

Case Study



NORTHAM BREATHES FRESH LIFE INTO SA EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE

A public/private partnership between Northam and the Eastern Cape Education Department has recently resulted in the handover of new and renovated administration and teaching spaces, ablutions, playgrounds and security fencing at three primary schools in Lusikisiki, South Africa.

Lusikisiki is a town with almost 305,000 inhabitants in the Ingquza Hill Local Municipa-

lity, situated in the Eastern Province’s OR Tambo District in South Africa. The onomatopoeic name Lusikisiki originates from the Xhosa word, which is derived from the rustling sound of reeds in the wind, named by the local Xhosa people. Lusikisiki is 45 kilometres inland from the fashionable Port St Johns resort, on the beautiful South African Wild Coast.



Northam is an independent, fully empowered, integrated PGM

producer. All operating mines and recycling operations are wholly owned, and comprise the Zondereinde mining and metallurgical operations, Booyensdal and Eland mining operations. Northam’s precious metals are refined by its partners Heraeus at its refineries in South Africa and in Hanau, Germany, and Johnson Matthey at its refinery in the United Kingdom.

In the USA the group owns a PGM recovery and recycling business. Northam’s aspirational target is to produce 1 million ounces of PGMs per annum.

Zondereinde is a mature mine, which has successfully mined PGM ores since 1992. The Zondereinde mine is situated in the northern portion of the western limb of the Bushveld Com-

plex, in the Limpopo Province. The mining right is underlain by both the Merensky and UG2 Reefs.

On the Bushveld Complex’s eastern limb, Booyensdal is a relatively young, multi-modular and mechanised mining complex, with overall ore production ramping up to planned steady state over the next three years. The Booyensdal mining right hosts both the Merensky and UG2 Reefs. With access to a massive ore resource, the Booyensdal operations promise to be long-life reliable producers of PGMs.

Eland is a shallow hybrid UG2 mine, ramping up to planned steady state over the next six years. The Eland mine is located in the south-eastern portion of the western limb of the Bushveld Complex, some 70 km north of Johannesburg and 12 km east of Brits, in the North-West Province of South Africa.



The newly renovated Mbotyi Junior Secondary School in Lusikisiki is the tangible result of a constructive public/private partnership in education in South Africa's Eastern Cape Province. Apart from financial support, Northam's project management expertise and guidance added significant further value to the lives of 1,500 learners in the province.

For many years Lusikisiki, along with other towns in the Eastern Cape province, has been the rural home to many migrant mineworkers in the mineral-bearing northern provinces of South Africa, particularly on the gold and platinum mines, and including the mines in the Northam group. Currently some 7% of Northam Zondereinde's labour force is drawn from the Eastern Cape province.

In 2019 the OR Tambo District, with a population of just over 1.5 million people was the most densely populated in the Eastern Cape. Approximately 52% of the population is below 19 years old, resulting in overwhelming pressure on the already stretched and neglected primary and secondary schools in the area. Given the Eastern Cape's reputation as one of the poorest in the country, infrastructure is underdeveloped, and inadequate for its citizens.

Northam's involvement in Lusikisiki and the rural Eastern Cape is based on the results of a review of Northam's labour-sending community development initiatives.

More than a rustle in the reeds

"A strategic decision was taken to make a meaningful contribution to OR Tambo District Municipality, specifically Lusikisiki, 'where the wind rustles the reeds' and where so many of the people who have helped to contribute to Northam's reliable supply of these wonderful "green" metals," says Refiloe Mogale, stakeholder engagement manager at Northam's Zondereinde mine in South Africa's Limpopo Province.

In response to this commitment a delegation comprising Northam Zondereinde, the Eastern Cape Department of Mineral Resources and the Department of Education visited the Lusikisiki area to identify and assess schools that would benefit from improved infrastructure. Nine schools were identified and inspected, and three schools, Sichwe Primary, Emyezweni Primary and Mbotyi Primary finally met the evaluation criteria. Difficulties such as degraded infrastructure, lack of water, toilets and sanitation, were common problems.

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The newly renovated Mbotyi Junior Secondary School in Lusikisiki, the tangible result of a constructive public/private partnership with financial support from Northam in South Africa's Eastern Cape Province.

As a result of the public/private partnership between Northam and the Education Department, the new and renovated administration and teaching spaces, ablutions, playgrounds and security fencing, will go a long way in ensuring that the infrastructure at these schools supports the outcomes of quality teaching and learning for close to 1,500 learners.

“More importantly,” says Refiloe, “this partnership enabled us to eradicate structures made from inappropriate materials providing a safe and secure learning environment.”

In thanking Northam for its contribution at the handover ceremony in February this year, Mr Fundile Gade, MEC for Education in the Eastern Cape said, “We have a long way to go in addressing backlogs in this vast and largely rural province and I am confident that, with the support of the private sector, we will be able to chip away at these backlogs until we can provide decent infrastructure worthy of all the children in our province.”