

Mining and Faith Day of Reflection

Thursday, 12 October 2023 from 13:00-17:30 UK time

Theme: How can faith-industry engagement build and sustain trust?

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1. Introduction

The 2023 Day of Reflection was convened on Thursday, 12 October by co-chairs the Rt Reverend David Urquhart and Reverend Jennifer Potter. The meeting, which was held at Church House, Westminster and online, provided a further opportunity for courageous dialogue between global faith leaders and mining executives.

The purpose of the meeting was to respond to the challenge of the critical trust deficit between the mining industry and broader society and to better understand what role this unique dialogue between faith and industry and other stakeholders, globally, nationally and locally, can play in reducing and even eliminating that trust deficit. Critical to this, is how the unique role of the MFRI can translate into tangible action that both helps to ensure that mining serves the common good and makes a demonstrable impact on the lives and livelihoods of those most significantly impacted by the mining industry.

Thank you to all participants at the Day of Reflection; for your continued support to and engagement in this courageous dialogue, for your vulnerability and openness, and for participating in such a respectful way.

This report is a summary of the conversations that took place during the course of the meeting, conducted under Chatham House rules.

Opening Prayer from Reverend Jennifer Potter

Heavenly Father, we meet together today in an atmosphere of openness and trust. We give thanks that such a diverse group of people are able to meet and share ideas in such an atmosphere of goodwill and friendship. We give thanks for the commitment, passion and skill of all the people gathered here today. Yet we meet today aware that we live in challenging times. Not least the violence and bloodshed both in Ukraine and in Israel/Palestine. We live in times when people's trust in their political leaders, and in many other leaders too, is at a low ebb. And so we ask for strength and perseverance as we seek to establish trust and trustworthiness in the work that we do. So, we pray for our deliberations today that each of us may gain new insights, be inspired to new initiatives and forge new bonds of friendship for the sake of the communities we seek to serve. All this we ask in the name of the man from Nazareth who worked to ensure the inclusion of all God's children in the new dispensation he was inaugurating. In his name we pray. Amen.

2. Setting the scene

The following provides a summary of opening reflections on Trust:

- Trust is not the same as being truthful. Trust is how confident we feel in predicting the actions of the other.
- Trust can be based on integrity or competence or both. Integrity-based trust is when you can trust the other to do the right thing. Competency-based trust is when you can trust the other to do the thing right. Mining companies have flourished at competency-based trust in the past. Integrity-based trust may be harder to establish and maintain.
- There is a difference between broad and narrow scope trust. Broad trust is where one trusts an entire group or sector to act in a particular way, for example the aviation industry. Narrow scope trust is where one doesn't necessarily trust a whole group, but one does trust individual actors within it.
- When it comes to trust, the messenger is the message. Groups tend to trust people who look, and sound like them. The challenge here is that minority and underrepresented groups often find it very hard to get their message across.
- Trust depends on an appropriate argument against self-interest.

The following provides a summary of opening suggestions on the role of the MFRI in relation to trust and the trust deficit:

- **Consider the legacy of mining** when seeking to build trust both in terms of reconciliation but also in relation to building a broad-based consensus in society around the future of mining (reference to Joint Action 2 in 'Building Trust for the Common Good: Partnerships to strengthen mutual respect and resilience in mining communities' by Jane Nelson and Chris Musser).
- **Commitment to a more manageable set of standards** determining what good and responsible mining looks like (reference to Joint Action 3 in 'Building Trust for the Common Good: Partnerships to strengthen mutual respect and resilience in mining communities' by Jane Nelson and Chris Musser).
- **Focus on how responsible mining can be a catalyst for the betterment of societies**, particularly in parts of the world that need development the most (reference to Joint Action 4 in 'Building Trust for the Common Good: Partnerships to strengthen mutual respect and resilience in mining communities' by Jane Nelson and Chris Musser).

3. Panel 1: Summary of insights shared by the panel on critical issues impacting trust

- Dialogue, underpinned by engagement, is key to building trust. Key elements of this engagement include learning about each other's culture, our differences and conditional acceptance of the other, looking for common interests and also striving for consensus.
- Recognition of the interplay between current geopolitical, societal and technological megatrends which are creating highly volatile environments. Recognition of the critical nature of mining within this context; producing the metals and minerals necessary for the energy transition.
- Building trust with the workforce and managing safety risks (and fatalities in particular) is critical, as well as ensuring that companies provide a respectful workplace free from sexism, racism, discrimination, and harassment. Building a relationship built on trust with the workforce and by extension the community is critical.
- Recognition that the trust deficit affects every sphere of human activity, not just particular industries. For industry, and mining in particular, there are three major elements militating against trust.
 - Legacy issues
 - Image control that disguises truth or unpleasant realities

- The balance of power (Reference to Apostolic Exhortation, '[Laudate Deum](#)'). Recognise it is very difficult to build trust between people or institutions that are equal in power, but even more difficult where there is a significant imbalance of power.

Learnings from the story of Zacchaeus

In the Christian tradition, the story of Zacchaeus can give insight as to how challenges around trust could be resolved.

19 He entered Jericho and was passing through it. ² A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich. ³ He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. ⁴ So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. ⁵ When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today." ⁶ So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. ⁷ All who saw it began to grumble and said, "He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner." ⁸ Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much." ⁹ Then Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰ For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost." ([Link](#))

Reflections on this passage from the Christian Bible.

- Zacchaeus had to come down from his high position in order to talk and relate to people at their level, in ways and in a language, which they understood.
- Zacchaeus was not put off by the dissenting voices, those who wanted to manipulate the situation or to influence the outcome.
- He was able to disclose what had happened, to show contrition and offer reparation.

The story illustrates three important elements of building trust: of disclosure and transparency; of contrition; and of reparation.

In South Africa, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was intended to listen to the stories of those people who suffered under apartheid, to give them the space to speak about their experiences, and to provide reparation. The process allowed people to speak about their experiences but failed to ensure reparation.

3.1. Panel insights into a common way forward

- Ensure that time is taken to listen to communities directly about local mining activity, while also understanding how communities come to key collective decisions and their timeframe for decision making, to ensure those processes are well understood and integrated into the dialogue.
- Ensure the application of international human rights law and address possible gaps between host country commitments to international legal instruments, integration into domestic legal systems, and local level implementation.
- Agreement making: recognise the need to create clear timelines on how companies are going to deliver on agreements, who is responsible for following up, and how communities can seek accountability and regular monitoring.
- Seek community consent/Free, prior and informed consent.

4. Breakout session 1: Summary of reflections shared by participants within their groups

During breakout session 1, participants separated into four groups and were invited to discuss the following topics:

Share practical examples where trust has been broken with communities local to mining or elsewhere and the learnings from that.

Share practical examples where trust has been built with communities local to mining or elsewhere and the learnings from that.

4.1. Participant reflections

- Recognition that the conversation is located within the broader erosion of trust in society, in institutions, in science and in experts.
- Trust is multidirectional, as is the fracturing of trust. A break of trust in mining is not usually a break in the A to B break of trust, rather its multidirectional, e.g. between the community and the company, but also the company and the government that is regulating it, or the communities and their institutions and the rule of law.
- Harms in the past will create a legacy.
- Transitions within both the community and company (such as a transition of ownership or changes in mine site personnel) can have negative impacts on the fulfilment of commitments.
 - Building trust can take a significant amount of time. When you replace someone in a leadership role who is party to an agreement you need to allow sufficient time to transfer the trusting relationship.
- Lack of intentionality in meeting commitments and a lack of mechanisms to hold one another to account, i.e. promises being made and not kept.
- Power disparity, in particular during community consultation.
- Issues could include unemployment, socio-economic development, community violence, drug abuse, domestic violence.

4.2. Specific cases mentioned

- Brazil: Relationship between Vale and Xikrin do Cateté Indigenous Peoples
- South Africa: Activities of Zama Zama gangs and informal mining of the Johannesburg tailings dumps
- Ecuador: Relationship between Catholic Church and mining sector
- Canada: Recognition of past human rights abuses perpetrated through the residential schools system

5. Breakout session 2: Summary of reflections shared by participants within their groups

During breakout session 2, participants again separated into four groups and were invited to discuss the following topic:

*Practical ways in which mining companies and faith leaders (local, national, global) can engage and leverage this engagement to build trust within communities local to **mine sites**.*

5.1. Participant reflections: Components of how to build trust

- Listening is critical and is a long process.
- Recognise that trust building is a continuum.
- Recognise the difference between building trust and doing good things.
- Trust building is a contact sport and requires regular face-to-face meetings.
- Critical that people visit sites to understand the mine and the conditions.
- Recognise that a single incident will not build trust.

- Orient engagement away from a transactional dynamic to a relational one – where the end game is mutual flourishing rather than profit and benefit.
- Consider the increased use of multidisciplinary anthropologists in seeking to understand and engage with communities where they are.
- Adhere to international human rights law at a minimum including the UN Guiding Principles on Human Rights whilst also adhering to domestic legal structures in host countries.
- Adhere to good practice guidance, including on consultation in particular:
 - Ensure consultation is participatory.
 - Ensure consultation is undertaken with the true representatives of the community (e.g. identified through transparent and open elections).
- Acknowledge and reflect on legacy issues.
 - Act with humility and admit (with specificity) to mistakes of the past.
 - Behave with intent and empathy; you cannot say sorry and move on, you walk with people. Even when they ask you to leave, you return and then you work out in time what are the appropriate tools to compensate and reconcile.
 - Recognise that initial interactions are critical and will leave a lasting impression.
- Commitment
 - Hardwire through agreements.
 - It is critical that these agreements are supported by relationships.
 - Be flexible to changes to these agreements but ensure that everyone understands the changes and agrees to a new set of circumstances. Ensure there is a transparent process in place for that.
 - Dialogue must lead to intentionality in meeting commitments and finding the mechanisms to hold one another to account – lack of trust comes from promises being made and not kept.
- Skills and competencies
 - Empathy, integrity, honesty, authenticity.
 - Ensure you are hiring the right people to interface with communities – empathy is critical.
 - Consider peer-to-peer learning for general managers.
 - Consider supplementing the role of a general manager with a general manager level person responsible for social performance.
 - Bring in experts to help communities understand what they want/need.
- Explore the role/response of leadership, including the senior executive team, the CEO and the board, in cases where there is an incident that risks a breakdown of trust.
 - Consider the distance between the operations and corporate support.
 - Consider when senior teams at corporate level or the CEO become involved.

5.2. Participant reflections: On the specific role for the MFRI

5.2.1. Convenor and Catalyst

- Faith groups have the ability to convene as a neutral voice and act as interlocutor between communities and companies (more challenging in countries where the church is highly politicised).
- Create a safe space for listening.
- Encourage vulnerability.
- Share in the humanity of leadership.
- Enable a better understanding of others.
- Support the development of a shared vision and commitment to the common good at the global level as well as at the local level.

5.2.2. Address power disparities

- Support the capacity building of communities and in particular their ability to engage, e.g. improved negotiating skills.

5.2.3. Engage on thematic issues

- Gender-based violence
- Artisanal mining
- Mine closure
- Circular economies, in particular in relation to the conservation of mass, i.e. minerals will last but future generations will have to mine them from landfill rather than from fresh seams.

5.2.4. Local level dialogue and engagement

- Create local level (site level including community) dialogue.
- Participate in independent reviews or the oversight of due diligence, e.g. human rights impact assessments.
- Help companies to understand the local context, including the system of local beliefs and ideologies.
- Act as independent providers of capacity building for local communities.
- Act as local partners to help identify the needs and concerns of vulnerable people.
- Implement partner for health, education, food security, possibly in line with Laudato Si' action plans.
- Support development of a road map/shared vision at site level.

5.2.5. Teaching and learning

- Support the mining industry to share its activities via theological working groups producing outputs and ensuring grassroots translation. Create space for faith groups to bring in the perspectives of local communities.
 - Provide educational summary to faith leaders on mining or create a channel of communication where mining and faith groups can learn from one another.
 - Understand faith communities better from a mining perspective – what more can be done for leaders/local mine site workers to understand faith communities better (e.g. MFRI could spend time with company board members)?
 - Develop training for faith leaders close to mine sites to help them become more curious about mining and help mine workers and their families in their area.
- Church could share its institutional experience of sharing a message, translating it into different jurisdictions, cultures, and across different generations.

6. Panel 2: Summary insights on how MFRI can contribute to addressing the trust deficit.

‘The road is made by walking it’.

- Focus on the tangible ways in which to secure the futures of miners and their families. This is only possible when mining companies secure the futures of communities beyond the lives of mines including rehabilitating the environment.
- Look at opportunities for national level engagement including in Brazil.
- Consider themes where we can share learnings and engage in practical projects including gender-based violence, defending human rights defenders, the just transition agenda and the circular economy.
- Consider the impact of conflict multipliers like social media and climate change, e.g. on mine closure.
- Bring in non-ICMM companies working in gold and copper or lithium and cobalt.
- Engage in established processes looking at merging standards.
- Ensure that the continuous dialogue is multi-generational.
- Relationships are critical and must be founded on trust, integrity, authenticity and durability.
- Place value of people above profit.
- Consider the setup of conversations at the local level to eliminate intimidation, address power imbalance and ensure conversations are imbued with patience, kindness and tenderness.
- Consider the role of the MFRI as mediators.
- Consider supporting the development of strong established accountability and leadership models to ensure that all parties are held accountable for delivering their promises and outlining consequences for non-delivery.
- Recognise the fundamental alignment between faith groups and the industry on timeframe for impact.

7. Closing invitation to all

- Go deeper in that thinking about trust including the three levels of trust in oneself; trust in the other; and trust in the organisation.
- Accept the challenge of Jane Nelson and Chris Musser’s paper ‘Building Trust for the Common Good: Partnerships to Strengthen mutual respect and resilience in mining’.
- Give deep thanks for the vulnerability of people with significant responsibilities.
- Enjoy the benefits of the Holy Spirit which are listed in Galatians 5: 22-23 as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness.
- Continue to relate to one another.
- Bring up the examples of trust and untrustworthiness.
- Deliver a better society, not just a better business.

Final prayer Isaiah 26:3 *‘Those of steadfast mind you keep in peace - in peace because they trust in you.’* ([Link](#))

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