



## REVOLUTIONISING THE SYSTEM: THE FIGHT FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE



*“[In South Africa] all the power stations in the country and coal mines are being developed in the name of servicing people with energy. But, why are the power cables carrying electricity still passing over communities’ houses? Many women, especially in Mpumalanga, are going to the coal dumps and abandoned coal mines to dig coal with their bare hands for just a little bit of energy....”*

– *Caroline Ntaopane, WoMin*

From the coal fields of Mpumalanga, South Africa to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where the Inga hydropower dam Phase 1 and 2 has displaced thousands of people with many more thousands projected to be displaced by Inga 3, communities carry significant costs of these mega energy projects with no benefit. And within these communities, women manage the fallout of land and water dispossessions, destruction of forests and pollution by increasing their work of subsistence in the fields, homes and community. The costs of a development model organised around profit for a few are deeply gendered.

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Globally, the world's poor carry the mounting costs of climate change whilst powerful governments and their corporate backers continue to stymie progress in the climate negotiations. The deep cuts required to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions by 40% from 2005 levels by 2035 (IPCC) are avoided in favour of 'false solutions' which once again transfer costs to the 'poors' of the world. They are the ones who lose their lands and forests to carbon trading schemes, and whose food crops are converted to new fuels whilst the polluters just keep on polluting.

Outside of the climate negotiations, governments grow their military budgets and interventions to address

climate change as a threat to 'national security'. This is particularly true of the US where the Institute for Policy Studies estimates a military spend of just under US 600 billion vs US 21 billion on climate change in 2017. In the years to come, the world will see powerful countries further securitise and weaponize their response to climate disasters and increased migration and to secure the needed control over scarce natural resources, such as arable land and water bodies.

Climate justice cannot be achieved within the current patriarchal capitalist system, within which lie the roots of climate change. This is a system which treats nature as capital, and reduces the majority of humanity to a cheap labour reservoir. This is a system which creates wants, promotes consumerism and a throw away culture, and whose mode of production creates toxic waste and pollution. The world and its people requires a radical change in systems hence the demand 'systems change not climate change'.

The call from women on the ground is to build a world where people will not need to live with "clouds of coal dust hanging over their heads." This quarter's newsletter speaks to how WoMin is working with communities, networks and movements at national, regional and international levels to create opportunities to build that world collectively, whether through energy assemblies in Uganda or in a march of thousands for climate justice on the streets of Bonn.



Thanks for reading!

# Fighting for A Different World Order: WoMin at COP23

The Climate Change Negotiations, where the interests of polluters are well-represented, challenge movements and organisations worldwide to strengthen their strategies, deepen their alliances, and campaign for the development alternatives needed to achieve climate justice for the majority of the world's people. It is for these reasons that WoMin chose to participate in the annual [Peoples Climate Summit \(PCS\) 2017](#) and the Bonn Zone of the 23rd UN Climate Conference (COP23) this year.



A nine-woman delegation from South Africa, Uganda, Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Senegal and Zimbabwe joined the thousands of other delegates and climate activists in Bonn. With the aim to put forward an African eco-feminist critique of climate change and its impact on women and grassroots communities, WoMin convened two workshops with comradely organisations from Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe and participated in and supported the platforms of its allies and friends in the PCS and the formal Bonn Zone. The delegation also took part in the People's Climate Summit March on November 4 and participated in the [Ende Gelände](#) blockade on November 5 which forced the German energy giant RWE to stop three excavators and one conveyor belt at the Hambach coal mine.

## The violence of climate change, extractivism, capitalism and patriarchy (Workshop I)

This workshop was a platform to explore the root causes of climate change and the layers of violence, social instability and repression that work together to shape the world today. Titi Soentoro of [Asia Pacific Women Law and Development](#) and [Asia Pacific Movement for Debt and Development](#) addressed the violence of a capitalist development model, which imposes the logic of economic growth and industrialisation and destroys communities, exploits nature and cheap labour, and is ultimately responsible for climate change. [JASS's](#) Zephaniah Repollo explored the relationship between extractives, militarisation and violence against women human rights defenders in the Philippines. Fanny Metga from [La Via Campesina](#) in France then drew the links to the brutality of industrialised agriculture and accompanying land and seed grabs, pollution and climate change, and Hannibal Rhoades of the [Gaia Foundation](#) pointed to Western cultural and economic regimes – capitalism, communism, and the



enlightenment – which have imposed the most violent form of human supremacy over nature. Blandine Bonianga from FESO in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, addressed the violence of the **Inga hydropower dam scheme** (phases 1 and 2) which displaced communities (who were never compensated) and produced electricity principally enjoyed by the copper mines in Katanga. She shared how communities and particular women in those communities are organising to say NO. All of the speakers addressed resistance through movement, through defence of the commons, through organising to challenge patriarchy within movements and through the power of ideas which subvert the dominant.

### **Fighting A Contaminated Future – Women Building Power, South Africa**

Our planet is littered with thousands of coal mines, South Africa is the fourth largest coal producer in the world and its industry makes up R51 billion of South Africa's economy<sup>1</sup>. With those kinds of figures, the future of coal is nowhere near its end and the future of renewable energy is in the dark. South Africa is failing to promote a just transition to sustainable energy. What does this mean to disadvantaged communities? It means more land grabs, forced removals, water contamination and dirty air. It means more ill health and more shattering climate impact that hits poorer communities hardest, especially farmers and women who depend on natural resources for their survival.

Despite the long struggle of communities fighting the expansion of coal mines, the South African government fails to hear the people, and see the evidence of climate change and its impact. Meanwhile, the major polluters – Eskom, Exxaro and Anglo, for example - work hand in hand with the government to block the development of renewable energy solutions and hold mining interests accountable for environmental degradation and human rights violations. More coal will not end poverty – instead, there needs to be a radical shift to ensure that poor people no longer bear the costs of climate change and pollution.

The actions at COP 23 and the People's Climate Summit make the fight to phase out coal that much more urgent. We need new movements, strategies and tactics. We must not leave anyone behind – youth, churches and women. For Women Building Power, WoMin's regional campaign for energy and climate justice, we must intensify action from the local to the international, building women's capacity to fight for energy sovereignty. – **Caroline Ntaopane, WoMin**

1 <http://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=4820>.

## Organising for people's development sovereignty, our right to say NO (Workshop II)

This session grappled with ways in which communities across the world resisting extractives, mining, energy and mega infrastructure projects are asserting their right to say no and determine their own development futures. Soumya Datta from India Climate Justice spoke passionately against mega hydro dams drawing on the people's fight against the Sardar Sadovar dam on the Narmada River which has displaced between 320-350 000 people since 1987, destroying their livelihoods and way of life, but also giving rise to one of the most formidable resistance movements in India's history. Merah Johansyah from JATAM in Indonesia addressed the coal mining menace there which has been characterised by gross manipulation and falsification of consultation processes, often involving the corruption of traditional leaders, with the almost total exclusion of women. Mela Chiponda from WoMin talked about women's central role in food production, seed stewardship and social reproduction, which gives rise to an idea of development that contests the dominant order. Erivan Camelo from La Via Campesina in Brazil addressed peasant resistance to industrial mining which is stealing natural wealth for capital; communities are organising to push back mining from their territories and assert their right to determine and shape their own development. The last provocateur, Nnimmo Bassey from Home of Mother Earth Foundation, turned our attention to the false solutions to climate change, such as REDD but also new geotechnologies such as cloud seeding and iron fertilisation, which hold significant consequences for vast numbers of people yet there is no requirement for consent. As governments trade our right to climate justice with capital, we need to rethink our development to embrace the common good, public goods, national sovereignty and the power of the people to define their own development.



## Mega Dams – the so-called “clean” energy solution...

Mega dams are often touted as a “clean energy” solution to climate change. Take the Sardar Sarovar Dam on the Narmada River, for example, which is over 1,300 km long and drains into the Gulf Khambhat in the Arabian Sea. Initially sponsored by the World Bank with grossly exaggerated claims that it would irrigate 1.8 million hectares of drought-prone Kutch and Saurashtra in Gujarat, and provide energy to the host communities, the dam has failed to live up to those promises. To date, more than 320,000 people have been displaced, and their livelihoods destroyed with poor quality resettlement land or minimal cash compensation. More than a million people will ultimately be affected by the dam’s complex canal system and related projects. The Sardar Sarovar Dam is one of the most controversial dam projects in the world, with communities waging intensive resistance for over thirty years.

There many such stories of mega hydropower projects that have brought great misery to peasant and indigenous communities that are forcibly displaced, sometimes flooded and suffer the downstream impacts of damming, from the Kariba Dam in Zimbabwe to the Inga Dam, Phase 3, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Grand Inga budget is conservatively estimated at USD 100 billion in total development costs, and the rehabilitation of Inga 1 and Inga 2 alone is estimated at over USD 800 million. These are costs that will be carried by the Congolese population, who have only enjoyed around 10% of the electricity generated by Inga. For over 50 years, the communities displaced by the Inga 1 and 2 live in abject poverty without rehabilitation. Mega dams, apart from producing methane, a greenhouse gas contributing to climate change, negatively impact on freshwater resulting in the destruction of marine life and the extinction of some water species.

Are dams and mega projects like this truly “clean” energy solutions – particularly when the cost on human life, communities, and the environment is so great? The World Bank, one of the biggest financiers of mega dams in the world, spent 54% of its power sector lending on large hydropower projects in 2014 alone.<sup>2</sup> With a combined commitment to spend over US\$17 billion on the Narmada and Inga projects before **withdrawing from the latter**, the question remains why does the World Bank and other International Financial Institutions (IFIs) continue to finance projects that result in maldevelopment for peasant and indigenous populations and have such a disastrous impact on the environment?

Now, more than ever, we need a global movement for development sovereignty and energy justice, that empowers communities and women to claim their right to development. – **Mela Chiponda, WoMin**



<sup>2</sup> <http://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=4820>.

# Identity, Land & Resistance: building living consent rights for African women



“We... know who we are because of the land. We believe that once you have lost the land, you have lost your identity,” says community activist Nonhle Mbutuma, a founding member of the Amadiba Crisis Committee and resident of Xolobeni, a community on the Wild Coast of South Africa which has been fighting titanium mining for more than a decade. “We also believe that it is our **right to live in a healthy environment**, an environment which is not harmful to us, that has clean air with no air pollution, no pollution of the land and no contamination of the water. To make all these things happen, we believe that women must be a part of decision making... If we do that, we are going to build a healthy nation.”

Activists like Nonhle have long struggled for the right of women and their communities to determine whether a proposed development project, which will impact their lands, forests, waters, bodies and cultural heritage, should proceed. This right is described as Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) in mainstream development parlance.

## What is consent?

“Consent” is not a new idea. As a concept, it has been expanded from an individual right to a collective one, grounded in moral theory and legal statute. This evolution of thinking has informed frameworks such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO) 169 convention, the ECOWAS protocol in West Africa and some national laws that allow for indigenous groups and communities to claim their right to make decisions about developments that affect their lands and natural resources

Consent is essential in the context of extractivist development activities – mining, mega infrastructure, mega dams, and industrial fisheries and agriculture – which destroy livelihoods, pollute air water and soil, cause ill health-social violence and instability, and undermine indigenous and traditional relations with nature. Working class and peasant women in Africa sit at the frontlines of the harm extractives projects cause, facing the double-burden of a gendered division of labour and unequal power to make decisions in the community. When land is taken it is women, the primary subsistence producers, who are ignored and not compensated for their unrecognised informal land rights. When water is polluted women walk further and longer,

often placed at physical risk, in search of clean drinking water for their families. And when children and other household members fall ill because of water and air pollution, it is women who nurse them as part of their unpaid care responsibilities.

Extractivist development has been a consistent feature of colonisation and neo-colonisation in resource rich territories in the global South and parts of the global North. From the African Union's [Africa Mining Vision](#) to the World Bank's [Strategy for African Mining](#), an extractivist capitalist and patriarchal development model is actively promoted as the pathway out of poverty and dependency for global South nations.

Communities have resisted this dominant paradigm to defend a 'traditional' mode of production oriented to use, and a way of living which is human centred and interconnected with nature.

## Consent is not neutral...

Mainstream development discourse tends to present consent as a neutral right which can be established in law and claimed by communities within the current development order. Questions of power, inequality and ultimately the development logic guiding large scale natural resource exploitation are usually absent in these discussions. For WoMin, consent is a radical and revolutionary claim which firstly, removes power and authority from the state, and places it in the hands of local people to make decisions about their development futures. And secondly, the right of consent gives credence and space to lived development alternatives at the local level, affirming people's sovereignty over their own development which is founded on a different relationship of humanity to nature.

Consent empowers the local and the people most affected and therefore undermines the driving logic of the system: profit for capital and its ally – the political elite. For this reason, consent rights for communities, even if legislated, will typically be undermined and subverted in practice.

Women's central role in subsistence, care and solidarity within communities makes it that much more critical that their voices are heard in traditional and indigenous decision-making processes to build real development alternatives.



Groundup (CC BY-ND 4.0)

## The Xolobeni Community Story...

In early 1996, Mineral Resource Commodities (MRC), an Australian mining company, began to show interest in mining titanium in Xolobeni. First they approached the local tribal authority (TA), which administers community affairs in accordance with customary laws and traditions. The TA then introduced the company to the Amadiba community living in the area and gave the company an opportunity to explain their mining interests. From the start, the majority of the community was not agreeable – people were concerned about threats to their grazing land and water supply, the impact on livestock and livelihoods as well as the destruction of medicinal plants, and the interference with ancestors' graves.

Nevertheless, in 2002, MRC made its first application to the Department of Mineral Resources (DMR) (then the Department of Minerals and Energy) to prospect the area with the intention to start mining in 2007. Prompted by the increased mining interests and pressures on the community, the Amadiba Crisis Committee (ACC) was founded by members of the community who were opposed to mining.

By July 2008, the DMR had granted mining rights to MRC's South African subsidiary, Transworld Energy and Minerals (TEM) which owns the Xolobeni Mineral Sands project. This decision was met with protest from the community and subsequent backlash by police against those who spoke out. "In September 2008, pupils at the Xolobeni Junior Secondary School were jambokked by police after refusing to sing at an event organised by politicians to celebrate the granting of mining rights," **wrote** one journalist at the time.

The ACC's mobilisation against the decision resulted in the mining rights revocation. But the struggle did not end there. The Xolobeni community has continued to oppose mining in their area, blocking the "environmental impact assessment" required for mining to proceed in 2015. This blockade led to escalated violence and repression against the community by police. On 22 February 2016, planned drilling on the dunes was obstructed by mass mobilisation. Shortly thereafter, Bazooka Radebe, chairperson of the ACC, **was assassinated** by two hitmen in front of his son on 22 March 2016.

In April 2016, the South African Human Rights Commission **condemned** Mr Radebe's murder and the **ongoing violence** related to mining in the Xolobeni community. Almost a year later in June 2017, government announced its 'intention' to place an 18-month moratorium on mining in Xolobeni to allow time to "resolve" the community conflict. ACC has since **rejected the proposed moratorium**, and contended that it is part of a strategy to demobilise community resistance and lay the ground for the mining to proceed.

## Our Bodies. Our Lives. Our Right to Consent: Women, power, and activism

The struggles of the Xolobeni community in South Africa are emblematic of the fight of communities around the world to defend their livelihoods and way of life. In these struggles in Africa, women may often constitute the core of resistance, but rarely assume leadership positions. In Xolobeni women lead and this is, in part, explained by the Amadiba's history of women's empowerment. 'Where can a woman give birth if she doesn't have land?' the founder of the Pondo nation is reported to have asked. In Pondoland, where Xolobeni is located, women are permitted to participate fully in community meetings and they also have the right to



Groundup (CC BY-ND 4.0)

be members of traditional councils. They lead and they speak at meetings just like men. One of the important tasks of traditional courts is to allocate and govern land. These customary laws provide for unmarried women to have title to land, while unmarried men do not have these rights. The allocation of land rights to women is very atypical in traditional communities in South Africa and is a key part of the explanation for women's power in this community. Women in Xolobeni have been particularly concerned about the future of their children, and the long term sustainability of life on the land should the mining project go ahead.

As this case illustrates, FPIC is not merely a legal tool, it is a radical political commitment and process, claimed through local organising, clear ideas about local development and political solidarity from within and beyond the community.

Read the paper on which this article is based in Gender and Development Journal - Natural Resource Justice issue here: <http://www.genderanddevelopment.org/page/current-issue>.

# Activist Voices: The ‘Madness’ of Oil Extraction in Uganda



*“What I want is to go back home to my community with is a plan on how we can stop this madness that is going on in our land. We just see strange people coming into our area with politicians, they do not talk to us, but they talk about us and our land. Then the next thing you hear is that they are taking our land, and telling us that we are now very rich because we have oil. They take our land and put us in camps, but go on to tell us that we are now rich. What kind of rich person stays in a camp without energy, water and food? It would be good if today we come up with a plan to stop this. I would go to my community relieved that at least we have a plan to act against the taking over of our land by these ‘important’ people.” – Activist participant, Women’s Energy Assembly, Hoima, Uganda, September 2017*

In Hoima, Uganda, the discovery of oil has had a disastrous impact on communities, particularly women. Thousands of people have been displaced, many without compensation, and now live in displaced people’s camps relying on welfare handouts for their survival. Families and communities that were once self-sufficient and healthy have been reduced to beggars struggling daily to make ends meet.



## **Activist Story: Oil destroyed my family**

*Agnes\*, a community activist from Hoima shares her experience.*

The discovery of oil in Hoima started just as a rumour. We would talk about oil when going to fetch firewood, we would discuss about how rich we had suddenly become as we harvest our crop. Oil brought with it promises for a good life. We would hear about it in the radios, some read about it in the papers. Our husbands were much more excited about the jobs they would get, important jobs in the oil companies. We did not know that they would take our land, we did not think of anything bad about oil extraction. Reality dawned on us when the government officials and some strangers visited our land. They did not talk to us, but they were discussing amongst themselves and putting some pegs at our homesteads. We were afraid to ask them anything because the people were not engaging us.

They talked amongst themselves and in some places they would ask where our husbands are. Then, the rumour started that they were going to take away our land and give us money instead so that we can buy another piece of land elsewhere. Men were also talking about the land and the money, but in my family, there was no discussion about the land and money. Every time I tried to ask, my husband would say it was a men's discussion. I kept silent and thought about what I would do if they would take my land. Where would I get food? I discussed with other women and their situations were not different from mine. Then one day, they came and told us we had to leave and that we would be given money. As usual, my husband did not want to talk about it. Then one day, he just left. I do not know where, but people say he bought a motorcycle and went to Kampala. I was left with four children. As first, I thought that even if he would leave us, I would work on the land and send my children to school. But that was not going to happen, as the government officials came and told me that since we had received our compensation we were supposed to move and stay in the camp as we await relocation to another place. I asked what we were going to do for food... they said they had discussed and agreed with my husband, and had paid for the disturbances they caused and compensated for the losses that we were going to have. I was devastated by the betrayal by both my husband and my government. My husband connived with my government to take away my land and my life.

I am homeless with four children to look after. I do not know what is going to become of my children. I used to cry until I heard that women are holding meetings to discuss about their issues and I started attending. I am now hopeful but sometimes when I look at my children, I just cry. This oil destroyed my family, it destroyed everything I had, everything I worked for in my life.

*\*Agnes is not her real name*

Women activists like Agnes are mobilising for the alternatives that make sense for their community as part of the Women Building Power Campaign. Through spaces like energy assemblies, community exchanges, and feminist participatory action research planned for 2018, women impacted by extractives industries are coming together to develop shared analysis and strategies for advocacy and build solidarity in a movement that connects their struggles. In March 2018, women activists from across the oil fields will come together in a WoMin/NAPE supported national women's movement building school which will further strengthen women's knowledge, skills, organising and campaigning for economic justice and women's rights.

# HIGHLIGHTS



**MOZAMBIQUE | Breaking down how women are impacted by extractive industries in Tete** From 28 – 30 November, Justiça Ambiental (JA) convened a WoMin-supported workshop in Tete, focusing on the struggles of various communities impacted by mining and mega project developments and the dimensions of violence they are seeing in their context. It was a powerful platform for communities, particularly women, to share stories and build solidarity. The space was also geared towards building greater and nuanced understanding of the specific impacts of climate change and environmental injustice on women in these communities. To strengthen this, a women-only space was created for the third day to allow women to share and expose stories of the violence and other challenges they face in their daily lives. This was one of the first times women have had such a space, and represents the beginning of a critical JA-WoMin collaboration to support women’s organising for social, economic and environmental justice.



**UGANDA | Women Building Power Campaign Energy Assembly** In September, 87 grassroots women activists drawn from Hoima, Kaiso-Tonya, Nwoya and Bunyoro gathered in Hoima, Uganda for the first national Women’s Energy Assembly. Forming part of the women-driven fossil fuels, energy and climate justice campaign, Women Building Power, the energy assembly is a radical space for women to share their experiences, deepen their knowledge, and begin to put forward their ideas for a woman-centred, localised and collective renewable energy alternative. African women are often excluded from energy planning and decision-making by governments and by private corporations leading the planning and rollout of energy projects. One of the participants to the assembly reflected as follows:

*“I just wish we could have electricity like in towns. It makes work so much easier because you just press a button and you cook, you do not need to spend long hours looking for firewood and too much time making the fire or even going to check from time to time whether the fire is still there. You do not need to wake up every morning to remove ashes from the hearth so that you can make another fire for making your breakfast. It is clean that your clothes are not black with soot, you do not inhale smoke and your eyes are not weepy when you are cooking”. Activist participant, Hoima, Uganda*

**SOUTH AFRICA | Waterberg Women’s Advocacy Forum Launches** On October 12 2017, 30 community activists from Lephalale joined forces to convene the very first meeting of the Waterberg Women’s Advocacy Forum under the South Africa Women Building Power: Fossil Fuel Energy and Climate Justice Campaign. The launch was supported by activists from the Vaal Triangle and Mpumalanga, WoMin’s ally – Women Affected by Mining United in Action (WAMUA) – as well as women activists from the towns of Somkhele and Fuleni, Kwa-Zulu Natal who have been facing the shattering impacts of mining and other extractives activities in their areas.

Lephalale, a coal mining town, which sits to the immediate West of the Waterberg coalfield holding about 40% (or 50 billion tonnes) of South Africa’s coal resources, was declared an air pollution hotspot in June 2015 as defined by Section 18(1) of the National Environmental Management: Air Quality Act, 2004 (Act No. 39 of 2004) (NEM: AQA). In fact, South Africa’s largest open cast mine is found in Lephalale and Matimba Power Station is the largest dry-cooled power station in the world.

Unlike the Mpumalanga Province and Vaal Triangle (Gauteng and Free State Province), Lephalale’s air pollution is not as advanced yet. This leaves opportunity to *prevent and protect* the air from deterioration. The challenge ahead is a great one, not least due to the Medupi Power Station, the fourth largest coal fire power station in the southern hemisphere, which was **funded by** the World Bank and the African Development Bank. The rivers in Lephalale are drying up, leaving surrounding communities without water. Ancestral grave sites have been desecrated and the only clinic in the Marapong community is unable to cope with the rapidly growing population, with some patients waiting for days for treatment.

“The companies departed from the promises that they made to communities,” says Francinah Nkosi and Sylvia Sebina, leaders of the Waterberg Women’s Advocacy Forum.

Initially, the power station was touted to bring a new vision of development along with jobs and new developments (houses, clinics) to the communities but this has not been the case.

*“The companies turned a blind eye on the communities... on the impact of their activities, [starting from] human health. When Medupi was built, so many people lost our (...) sense of community, our wealth which was in land, agriculture and livestock. The power station [and other corporate interests] now take water from the community and pollute the air we breathe. There are no jobs, and many communities are still using paraffin and wood for heating and cooking. We are paying the high cost of medical bills because we have people suffering from respiratory illness, asthma and tuberculosis. We feel like we are paying high cost because we see electricity cables passing over our houses and we don't have access.”*



Confronted by these many challenges, women in Lephalale are organizing themselves. The Waterberg Women's Forum has already developed an advocacy plan to mobilise women's participation in community decision-making processes and the protection of their natural resources and environment. They hope to educate the community on their rights, climate awareness and the impacts of mining on air quality and access to water, and build community clean-up efforts to address and prevent all forms of pollution.

## **BURKINA FASO | Building community consent & the Bomboré Gold Project**

Bomboré is a village in the rural commune of Mogtedo, 85 km from Ouagadougou. The municipality is home to the **Bomboré gold project**, which will be operated by the Canadian company Orezone. **The project, which covers 162 square kilometres, is the largest undeveloped gold deposit in Burkina Faso.** Located in an area where the vast majority of people subsist by agriculture and related activities such as caring for livestock, this major mining project will have a significant impact on the six villages and 12,000 people who currently reside there – from a direct threat to water supply to almost certain relocation of thousands of people. WoMin and local ally, ORCADE, organised an initial meeting (17 – 21 August) with the communities that will soon be affected by the gold mining. Communities, particularly women, in Bomboré had already begun mobilising to claim their right to consent and push back against resettlement proposals from the mining company. ORCADE and WoMin will continue to support the community in their efforts moving forward by creating more spaces for collective strategy development where women’s voices and concerns are heard and accounted for.



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