



## **A NOTE BEFORE READING**

THIS REPORT WAS PUBLISHED IN NOVEMBER 2009 AND HAS BEEN KEPT CONFIDENTIAL IN ORDER TO GIVE THE PARTIES INVOLVED AMPLE TIME TO RESPONSE.

IN SEPTEMBER 2010 WE RECEIVED AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FROM THE DE BEERS CHAIRMAN'S OFFICE OF OUR REPORT AND ACCOMPANYING LETTER. THIS WAS AFTER WE TRIED TO PURSUADE SOME INVESTORS INTO BUYING THE COLVILLE DUMP.

SINCE THEN, DE BEERS HAS BEEN VERY COÖPERATIVE AND REACTED POSITIVELY ON THE MATTER.

THE RESULTS ARE THAT NOW 1/3 OF THE COLVILLE DUMP HAS BEEN GRANTED TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND THAT FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN FUTURE HOPE AND DE BEERS ARE BEING FACILITATED BY THE JEWELTREE FOUNDATION AND FUTURE HOPE'S LAWYER.

The Colville dump is still for sale and anyone interested can contact us directly, we would be happy to assist further.

# FUTURE HOPE MINING

illegal diamond mining in De Beers' backyard

A travelogue about the visit to the mining dumps in Kimberley South Africa November 2009

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## Diamond Mining in Kimberley Mining De Beers' Colville Dump

By M. Angenent - Member of the Jeweltree Foundation

In november 2009 me and a group of international Jewellers left for Kimberley. We where invited by mr Thomas Siepelmeijer, a lifelong promotor of small scale mining and currently working on solar and wind power energy projects worldwide. Mr Siepelmeijer was the first to promote a group of diamond miners in Lesotho and helped them in selling their community mined diamonds. What he had to share with us this time far exceeded our expectations.

Kimberley is the diamond capital of South Africa. It is home to the Big Hole, the largest man dug diamond excavation in the world and name giver to the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme, a sheme initiated to counter illegal diamond mining and stop the funding of the so called 'blood diamonds' that fund

terrorist activities, so when mr Siepelmeijer mentioned to us that there was "illegal" diamond mining going on in the very hearth of Kimberley we found upon him. However, the story was even more surprising than we expected.

We headed of to the Colville mining dump, an old tailing a stone trow away from and containing the debris of the Big Hole. Since the Big Hole is not operational since 1914 this tailing is lying bare for almost a century. As it still contains little diamonds some of the unemployed people in Kimberley try to make an 'illegal' living by excavating these dumps.

The tailing is property of De Beers and as access is not officially granted. Therefore mining is illegal and fined 1000Rand (\$135,-). A lot of money for the poor people

trying to make a living zifting through the dusty soil. The occasional 'lucky finds' are not eligible for the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme and therefore sold to the scavengers who offer their 'services' around the tailings.

In order to obtain a legal status the 'illegal miners', represented by mr Steven Smith, youth leader of the Khoisan, South Africa's oldest ethnic group, approached De Beers. De Beers kindly offered their services by providing a 6 month course after which the Future Hope Diamond Company was erected. This was 2002, and since then no official right to actually mine the tailings was granted, nor has the community company been invited to negotiations regarding sales of some of these tailings, although this was allegedly promised.



# Diamond Mining in Kimberley

## From De Beers to Future Hope

De Beers mining operations came into existence after a merger and obtaining rights over the Big Hole diamond mine in 1888. In the years following the mining operations in Kimberley flourished and when mining ceased in 1914 the Big Hole had produced over 14 million carat of diamonds. An estimated value of 5.6 billion dollars to today's standards.

The Khoisan people and other ethnic groups who lived in South Africa were employed as labourers and helped accumulate the enormous wealth for the Company and the British Crown.

De Beers has been mining in Kimberley for over 120 years and although underground operations have ceased, De Beers' presence in Kimberley continues in the processing of the tailings recourses by the Combined Treatment Plan and the Big Hole project. Allegedly marketed as means to invest in tourism and support the local communities that surround the Kimberley mines. Today the Diamond Trading Company (DTC) still resides in Kimberley and houses in one of the two biggest buildings, the other belonging to ESCOM, South Africa's energy giant.

The Khoisan remain unemployed, underprivileged and see no other means but to reside to illegal mining activities. The establishing of their community based mining consortium in 2002, The Future Hope Diamond Company, with help and training of De Beers has been to no avail before our intervention.

Numerous applications and meetings have been held to address the points and difficulties

facing cooperation and support between Future Hope and De Beers and although De Beers, in person of their representative agreed (on Feb 1st 2008) that the whole operation could not be subscribed as "a successful story of De Beers", no efforts have been taken so far into offering a more positive solution. The only analogy remaining was that of "a cook with the wrong ingredients" although the only ingredient missing is a place to mine legally.

So far, applications for sites other than the

**"The purpose of the company is to make profits for its shareholders, but to do so in a way that makes a real and lasting contribution to the communities in which it operates"**

**- Sir Ernest Oppenheimer  
Chairman, De Beers Group 1929-1957**

**(quote used on the first page of De Beers' Best Practice Principles)**

Colville dump have also proven to be unsuccessful, or could not be granted for various reasons. In one case a request for application to the Directorate of Mineral Development of the Northern Cape was refused because another company already had a mining licence on the area for the mineral they applied for. This other company was De Beers Consolidated Mines Limited.

Matthew, husband, father and diamond miner.

After his training Matthew now uses safety gloves and a large stone to grind down the smaller stones and remove the hard soil. For the larger rocks he can refer to the more sophisticated 'hit it with a shovel' system.





**"Our only risk is the sudden discovery of new mines, which human nature will work recklessly to the detriment of us all"**

**- Cecil Rhodes  
Founder of De Beers**



## Some try to make a living Others try to make a life...

Finding some shade under one of the spare trees that thrive on the Colville dump, Hendrik and Benedict can enjoy their outlook on the building of the Diamond Trading Company in the far distance.

Both men are lifelong friends and after loosing their jobs and being unemployed for weeks had little options but to refer to illegally mining the Colville Dump.

Working their for 3 months now however has not been extremely profitable. Their total findings accumulated to zero. The risk of sifting the dust and gravel for hours and hours in a 35 degree celcius shade with no other means but an old

barrel a shovel are far outweighed by the risk of being arrested and fined a 1000 Rand.

But although Hendrik and Benedict have not been lucky, others have. The story goes that one of the miners was fortunate enough to recover a large diamond which he was able to sell on the black market. The money was used to buy his mother a house and throw his friends a party. Fact or false, the story works as a great motivator for the others to continue their diggings. The buyer obviously remains anonymus.

# WANTED



## Help wanted to support the illegal miners in Kimberley



If you wish to support these people and help them obtaining legal mining ground you can make a donation to the Jeweltree Foundation under the reference of "Kimberley Progress".

We guarantee that 100% of your donation will be used to assist these people in their rightful claims to the lands they lost 100 years ago and which their forefathers have been roaming for 5000 years.

Thank you!

### credits

picture on page 1  
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The Jeweltree Foundation is a non-profit that supports small scale mining initiatives.

We offer a track and trace system for jewellery made with precious metals, diamonds and or gems originating from Small Scale Mining projects worldwide and promote these projects by means of brochures, pamphlets and others.

We do this to make these projects more attractive for large manufacturers to work with directly.

For more information on how to be eligible for the sale of Jeweltree Certified Jewellery please visit us at: [www.jeweltreefoundation.org](http://www.jeweltreefoundation.org)