are other possibilities, for example getting your local government to declare your county or province a Tourism Development Area. Offer to work with them to produce a county-wide land management plan which specifically excludes mining.

NOTE: depending on the area, tribal leaders may play the role of local government, so regardless of

whether there is another local government, getting their support is key.

In some cases the communities will decide it is a waste of time trying to get local government on their side, due to corruption or “sell outs.” In this case, consider regional and national government officials. Identify friendly legislators (Congress or equivalent) and try to win them over to your side. Some officials will give you very important information that can make all the difference, and later can rule in your favor if you present yourselves correctly. Widen your base of support by not limiting yourself to one political party. Ideally, these legislators would be genuinely committed to your cause, and not political opportunists.

Get funding

The struggle may last for years and may involve substantial money. Organizations to help with funding are available. (See Resources section.)

Although external funding can make it easier to carry out more activities against an extractive project, it is best not to rely on it completely. Try to build and maintain a resistance based on your own resources; this will greatly increase your chances of success. You should also be aware that the influx of large amounts of money can also damage a weak organization.

As the campaign evolves, you may require funding for things like websites, printing, video-making, travel, expert assessment, and legal and other professional assistance. Obtaining outside funds can take time, but you may also find the people power to do that work.

At the outset, obtaining startup funding locally is a good thing to try, through a local event such as a dance, music festival, community play, raffle, or auction. Ask a local musician or poet to contribute with a ‘star appearance’ to your event. Auction items could include certificates for a dinner cooked at the winner's home, a haircut, or other services. If such events prove successful you can slightly alter and repeat them later. They are also a great boost for morale and solidarity, and can recruit more citizens to the cause.

The more you tell your story, in all media and all ways, the better the chance that a friendly overseas organization will help you fund some of your work. Contact national and international organizations to help you identify possible funding sources, and look on the Internet to find them yourself. Contact other

communities fighting similar struggles, and see if they could help by contacting the organizations and funders that are helping them.

2C. Form Alliances

Start with local alliances

The creation of a strong, wide variety of local opposition is essential for success. Reach out to religious and environmental organizations, local governments, regional and national governments and NGOs. Work with and inform these local organizations.

Inform local church or religious leaders about mining and its impacts on the poor and marginalized, and about the social havoc it often causes. The support or involvement of religious leaders or even of the church itself may make all the difference in the outcome.

While the support of local political leaders is very important, be on the alert for political parties that may want to use your struggle for their own political ends. In some countries, you may be tempted to “politicize” your struggle by supporting such groups. It may work, but could also backfire if the party in power sells your struggle to the electorate as a mere tool used by political parties. Think thrice before you let party politics into your struggle.

The support or involvement of religious leaders may make all the difference in the outcome.

One strong ally might be a communal or regional water board, or its equivalent, once they know that extractive activity can contaminate and or dry up sources of water for communities or irrigation. Or, farmers’ groups downriver if they see that their irrigation water would be contaminated, impacting their health and their crops. Similarly other agricultural producers, fish farm owners and others may be useful allies.

Look for possible allies beyond your immediate area. Communities downstream and downwind will also be affected by mining. Wells far away from the mine may be contaminated by arsenic, mercury and other heavy metals. Smelting plants can contaminate ground and water resources many kilometers

away. So visit these communities, too, and get them involved.

Also seek out tourism organizations (or individual tourism entrepreneurs) within your region or at the national level, if tourist attractions are threatened.

Quickly expand your alliances

Form alliances with other affected communities in the region, or with other communities threatened by the same company. From some of these you may get the information you need for educational purposes. It’s always good to create alliances with a variety of groups, including environmental and human rights organizations.

University students can sometimes become inspired by your struggle and offer free help. You may know someone at a university who can help organize a meeting between friends or a University club or department (biology, tourism, hydrology). University professors are also an excellent resource. Ask to give presentations in their classes and recruit student help that way. Professors may be willing to do research for your organization and might include students on the project, or even have students do this work as part of a class assignment. You can also raise funds and increase publicity by asking professors and students to hold a forum, a tea-in, or a conference about your struggle. This can generate media interest as well.

Potential allies within the national government could include the ombudsman, a human rights commissioner, the minister of tourism, the natural resources and wildlife conservation departments, etc.

National NGOs (non-governmental organizations) are also useful allies. See which NGOs in the major city or cities are working on extractive industries and human rights. Try to enlist as many as possible and ask for their help gathering information from the government and other sources. These NGOs may fund workshops and information sessions on mining’s impacts or human rights. See if any of the national NGO’s can provide you with free legal advice.

You may also be able to get an exceptionally respected individual, a national hero or television/movie/sports star to help you publicize your cause. This can be a very effective publicity tool — and inexpensive.

From the national scale you should move quickly to the international arena. Find organizations in the country where the company is from, keep

them informed, and ask for assistance (information about the mining company and its investors, and sources of funding). Use these international alliances to launch letter writing campaigns to denounce abuses or highlight political, cultural or biological risks associated with the company's activities. Work to pressure investors to sell their interests in the company. These actions can help to drive down the price of the company's shares. For example, after years of denunciation of Copper Mesa Mining Corporation's activities in Ecuador, the company shares lost 98% of their value.

If protected areas or endangered species are directly or indirectly affected, you may find allies in international organizations such as the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), World Wildlife Fund, Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), and others.

2D. Use the Law and the Political Process

Lawsuits and injunctions

A legal challenge to a project sends a powerful message to the company, its shareholders, and your elected representative, and can sometimes stop the project or slow it down considerably — giving you time to organize better. Try to make the legal challenge as solid as possible, since if successful it can establish a legal precedent for similar situations elsewhere. You will probably have to rely on a national NGO to help you do this, as it can be a complex and expensive strategy. If you feel the courts are so corrupt that you know you will lose, you may still want to go forth so you can eventually present your case in the international arena.

Carefully study the constitution and mining legislation. Present legal challenges whenever possible. In Ecuador, DECOIN helped present five legal challenges to their mining project. Even though all failed, mostly because of corruption (something else to consider), it is necessary sometimes to show the world that you are trying every legal means possible to stop the project. If you want to go to the Regional Court system (such as the Inter-American Human Rights system), the first thing they'll ask you is to show that you've exhausted all legal measures in your country. Although it can be frustrating, it is also indispensable if you want to go this route (we highly recommend keeping this option open).

If you discover that the company has made procedural mistakes, present legal cases to annul their

concessions. If that fails, seek an injunction against the mining company and/or the government, based on a statutory or constitutional violation (examples: lack of consultation with the community, or taking property without fair compensation). Failing that, if you have good grounds, you can sue the government for violation of mining legislation or other laws.

Those who feel that it is a waste of time fighting in the courts because of corruption may want to pursue legal strategies at the international level. If you have the slightest grounds on which to do so, sue the company in the country where it is registered. This requires that you have close ties with an organization in the country that can help — and money. Seek pro bono legal assistance (see Resources Section). Just the threat of a lawsuit like this can scare investors away.

If you have grounds and support, file a case against the company based on a breach of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) multinational guidelines. Though you may lose, this brings negative publicity to the company. Find out more at CIEL, Center for International Environmental Law — see Resources. Again, you need to have a good working relationship with an international organization.

Referendums / local votes

The idea of local referendums or votes on natural resource development gained popularity in 2002, after the community in Tambogrande, Peru voted to reject a mining proposal. Since then, the practice of local votes (or referendums) on mining projects has spread to other parts of Peru, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Argentina, Mexico, Chile, Turkey, the Philippines and elsewhere. In virtually every case, voters overwhelmingly rejected extractive projects.

This approach may not work in some cases; the votes are not always accepted by national governments and may not be legally binding, or the company or government may invest heavily to throw the referendum their way. Nonetheless, referendums are becoming a popular way to democratize the decision making process around natural resource use. They can also derail large projects with funding from the World Bank's International Finance Corporation (IFC), since the IFC's Policy on Social and Environmental Sustainability requires such financing apply only to projects that have proven "broad community support."

If you want to pursue a local referendum in your community, the Environmental Defender Law Center is a good resource for more information and assistance (see Resources).

2E. Obstruct the Process

The purpose is to make things difficult for the company, delay the work, and make the project more expensive for them. Delaying tactics cost the company money, upset the investors, and give you more time to organize resistance.

Purchase critical land

One of the most valuable things DECOIN did at the beginning of their resistance to the mining project was to buy land for communities in the mining area. Owning the land became an important tool to stop the mining development. This land eventually was used by the community most at risk from the project as part of their community ecological tourism project — one more reason for the community to protect “their forests.”

Challenge and delay the TOR

As soon as possible get a copy of the Terms of Reference (TOR). Have it read by someone with experience (an internal or external ally), and try to oppose it on legal and technical grounds in plenty of time before the government approves it. Insist that it is incomplete and that other aspects should be considered (impacts on existing productive alternatives, protected species, and archeological and culturally significant sites). Much will depend on the laws and Constitution. If community consultation is required, try to prove it was never legally carried out; this may delegitimize the TORs.

Challenge and delay the EIA

Communities must insist on a substantive Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) before any mining operations are established. The EIA should be done by a neutral agency (one not funded by the mining company). Insist that it include an expert on environmental health. If the EIA identifies drastic potential impacts, it can play a key role in building opposition to the project. Sometimes the information from the assessment can be powerful enough to prevent the start of mining operations in a region (unusual, but possible).

Sometimes, the community can block access to the project site to prevent the company from completing the EIA study. In most countries, companies should not be able to trespass on private property, so be on the lookout for this. Find out where the company is working and how much time they spent on certain studies — this may help you invalidate the study later.

If the EIA has been done, obtain a copy and get it reviewed. You might conduct your own review, but it often requires expert advice — perhaps an organization whose specialty is to review EIAs (see Resources). If you can afford it, hiring a lawyer experienced in mining law is a wise decision. After you have analyzed the EIA, summarize its contents and reproduce and distribute your findings to all relevant organizations and communities. Make sure you include a shortened version pointing out its flaws, and the real impacts of the project. At the same time, you can pressure the government or company to produce a document with this information. Pointing out the study’s flaws may provide legal grounds to stop the project.

Find, and present to government officials, as many technical and legal errors as possible, and reasons to reject the EIA. Examples: Rivers or streams that they should have but didn’t study, protected species they overlooked, areas they said they studied but didn’t, wrong elevation/rainfall information, incorrect boundaries, incomplete list of chemicals used for drilling equipment, and inadequate social evaluation.

If you or your lawyer notice illegalities in how the EIA was prepared or how it is being implemented, sue to have the project stopped. Similarly, if any of the procedures or work violates the Constitution, seek a constitutional injunction or similar legal measure. (See section 2D on using the law)

If you are unable to stop EIA approval, exploration will go ahead. Exploration can cause significant environmental damage and social impacts (in spite of government or company claims). Make sure you are able to either obtain access to areas being explored to assess if the company is complying with the EIA, or else get information from an insider (Are they using streams that they aren’t supposed to? Did they build the access trail or road wider than indicated in assessment? Are they dumping garbage or using different chemicals than the ones listed?) If so, denounce it to the local and national authorities and to all your allies.

NOTE: Communities that focus on the legal and technical aspects of extractive industries will probably lose the battle if they do not also have strong local support from residents and international allies. In other words, *this is a political struggle and you cannot rely on technical approaches alone*, because mining companies will almost always have more money to spend on their own experts. For this reason, it is most important to prevent a company from buying or forcing consent from the community, i.e. obtaining the social license.

Prevent the social license

It is difficult to fight against the company's tactic of buying off people. They pay high wages, offer everything to everyone (such as medical services, new schools, and jobs), and hire people to do nothing, just to get them on their side. Create the anti-mining and pro-community awareness that is needed to defeat these projects. Highlight the risks involved to the community's welfare and its social cohesion. This is best done through organizing yourselves and educating local people about the mine's real impacts.

Create economic alternatives to mining

While it's important to say no to mining, your struggle will be much more respected by the community if you work to create alternatives and help to solve the problem of poverty — giving people an alternative to being hired by the company.

In the Intag region of Ecuador, local organizations created the following alternatives:

- Shade-grown coffee association
- Several community ecological tourism initiatives (at the mining site)
- Several handicraft groups
- Hand-made soap and shampoo products
- Vegetable ivory products
- Marmalade and syrup production
- Sustainable agricultural organizations
- Fish farming and egg production

Alternative economic projects are important, but remember that the companies can pay much more — at least for a short or medium term — than what these activities generate. In the end, the social and environmental educational projects are most crucial to demonstrate the long term devastating consequences of mining and the sustainability of alternatives.

This is a political struggle and you cannot rely on technical approaches alone.

Capitalize on their mistakes

Keep on the lookout for mistakes the company or government makes, and pounce on them. If concessions were given, find information about how they were given, and look carefully for irregularities or illegalities. This can be key, but it is useless unless you publicize it as far and wide as possible.

When the company in Intag used paramilitaries, anti-mining activists had advance notice and had people filming and photographing the encounter. Allowing violence against defenseless community members to be photographed and filmed was a big company mistake.

2F. Publicity: Spread the Word

Publicity means getting your side of the story out as much as possible, both nationally and internationally. Highlight issues such as rich biodiversity, the presence of endangered species, pristine water sources, nearby protected areas, primary forests, areas of archeological, spiritual, and cultural significance, threats to indigenous cultures, and places at risk of earthquakes. In other words, present as many hooks as possible for organizations to latch on to and get involved. If an EIA has been completed, it may be a good source for this information.

See if there's a special "charismatic" species you can use as a rallying cry (Condor, Jaguar, Panda).

You want your story to be heard by as many people as possible in the world. The goal is twofold: (1) to highlight the impacts to nature and society that a project may pose, and (2) to publicly shame a company and make it harder for them to obtain funding by discrediting them. The information has to be 100% truthful so the press and/or investors can trust it.

Websites

The Internet is a valuable resource and not expensive. Create a Web page where you can publish maps and project details, expose lies and misdeeds of the mining company and give information about

your work of resistance. It can be updated often to include new developments, new allies, news from the local communities etc. Consider creating a blog to allow for input from others.

The companies are very wealthy and can “green wash” their participation in a mining project. Your web page may be the only source of information telling the other side of the story, so it is important to get as much accurate information as possible and get it to people who will share it widely. This means that you should ask as many national and international organizations as possible to post news of your campaign on their web sites. Creating an English version of your website will facilitate this.

The press

It is essential to understand the power of the press and the importance of developing basic skills for using it.

Encourage visiting reporters as much as possible, giving a few the first shot at reporting a story. Make sure they are there when something important happens so they can report it (this saves on publicity costs). Visit the media, invite them to the communities, and supply them with a steady and factual stream of information on the company’s tactics and activities, and the threats the projects pose to the communities and the environment. You can also hold news conferences in a major city, inviting the press to a breakfast or lunch — it’s more likely they’ll show up. Make sure you learn how to prepare press kits and press releases (see Resources). The information could include good quality photographs, video clips, copies of documents and interviews, and contact information.

Don’t forget local resources as well. You might start a newspaper to inform local people. Hopefully you’ll have someone who can write reasonably well. If not, try to befriend a supportive reporter or someone in a local organization to give you a hand in writing and sending out as many news bulletins as possible on the situation. Create and distribute posters, videos, brochures, and booklets on biodiversity, water and the impacts of mining on them. There may also be organizations that train community journalists, so contact them for assistance. Do local and regional radio spots on mining and the importance of conserving water, the forests and biodiversity. If no local radio station exists, consider starting one.

If the press shows no interest in reporting your story, you may have to buy space in newspapers, on radio, or TV to influence public opinion within or outside your immediate area.

Photos and videos

Another thing that can help a lot is to produce video documentaries, both in English and your native language. However, this takes time and resources and requires, among other things, learning to use the equipment. The chances of your story being heard outside may depend on the quality of the photographs, audio recording or video clips you supply to the newspapers, radio or the TV stations. If possible give videos and DVDs to potential allies for free. Remember one picture can be worth a thousand words.

You can print and distribute postcards showing the results of the company’s presence in other places (violent confrontations, dead animals, or a ruined community). Send these to journalists and other public figures. In Intag, DECOIN published a postcard of the paramilitaries attacking the communities, and people from the communities sent messages to Ecuador’s president on them!

Protest demonstrations

Marches in the main cities, to spread the news outside your area, can work but can also be expensive. DECOIN helped mobilize hundreds of people who went to the capital city, Quito, several times. They marched to where the constituent assembly members were writing the constitution, and other key places. It seemed to be worth it. It may be a very effective way to galvanize support for your cause and raise the profile of the problem.

Play or puppet show

Putting on a play or puppet show to illustrate the effects of mining can be a great way to communicate, especially to a non-literate population. It could be a simple plot showing before and after, promises vs. reality. Typically, this kind of street theater involves one or more persons representing the community and another person representing the company. Some of the best street theater combines comedy with serious drama. (see Resources section for Amnesty International’s “How to Use Street Theater”)

In summary, get the word out, and do it relentlessly.

2G. Organize Globally

A lot of this work really comes down to leveling the playing field between corporations with economic and political clout and local communities. If the companies have the courts on their side, you can have the press, local communities, and hopefully local governments on yours. International organizations can be a huge help to counter the imbalance too.

Take the struggle beyond the local arena as soon as possible

The battle has to be fought on many fronts at once — local, regional, national and international. Global attention, whether from governments, the press, or NGOs, will have an impact in your country — nationally and locally.

Campaign in the country of origin

It's important to create and sustain good relationships with one or more international organization, ideally in the mining company's home country, (such as Mining Watch in Canada, and Earthworks and Oxfam America in the USA). Get them to help you publicize your story and shame the company back home, because that's where much of the power in this struggle is.

Contact newspapers in the company's country of origin and send articles, denunciations and petitions to their government. If the information is reliable and the company wants to appear responsible, that can lead to changes in policies or management. If a company has a well-earned reputation for being a responsible corporate citizen, it may drop the project altogether (of course, you may get a very irresponsible company with no reputation to lose).

The battle has to be fought on many fronts at once — local, regional, national and international.

If possible, travel to the country where the company is based and bring attention to your area's uniqueness. DECOIN went to the Canadian Parliament to denounce the actions of the company, and gave radio and newspaper interviews. Again, the full support of an overseas organization is critical for this to work.

Have local residents send a personal message to the country's president to denounce illegal or aggressive tactics.

Report the company to the Securities and Exchange Commission (or equivalent in their country of origin) in an effort to have them delisted (prevented from trading in the exchanges). For this strategy to work it is important to point out any false or fraudulent information the company may be publishing. The Securities and Exchange Commission only looks at this type of concrete information. Keep a record of all communication with the Securities and Exchange Commission and share it with the in-country ally organization.

Another strategy is to file a lawsuit against company officials and the relevant stock exchange. The main objectives are to delist the company from the exchange and to draw the public's attention to how their stock exchanges are funding human rights abuses overseas. The lawsuit may also help to pressure the government to implement strong standards to regulate its extractive companies working overseas.

Human rights groups

Focus your denunciations on human rights issues as much as possible. As soon as the company or its representatives hit the ground, form an alliance with a reputable human rights group (see Resources) so that the company has to tread carefully. Ask them to report on human rights abuses if at all possible.

International observers

Companies have to be very careful in the presence of international observers. Contact organizations that will send international observers to witness, record, and denounce what is going on, thus reducing the likelihood of violent confrontation. Some in-country human rights groups may have such a program.

Buy shares in the mining company and contact other investors

A very important, but often overlooked, strategy is to go after the investors who buy shares. Buy some shares in the mining company so you can attend their shareholders' meetings. This allows you to (a) talk directly with some of the bigger investors about what the company is doing, or point out to them the legal, environmental or social obstacles to the project; (b) submit a shareholder resolution, and (c) possibly find out more about what they are planning — information

that may be otherwise hard to obtain (asking at the meeting or beforehand by phone or letter).

Describing the threats of mining to your community only works with investors who have some degree of social or environmental conscience. Many only look at how much money they are making. But if they are publicized enough, your actions may work to scare off potential investors.

Writing letters to some of these large investors can be important (see below). If the company is publicly traded, it shouldn't be difficult to get their contact information. Possibilities include Sedar (Canada), Corp Watch and the US Securities Exchange Commission (USA), and Rainforest Information Centre (Australia).

Letter-writing campaigns

Letter-writing campaigns can be very effective as a way to raise the profile of a struggle. They make it difficult for government officials to gloss over the issue. They also draw their attention to a problem they may not be aware of or well informed about. More importantly, they let company officials know that the locals are not alone. International solidarity can keep local opposition leaders safe by making them more public, thus less vulnerable to human rights abuses. In Ecuador, letter campaigns helped protect activists and convince the government to drop charges against them.

2H. Direct Action

Part of the struggle may involve direct, physical, community measures to delay the exploration or exploitation process, and to stop the company from gaining ground (direct action or civil disobedience). Make every effort, however, to keep these measures nonviolent. You want the world to see the company's violence, not your own. Peaceful tactics, even though they may take longer to achieve their goal, are preferable to using violence.

Gandhi and Martin Luther King, among others, have demonstrated the effectiveness of non-violent direct action or civil disobedience, where people organize and intentionally break laws that they consider unjust. The objective is to create a crisis and foster tension, so that an organization that has refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue.

If you decide to engage in civil disobedience, it is important to train participants in the practice of

Blocking access roads, sit-ins, hunger strikes, and creative forms of non-cooperation have been used successfully by well-organized communities on every continent.

non-violent resistance (see Resources). Be aware that companies might try to infiltrate your group and urge you to undertake violent actions in order to discredit your group and land you in jail. When someone suggests violent actions, be sure you consider who that person is and what his motives might be. Consider whether committing violence really serves your purpose or not.

In order to minimize the legal impacts of direct action, prior legal counsel is absolutely necessary — and it must be good legal counsel. Direct action may or may not work depending on the level of national and local support for the mining project. It is a particularly sensitive issue at this time in history since many governments can use the term 'terrorist' against you. If they make the label stick, the power of the state and military can come crashing down on your organization. Also, if the army has an interest in the project, it is best to hold off (thus the great importance of digging deep to find out who really is behind the project). If your leaders are arrested or if your campaign loses essential backing you can pay a big price. It may also turn public opinion against your struggle, and the legal costs involved could put a severe drain on your coffer. .

Despite the risks, there are times when direct action can galvanize local opposition, and it can become a powerful symbol of resistance. Blocking access roads, sit-ins, hunger strikes, and creative forms of non-cooperation have been used successfully by well-organized communities on every continent. Keep your goal in mind and choose the most promising tactics to gain support for your position. See Resources for examples of non-violent direct action.

If you decide to go ahead with direct action, plan in advance, in detail, for best results. Make sure the setup is optimal. It can help to have members of the press and human rights observers present. Here are some planning questions you should answer: What needs to be in place to obtain the greatest benefits (e.g. have members of the press and human rights

observers present)? What are possible negative consequences, and what can be done to neutralize them? What are the likely short, medium and long-range results? What are some follow-up activities to be implemented, so the actions are not wasted?

21. If Mining Goes Forward or is Already Underway

In many cases, the concession/exploration process may already be underway when you start to organize against it. Remember, almost every action described in this section can be used throughout the process, and can be effective at any stage. *Do whatever it takes to delay or interrupt the process, at any stage.*

There may be situations in which you cannot stop the extractive process. In such cases it's important to reduce its impacts. A strong community organization, independent from mining company interests, is essential to minimizing the project's impacts.

Health precautions

If it appears that mining will go ahead, insist that the mining company take steps to assure the health of local communities. Identify possible health threats and establish a system to monitor the toxic effects of mine contaminants on local populations. Conduct a baseline survey on human health and the environment (air, water, soil, foodstuffs) to determine existing levels of heavy metals, arsenic, cyanide and other potential mine contaminants in water sources and bodies. Make sure it is done carefully and accurately, in advance of mining if possible. This is a key responsibility of the mining company. These baseline levels are necessary to measure the impact of mining activities.

Any plans to safeguard health must be tailored to how local people identify and prioritize their own health needs and access health care. Their voice must be incorporated into any proposed health programs that have any reasonable chance of success, and the programs must be inclusive and promote the rights of local communities.

Compensation

Adequate funds must be assured to compensate local communities for treating health problems, death, loss

of agricultural, fishing, and hunting capability, forced relocation, the loss of livelihood that these cause, and other negative impacts.

Community oversight

The creation of a strong community organization to do things like negotiate infrastructure or services improvements, approve new business establishments (to deny brothels and cantinas), and approve new personnel (insist on police record and community reference) may help to reduce the level of the social upheaval. The organization must remain independent and free to denounce irregularities or illegalities to the proper authorities.

Community members can set up a sampling program, to establish baselines and track environmental parameters, such as water quality, airborne particulates, health indicators, etc. This is a powerful way to keep communities involved in the process and informed about risks.

Power must be kept within the communities as much as possible — preferably in the hands of original residents. However, it is a sad fact that often the most committed individuals soon leave the communities after large-scale mining moves into town. If a single community-elected committee is responsible for negotiating with the company, the company will be less likely to divide and conquer by buying off individuals and keeping the community fragmented. While it's possible that the company will try to buy off the leaders of the committee, it's still best to have a democratically elected community-based oversight committee. The committee can also demand that the company keep from destroying certain resources, implement more environmentally sound mining practices, use less toxic substances, and find more appropriate disposal sites.

Establishing community oversight may have many other benefits in addition to reigning in company abuses. An oversight committee can be a model for other organized groups such as women's organizations,² conservation projects, small-scale community hydroelectric projects and a group to seek a municipal ecological ordinance to establish a "municipal protected area."

² Women almost never benefit from mining projects. Mining is most definitely a "man's" activity, but women are often the most impacted by mining projects. The creation of strong women's groups may play a significant role in stopping mining projects.

3. Company Tactics & Community Countermeasures

“First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you — and then you win.”

—Gandhi

The strategies in the previous section are highest priority, and most are useful at any stage of the exploitation process. This section describes a few tactics used by some companies at certain points in the process. While not all may apply in your situation, it is good to be prepared for them in advance.

Company Tactic 1 — Visit with false identity

The mining company is applying for concessions, or already owns concessions, and sends a team to assess the local situation. They want to find out the level of knowledge among the populace on the mining issue, and the degree of opposition. At this stage they may start identifying possible key community or local government persons to get on their side. They may come with a false identity (such as posing as an NGO representative) in order to obtain information.

Countermeasures

Be wary of people soliciting information without a good reason. Make sure strangers are who they say they are — get their ID information, telephone, and address, to follow up. Write down what they are proposing or offering. If they are lying, you want to be able to prove it and expose them for what they are later.

If you suspect that this may be a mining or other extractive project, study the legislation to see what their next obligatory steps are (see Section 2A).

Company Tactic 2 — Open meeting

When they have found a local ally, the company may come in openly and meet with the local government or community to talk about the project. They are very likely to arrange meetings through “friendly” local government or community officials. By this time the officials may have been promised some benefits (not just monetary).

Countermeasures

It is important to be aware that the company may use meetings as part of getting community acceptance of the project (the “social license”), in order to comply with national or regional legal obligations (this is known as a “sham consultation”). In some cases the company might carry out a meeting not telling the participants the real objective of the meeting, and use the opportunity to inform the government that the community is in full agreement with the project.

KNOW the legislation, stop any possible misuse of community meetings and, whenever necessary, clarify that meetings are not satisfying legal requirement (such as prior consultation). Keep your own minutes of the meeting, and ask the company to provide you with their minutes of the meeting. Get as much information from the company as possible: name of company officials, where they are from, addresses, telephone, and specific information on the concessions (concession code, boundaries, and physical extent in hectares). Ask them for a map showing concessions. If they cannot or will not deliver this information, it may be wise to prevent the meeting from taking place until they supply all the information you need.

Company Tactic 3 — Manufacture the social license

While negotiating with a community, the company may decide to negotiate with (and thus strengthen) a group that does not represent the community’s interests, if it feels the group will be easier to manipulate. This in itself is divisive, and is one measure used to destabilize a community’s defense mechanisms. It also can drastically upset a community’s power balance. If there are no manipulable groups in the community, the company might simply create a new one with people they can count on to support mining development.

This group will be the company’s champion in the public arena, not only defending and actively supporting the project (financially benefitting from the company’s presence all the while), but also implementing some of the company’s on-the-ground social programs. But, the most important objective is

for the false community group to give the company the legitimacy it needs to convince the public, their investors and government officials that their project has obtained the necessary social license.

If a community is able to defeat this tactic, the company and its ready-made development organization may work with nearby communities to turn these against the community which is resisting their project. The end result is inter-community animosity and a great increase in pressure on those resisting the project.

Countermeasures

Before the company has a chance to create their organization, educate community members about this tactic. If it's too late to stop, denounce it to as many people and organizations as possible to prevent the false organization from signing contracts with other organizations or government institutions. Make sure the company's investors in particular, other communities and government officials are aware that the support the false organization is giving is just that: false.

Company Tactic 4 — False front organization

If the company cannot find a willing ally among existing community organizations, it may create a new "local development organization" to smooth its way. Or it may create a parallel governing structure, or empower a pro-company leader. There may be a lot of money available right away for this new group. In Ghana, the gold mining corporations did this with youth groups, farmers' groups, faith-based groups, and women's groups. In some cases they helped create these groups, while in other cases they simply corrupted their leaders.

The company may do this before or after the EIA. Their objectives are (a) to create mistrust within the community and (b) not be seen as the Big Nasty Foreigner or Big Business, but rather as working through a trusted local organization or local person, ideally someone with a good reputation.

Countermeasures

You need to be one step ahead and try to reach those influential people before the company recruits them. Give them reliable information about the proposed project in order to get them on your side. If you are unable to do so, expose any conflict

of interest they may have or other reason to be suspicious.

If you can, show that the mining company has been dishonest in the past. Point out that the company's real interest is extracting the resources and making money, not the well-being of the community.

Company Tactic 5 — Signing trick

The company may send representatives to the homes of unemployed people promising high-paying jobs if they sign a "job application" which is really a petition showing support for the proposed mine. The Rosemont Copper Corporation did this in an effort to secure a concession in Santa Rita, Arizona. In the Zamboanga Peninsula of the Philippines, Toronto Ventures, Inc. deceived the Subanen indigenous people by having them sign a blank sheet of paper and later used it as "evidence" of their giving consent to TVI's mining project. This "signing trick" is also a form of what activists call "sham consultation."

Countermeasures

Do not fall for this trick. Be very careful before signing anything. If people cannot read, then have a trusted associate or friend read the document for them. Never sign a blank sheet of paper—make sure the heading on the paper coincides with what your signature is needed for.

Company Tactic 6 — Purchase of critical land

The company will usually attempt to purchase access routes and other critical land from local people. Sometimes this is done by forcing local farmers to sell their land at prices determined by the company. And they sometimes use land purchasing to debilitate communities.

Countermeasures

The best way to combat this is through education and organization. If people understand that selling land to the company will put their own community at risk, or that it may provoke land invasion by land traffickers wishing to "make a killing" buying and selling land, they may be less likely to sell out. Also, start community discussions about economic alternatives to mining so that people can imagine new economic opportunities if they keep their properties.

Company Tactic 7 — Offers of services, projects and jobs

The company's objective here is to seduce some of the local residents and thereby divide the community, in order to obtain the needed social license.

The company may promise services and infrastructure projects to local communities and government, such as roads, bridges, clinics, schools, a full time doctor and medical/dental care, and education scholarships. They may also offer high-paying jobs (for a while), singling out certain family members and individuals, to sow resentment and distrust. They may do this directly, or through a front organization, but everyone will know that company money is behind it.

While some promises are kept (at least at the beginning) many are not. The effect is to implant the new idea that the community is “poor,” and to make material wealth more important than cultural and social wealth.

This strategy of mining companies creates dependence on their presence and the goods and services they provide. It is important to make people aware of the dangers of this strategy and its consequences. Dependence on company services sets the society up for eventual collapse when the company leaves.

Countermeasures

This is very difficult to counter. Communities may be desperate for a road or a clinic. If there's a high rate of unemployment, many people may want to work for the company. This tactic is much more effective in areas abandoned by governments, where communities may not have real alternatives. The way to address this is to try to get local governments or friendly foundations to provide services and infrastructure. By now you should have distributed as much information about the company and the project's harmful impacts as possible and enlisted the support of local, regional, national and international allies. Constantly remind them that whatever the company is offering, it is not worth the permanent and devastating social, environmental, and economic costs of the project.

Reflect before signing. If your community wants to negotiate an economic deal with an extractive company, let them know that sudden influxes of money have resulted in long term poverty for the majority, irreplaceable loss of social and cultural values, long-term environmental degradation. If, on

the other hand, they value their community's well-being in all its dimensions — not just the economic one — then they will oppose the companies and their fake version of development and “well-being.”

You will definitely want to create economic alternatives to mining in your community.

Company Tactic 8 — Infiltration and surveillance

If enough money is at stake, the company may resort to spying on the opposition to learn about the community's plans and actions. They may set up digital video cameras and electronic recording equipment to monitor key spots. Occasionally, companies have recorded phone conversation and meetings, and intercepted the e-mail of community activists.

They may enlist or plant spies in your community or organization to gather information to use against you. The spy may become a core member of your group, joining protest actions and hosting action meetings. Usually the spy is there to gather information, but sometimes the spy may push the group to do actions (usually illegal ones) that in the end hurt your cause.

Countermeasures

When discussing delicate matters, use the safest means of communication possible, such as face-to-face meetings in places unlikely to be monitored by the company or government, and only with people you trust. Land-line telephone communication is much safer than cell-phone, but not completely. Emails are not safe. There are programs to encrypt email text, such as Hushmail (www.hushmail.com). These are much safer than regular email, but still not 100% safe.

There is almost always the risk of being infiltrated and spied on, so this is to be expected and should not make you or your organization overly paranoid. If you discover a spy, denounce this person and the company publicly (and non-violently), and make this violation known to the local and national media and to your international allies. Ultimately, however, the best strategy is to make sure your group maintains its moral integrity and is supportive of one another.

Company Tactic 9 — SLAPP suits

SLAPP (Strategic Litigation Against Public Participation) lawsuits are typically civil or criminal

defamation lawsuits brought by companies or their allies. Their purpose is to intimidate local opponents, and to cost them time and money defending themselves.

Countermeasures

Hire a good lawyer from the start to advise you, and try to form tight alliances with well-known international organizations, so that the company knows that when they take you on, you will be supported by these international organizations. Most “responsible” large companies won’t go after peasants because it will make them look ridiculous, especially if they know that someone like Amnesty International or Global Witness is ready to back you.

Company Tactic 10 — Company claims it’s no use fighting

The mining company may claim that if you fight them off, another mining company will then come in with a less community sensitive, less ‘environmentally friendly’ proposal. ‘You are better off with us,’ they claim. Such claims are nonsense.

Countermeasures

Let them know that any other company will be faced with the same opposition as the one you just mounted for them. Business people would think twice about investing millions of dollars in re-developing a ‘controversial’ concession surrounded by communities which, through their initial fight, have grown stronger socially, culturally and perhaps even economically. However, one must still remain vigilant.

Company Tactic 11 — Lawsuits, trumped up charges, and death threats

If the company feels threatened by the opposition, it may start using aggressive tactics, such as lawsuits, trumped-up charges to imprison the opposition’s leaders, or even death threats.

In order to publicly discredit main opposition leaders, a company may spread false rumors or manufacture false crimes. In some cases, companies have been suspected of paying minors to say they have been raped, thus triggering criminal lawsuits. Similarly, they may pay persons to say they have been robbed or assaulted by key leaders. For this, leaders have to be aware these things can happen and to be careful not to fall into these kinds of traps.

In Intag, Ecuador’s case, when the company “nice guy” tactics failed, strong-arm approaches were used, including paying local/state police to harass anti-mining activists. This can escalate into death threats against opposition leaders.

Countermeasures

Get in touch with Human Rights organizations you can trust and report these tactics right away. Ask them to periodically visit your area and have them produce reports you can use at all levels to denounce the company’s actions. Try to get international observers to live in the communities and record aggressive and/or illegal behavior.

If key leaders receive death threats, they may have to be protected by other community members around-the-clock. In some cases, depending on the trustworthiness of the police, you can ask for 24 hour police protection. You may need to provide “bonus pay.” Be sure to denounce all threats to the authorities. An international letter campaign (e.g. Amnesty International and Global Response) can also protect community leaders.

A paper trail is indispensable. Keep all notes, minutes of meetings, copies of documents, photographs — anything that you might be able to use later in courts or to discredit the company — in a safe place (or several safe places).

Company Tactic 12 — Security forces, paramilitaries, beatings, disappearances

In the face of significant opposition, companies may hire security firms to protect their personnel and infrastructure (such as mining camps). This is often meant only to intimidate you, but the next step is paramilitarization — a very serious stage of the struggle where your physical well-being may be threatened.

Countermeasures

If you suspect this may happen, highlight the threat in advance. Many communities and governments will reject the presence of paramilitaries or private security forces. Check to see if these “security” companies are licensed, and if the personnel are licensed to carry firearms. Human rights organizations may be able to access information about the paramilitary groups that you may not be able to. Take photographs and make video or audio recordings as evidence of their activities.

Security forces, hired thugs, and other persons working with the company may resort to beatings and disappearances, so you should be prepared for this possibility. Share reports of any human rights violations with international human rights organizations such as Amnesty International and Global Witness to immediately make it an international issue (including the UN, or the equivalent of the Interamerican Human Rights Commission or Court). You can seek protective measures beforehand if you can prove death threats. This will force the country to put in place such measures, and also brings it into the open and may help prevent crimes.

If you suspect that the company is paying police to harass protesters, keep backup copies of important papers and/or computer files in a separate place, in case they are seized or destroyed. Obtain copies of contracts between the police or armed forces and the company, and publicize these (you may have to go through the Public Defender or Ombudsman, through a friendly Parliamentarian or Congress person, or resort to using the courts).

If key leaders receive death threats, they may have to be protected by other community members around-the-clock (see previous section).

Company Tactic 13 — The company comes back

If you succeed in your efforts to stop the mining, the same company or a different company may come back later and try again, perhaps with different tactics.

Countermeasures

Be watchful for possible preliminary activity that would indicate another threat, and stop it before it gathers momentum.

Keep checking the Internet for rumors of sale of concessions to other companies. Make sure you update your web page highlighting the investment risks of the project. If you get wind of news of a company interested in buying out the concessions, try and write to them immediately, highlighting the problems that may be crucial for them, especially from an investment point of view (risks of civil disorders, take-over of project facilities, possible protected species impacted, and opposition of local communities and or government)

4. Conclusion and Case Histories

Success is Possible!

With hard work, patience and persistence, assaults by extraction industries can be defeated, or their impact can be greatly reduced. The reward is the continued good health of the community and its environment.

Tambogrande, Peru

In 2005, the Manhattan Minerals Corporation announced plans to build a massive open-pit gold and copper mine in Tambogrande, Peru. Nearly 50% of the population would have been displaced. But community members were determined to protect their clean water source, their mango, papaya, and lemon harvests, and their way of life. After many demonstrations (some of them with ten thousand

people), road blockades, and a popular referendum rejecting the company's proposals, the company finally withdrew its plan.

Intag, Ecuador

The communities of the Intag region of Ecuador are an example of successful resistance to mining projects. DECOIN, a local environmental NGO, helped organize the resistance and has been the principal organization confronting the mining threat since 1995. DECOIN said "One thing we feel was essential to the success was to take the struggle out of the local scenario as soon as possible. To do this, we simultaneously worked on the local, regional, national and international levels. This included educating all the local stakeholders (including local governments) on the social and environmental impacts of

mineral, forming local, regional and national allies, helping to create local alternative economic activities, constantly informing the rest of the country and the world of the threats and situation on the ground, and presenting several legal challenges to the project.

A fundamental key to success in Intag was the creation of many civil-society organizations working in community-based economic development. Strong community organizations are essential in achieving success when confronting extractive industries. The

support of all local governments also played heavily in the successful outcome, as well as the creation of many alternative forms of development- such as community ecological tourism and shade-grown coffee production. There are many, many other measures that, together with communities and other organizations and groups, we implemented.

The key during the entire struggle is to remain *relentlessly vigilant and persistent!*

5. Resources

Please note: this section highlights a few resources out of many that are available. For much more information, please see this Guide's complete Resources section which is posted at www.globalresponse.org

General

Search these sites for detailed information on the impacts of mining:

Mining Watch Canada
www.miningwatch.ca

Mines and Communities
www.minesandcommunities.org

Oxfam America
www.oxfamamerica.org

Earthworks
www.earthworksaction.org

Banks and International Financial Institutions

The Bank Information Center (BIC) can help you get information about banks that may provide loans to the mining company in your community. BIC can also help you pressure the banks to deny loans or to enforce strict environmental and social standards if they do provide loans to the mining company in your community.

1100 H Street, NW Suite 650
Washington, DC 20005 USA
Phone: +202-737-7752
info@bicusa.org • www.bicusa.org

Environmental Impact Assessments

First Nations Environmental Assessment Technical Working Group Toolkit. The purpose of this toolkit is to assist First Nations in British Columbia (BC), but it is applicable to many places. The focus is on communities whose rights and title and treaty rights may be affected by a project undergoing an EA.
www.fneatwg.org/toolkit.html

Human Rights Impact Assessments

Rights & Democracy developed a methodology for assessing the impact of companies on the human rights of communities, which has been implemented in many nations and is available in written form (*Investing in Human Rights*).

Search for *Volume 1: Human Rights Impact Assessments for Foreign Investment Projects*, and *Volume 2: Getting It Right: A Step-by-Step Guide to Assess the Impact of Foreign Investments on Human Rights* at www.dd-rd.ca/site

Legal Assistance

Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL) uses international law and institutions to protect the environment, promote human health, and ensure a just and sustainable society. CIEL provides

legal counsel, policy research, analysis, advocacy, education, training, and capacity building.

1350 Connecticut Avenue, NW Suite #1100

Washington, DC 20036

Phone: +202-785-8700

Info@ciel.org • www.ciel.org

Environmental Defender Law Center

EDLC protects the human rights of individuals and communities in developing countries who are fighting against mines, dams and other projects that harm the environment. EDLC enlists pro bono lawyers from premier law firms to defend environmental defenders, and help communities conduct "local votes" to stop mining projects.

For information on Local Votes, see:

www.edlc.org/resources/local-votes/law/votes-and-human-rights

Environmental Defender Law Center

812 S. Third Avenue, Bozeman, MT 59715, USA

Tel: +406-586-8294, Info@edlc.org, www.edlc.org

Letter-writing Campaigns

Global Response. Global Response can help you get the attention of decision makers in government and corporations by organizing international letter-writing campaigns. These campaigns can greatly increase your chance of success in defending your community's rights and natural resources.

PO Box 7490; Boulder, Colorado 80306 USA.

Tel: +303-444-0306

www.globalresponse.org

action@globalresponse.org

Media

"Preparing the Press Packet," published by EE and Media Gazette

This is an excellent resource that will help you provide the media with concise, timely and compelling newsworthy documents and information concerning your organization, its issues and the events about which you want to receive news coverage.

www.uwsp.edu/cnr/neeap/Media/preparing_the_press_packet.htm

For assistance on how to write a Press Release, see the following websites:

www.publicityinsider.com/release.asp

www.prwebdirect.com/pressreleasetips.php

The CAAT Media Guide:

www.caat.org.uk/getinvolved/mediaguide.php

Monbiot: An Activists Guide to Exploiting the Media: www.urban75.com/Action/media.html

Direct Action

Handbook for Non Violent Action

by Sanderson Beck

World Peace Communications, 2002

www.san.beck.org/NAH1-Nonviolence.html

The Ruckus Society

P.O. Box 28741

Oakland, CA 94604, Phone: +510-763-7078.

www.ruckus.org

The Ruckus Society offers trainings and other resources for organizations planning direct actions. Ruckus Society trainers have years of experience successfully teaching, planning, and carrying out such actions.

198 Methods of Non-Violent Action

http://65.109.42.80/organizations/org/198_methods-1.pdf

Technical Assistance and Technical Research Sources

The Canary Institute for Mining, Environment and Health conducts research and education projects on mining and human health.

Suite 508, City Centre Building,

250 City Centre Avenue

Ottawa, Ontario K1R 6K7, Canada

tel. +613-569-3439

info@canaryinstitute.ca

www.canaryinstitute.ca

The Center for Science in Public Participation

CSP2 provides training and technical advice to grassroots groups on water pollution and natural resource issues, especially those related to mining,

224 North Church Avenue, Bozeman, Montana, USA

59715, Csp2@csp2.org

www.csp2.org

Research on Corporations

Corpwatch. CorpWatch investigates and exposes corporate violations of human rights, environmental crimes, fraud and corruption around the world. They work to foster global justice, independent media activism and democratic control over corporations and are a good source of information on governments and corporate practices.

1611 Telegraph Avenue, #720

Oakland, CA 94612 USA

Tel: +510-271-8080

www.corpwatch.org

Information on company contracts and agreements:

Tech Agreement

contracts.onecle.com/harken/cab.apa.1994.08.01.shtml

Information on companies that are publicly traded in the U.S.:

US Securities and Exchange Commission

www.secinfo.com • www.sec.gov/edgar.shtml

Information on companies that are publicly traded in Canada:

SEDAR

www.sedar.com

Information on companies that are publicly traded in the United Kingdom:

www.companieshouse.gov.uk

Mines and Communities

www.minesandcommunities.org

The Data Center

www.datacenter.org

Essential Information

www.essential.org

The Corporate Research Project

www.corp-research.org

The Corporate Accountability Project

www.corporations.org

Minesite.com for independent news and commentary on companies:

www.minesite.com/companies.html

The Multinational Monitor magazine

Centre for Research on Latin America and the Caribbean (this website contains a large amount of resources by company and by country):
www.yorku.ca/cerlac/mining.htm

If Mining Proceeds

For information about mining struggles and successful strategies for challenging corporations see Jeff Conant and Pam Fadem, 2008, *A Community Guide to Environmental Health*.

Hesperian Foundation, Berkeley, California.

www.hesperian.org/publications_download_EHB.php

Chapter 21 contains helpful information on how to protect and restore the health of people and ecosystems after a mine operation has begun in your community and after such operations close down.

For excellent information on understanding the economic costs and benefits of mining see Oxfam America, 2009, *Metals Mining and Sustainable Development in Central America: An Assessment of Benefits and Costs* at

www.oxfamamerica.org/newsandpublications

Foundations and Other Sources of Financial Support

See additional Resources section for this Guide at www.globalresponse.org

Books, Articles, Reports and Films

See additional Resources section section for this Guide at www.globalresponse.org

Appendix A: Using Local Media

Local and regional media are vital to successful campaigning, and they are too influential to be ignored. Local activists can make a big difference by having a coherent strategy for approaching the media in their area. Don't worry if you've not worked with the media before — here are 10 tips to start you on your way.

1. Make media a priority

Media is vital to the success of your campaign, but is often not thought about until the end of a campaign planning process. By making it central from the start, you can be much more effective.

2. Offer news

The media have a very narrow idea of what is newsworthy. Something is only news if it is new. Discussions of opinions, no matter how important, are not news, but you can make them into news. Be imaginative!

3. Keep control of your message

Decide what you want to say and say it as simply as possible. Stick to your point and keep repeating it. Ensure that members of your group are all giving the same message. Don't undermine strong arguments by adding weak ones or allow anyone to lead you into tangents or trivialities. Be calm and concise.

4. Make it local

The typical local newspaper is unconcerned about anything beyond its own area. Make your news local.

5. Keep it human

A death is a tragedy, a million deaths is a statistic. Finding a human angle is well worth the effort. Is an unlikely person (such as a retired colonel) joining a protest? Has a local celebrity endorsed your campaign?

6. Use press releases — but don't rely on them

Issue a press release whenever your group acts or responds to events. It must be about something that has happened, not just an opinion. ("The group stated that it was outrageous..." rather than "It is outrageous..."). You can find advice on press releases in the CAAT Media Guide (see below).

7. Talk to journalists

Very few journalists will act on a press release alone if they don't know the group concerned. Phone around all the journalists who have been sent your release and brace yourself for disappointments. Half of them will claim not to have received it and most of the others won't be interested. Keep going. The chances are that you will find someone who wants to know more. And if you phone after every release they'll get used to you.

8. Build contacts

Don't stop phoning journalists who don't give you coverage. They're more likely to do so once you've spoken a few times. Stay in touch especially with those who are interested. Eventually, you will find them phoning you for comments. A good relationship with one or two journalists is worth a hundred press releases.

9. Be available

Journalists often need a quote on short notice. If they can rely on you to give that quote, they will keep coming back. Try to ensure that a campaign spokesperson is available at short notice as often as possible. This doesn't always have to be the same person. (You can have a rest!) A good solution often involves a mobile phone for media calls.

10. Keep going

Media liaison is hard work, especially when you're new to it. Don't give up! The more you do, the more contacts you will acquire and the easier it will become. Keep your press releases and phone calls regular.



Police attacking mining resisters at Intag, Ecuador (photo: Carlos Zorrilla)



Rosia Poieni Copper mine in Romania (photo: Tibor Kocsis, Flora Film)



Mining damage in Bellavista, Costa Rica (photo: Scott Cardiff, Earthworks)



Mine dump at Porgera, Papua New Guinea. Mining leaves huge piles of contaminated material and ugly scars (photo: Lloyd Cutler, Earthworks)



Contaminated water flowing from Polar Star Mine, Skamania County, WA. Poisons from mines can poison drinking water, kill fish and vegetation, and contaminate crops. (photo: Earthworks)



Fish killed by contaminated water. Poisons from mines released into rivers can kill fish and vegetation (photo: China Environmental News).