

Chinhoyi: Shackleton Profile

Shackleton in Chinhoyi is a mining community which was established in 1960 after the discovery and subsequent exploration of sedimentary copper mineral deposit in the area. The settlement is located 25 km south west of Chinhoyi town along the Alaska road. The small mining compound is owned by the Zimbabwe Mining Development Corporation (ZMDC) and administered by Chinhoyi Municipality. The settlement houses an estimated population of 13 440 accommodated in a total of 840 houses. The houses are former employee living quarters built by the mine. Operation at the now defunct mine ceased in 1999 and that was the beginning of the wrangle for survival for its inhabitants. As the mine closed its doors to mining in 1999 workers looked for alternative livelihoods elsewhere and the compound was left with no signs of survival. The government then allowed people from Tompson, Bere and Mahachi farm to reside at the compound in a bid to avoid Shackleton settlement from becoming a white elephant. Synonymous with dying mining towns the Shackleton community has been reduced to a ghost town where every other activity has extinguished and livelihood sustenance has become an insurmountable task.

Housing

The housing stock at Shackleton mine comprises a total of 840 side by side four roomed semi-detached houses. These houses were built in 1960 to house mine employees. The majority of these houses were built with cement blocks and asbestos sheeting was used for roofing. A few are built using concrete blocks which are mainly used for durawalls. The houses are now old and dilapidated. Fig 1 shows typical housing in Shackleton settlement



Fig 1: Four roomed house in Shackleton

Residents indicated that an average family of four share a single room. Their living conditions are deplorable as privacy is compromised, thus negatively impacting on social and cultural values. Living space in most of these residents is compromised, which all translates to a circle of poverty. Inadequacy of housing has forced a Shackleton resident to seek accommodation in a former communal toilet. He has cleaned and renovated the messy toilet to make room for his family. The other push factor to the sort of accommodation was extreme stigmatisation and discrimination by fellow members because of his epileptic son. The renovated toilet is easily picked out from the rest and is shown in fig 2.



Fig 2: The renovated communal toilet that houses a family in Shackleton

Land tenure

The houses in Shackleton community are formal but the tenure security of its residents is highly questionable. Typical of dying mining communities in Zimbabwe transferability of administrative power is very autonomous from planning and regulatory powers. Thus the Local authority has administrative power while ZMDC has the regulatory powers. Fusion of these, to facilitate developmental strategies has proved to be very difficult and almost impossible. Therefore, moves to formalize such settlements through planning, service delivery and property rights registration will always meet a dead end. The tenure status of Shackleton residents remains highly insecure.

Water and Sanitation

Water and sanitation is a huge challenge in Shackleton community. The residents use communal toilets which are not

sufficient in terms of number and capacity. The communal toilets are clogged with human waste and are basically not usable.



Fig 3: a row of dilapidated communal toilets.

Green flies swamped heaps of uncollected garbage and raw sewerage in the disused communal toilets. Catholic Relief Services has constructed a few communal Blair toilets to alleviate the sanitation challenges of the community. The community cannot use most of them as they are not completed. Residents have resorted to using the bush posing a threat of communicable diseases such as cholera and diarrhoea to the bigger community. To make matters worse, tapped water was last seen in the community in 1999 at the closure of the mine. Maintenance and revitalisation of the existing water infrastructure is just but a utopia as the Local Authority has no financial muscle to rejuvenate the system. The entire community make use of..... boreholes which are never enough taking into cognisance the

huge population and the general everyday household water demands.

Economic Activities

The economic base and activities in Shackleton has overallly dwindled since the closure of the mine. A smaller percentage works in support industries such as service industries and food processing industries. The death of the mine meant the declining of the market base for the industries and ultimate lead to their relocation or death as well. The non existence of formal industries in Shackleton has worked to the detriment of the residents. Residents in this small community heavily rely on seasonal part time jobs in farms, illegal gold panning and prostitution to furnish their livelihood needs. They have clashed with the law and social and moral values of the community in their endeavours.

Relief and development information

The living conditions of Shackleton residents have attracted the interest of the donor community. Developmental organisations such as Catholic Relief Services (CRS), UNICEF and Children Protection have assisted the community in the past years. CRS has constructed... Communal Blair toilets, which are not yet finished. UNICEF provided educational assistance to disadvantaged children through its Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) and availed buckets and soap in a move of increasing hygiene in the community. Children Protection assisted the Orphans and Vulnerable groups which included the orphans, the elderly and the terminally sick.