

# Q&A with Cathryn MacCallum, social consultant SRK Consulting (Cardiff) and Anita Bron, social scientist SRK Consulting (SA)

**From end-2014** SRK Consulting began incorporating a new livelihoods restoration model into its methodology. The model - a collaboration between Dr Cathryn MacCallum, from SRK's Cardiff office, and Anita Bron, from SRK Johannesburg - is being rolled out across both practices at a time when legacy, social and community involvement and relocation are increasingly on the

global mining agenda. While mining is a significant sector, the model can also be applied to any multi-stakeholder project where the establishment of partnerships is of paramount importance, where there is local ownership and where the company in question seeks to be a partner rather than the principal actor. SRK caught up with MacCallum and Bron in Johannesburg.

## Q How do your two areas of focus come together in this model?

**MacCallum:** "It's a marriage of Anita Bron's extensive experience in the mining sector in terms of social studies and social research and my extensive experience of working in the development sector. So we are pulling my development expertise and Anita's social mining expertise together."

## Q What sets this model apart?

**Bron:** "What really makes it unique is that when we are in the initial information gathering phase with communities, we'll already start to apply this approach. And even if we don't pull it through to a community development strategy ourselves, that information will be sufficient to support a sustainable strategy."

## Q Has that been hard in the past?

**Bron:** "Tim (Hart) initiated a development approach in our work. But that was always hard to put in to practice. This model provides the opportunity to explore it in depth and roll out a plan for sustainable community development."

## Q Is the time right for this sort of model across the industry?

**MacCallum:** "Certainly everyone is talking about positive legacy now. Plus there is a lot of focus on the importance of social closure. Indeed, mines have to consider the people who live in the area and ensure there is something there for them after the mine closes. If mines do this right, then the positive legacy will sort itself out: the social closure will be developed from the outset of the project. Because you'll have communities that benefit from the mine and, say, local procurement opportunities. These communities will be able to build on their skills and opportunities within a diversified economy from the outset. Skills and opportunities won't just be developed to serve the mine; rather the community will build on its inherent passions and drivers."

**Bron:** "Many mines want to improve and change what they are doing currently in order

to build mutually beneficial relationships with communities."

## Q Does this approach tap into the current focus on responsible mining?

**MacCallum:** "Absolutely. You cannot mine profitably and not be responsible. I think those days are gone."

## Q So livelihood development should be the foundation for all of a mine's activities?

**MacCallum:** "By focusing on livelihood as a means of engaging with communities, you are not creating dependency. You are always, always creating opportunities for your host communities, which aren't necessarily dependent on the mine. The service industry which springs up and which supplies the mine should be the icing on the cake. At the moment it's the whole cake and you'll have a bit of icing in the odd hospital here or a school there. It should be turned around. Livelihood restoration should be the cake."

## Q And the benefit for the mine?

**MacCallum:** "In the long term it's cheaper for the client, better for the client and better for the communities; which I think is the important factor. That benefits the client. We aren't telling clients to develop a social conscience; they want their businesses to run without risks. They don't want to have to set up really complicated grievance mechanisms and to be constantly dealing with huge social issues, when they can put their ducks in a row and their houses in order from the outset they can then reap the benefits in the long term."

## Q How does the model work?

**MacCallum:** "We are saying expand the social baseline phase slightly so you don't only get a quantitative picture of a community. Undertake a process of dialogue with the community at that time and find out what they are doing and what they are doing well, what are their livelihood strategies, what

resources do they use and what strengths do they have within their community. That's our unique opportunity because it's our first engagement with them. We're saying use that study (social baseline) as the start of your engagement with the community. Then, when you have to go and develop an environment and social management plan, you actually have something to base it on. You are basing it on the strengths of the community as it stands, rather than your idea of what they might need or what you think they might need."

## Q So this requires communities to understand their assets and strengths?

**MacCallum:** "We are saying if you use this assets-based approach to understand what people are doing, what their values and strengths are, what resources they use, and which are most important to them. It (then) becomes a case of opening up opportunities and taking off the straight jacket of being, for example, a smallholding farmer and (looking at) how that can be developed in a way that is both sustainable ecologically but also culturally sustainable."

## Q And you need community involvement and trust, surely?

**Bron:** "Continuity is important and involvement. You can't just fly in and fly out and think it's going to work. You have to build the relationship and trust. That's the thing about shared value."

## Q What's different from the existing Assets Pentagon Model?

**MacCallum:** "What sets our model apart is that we also say that there are pressures and forces on those local communities, realities and livelihoods on a day-to-day basis that they have no control over. For example, the unsustainable use of natural resources is one, another is global social-economic competition. In more recent months the impact of the ongoing Ebola outbreak in West Africa highlights the external influences on African



Anita Bron



Cathryn MacCallum

livelihoods. Other examples could be climate change, globalisation, issues like terrorism, global economic crunch, the price of gold. They have nothing to do with the community but they have a profound effect on their lives and they have no control over it. So it's important that they understand those global pressures and forces. By having that understanding and then engaging in a dialogue, they can have a discussion which enables informed decision making."