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26 April, 2019

PRESS RELEASE

Mine is no playground for kids – PJV conducts awareness on juvenile trespassing

PORT MORESBY, 26 APRIL, 2019, 1300HRS: Young children within the Special Mine Lease (SML) villages surrounding the Porgera mine operation have been cautioned against entering the mine operational areas, especially the open pit.

Juvenile trespassing continues to be an ongoing problem for the Porgera mine operation. Of the total number of illegal miners that enter the mine operations monthly, the mine's Asset Protection Department (APD) reports that five percent are children.

Porgera Joint Venture (PJV) this month carried out a school outreach program aimed at raising awareness on the dangers of illegally entering the mine pit and other workings.

Targeting seven schools, the outreach program was purposely to address the unauthorized incursions by children into the mine area in search of food and/or scrap material for income, posing the risk of death or serious injury.

The objectives of the outreach program; to increase awareness of mine related risks amongst schoolchildren through innovate communication platforms; promote duty of care in communities where children live; enhance personal identification with the issue of trespassing among children and to introduce PJV's Safety Mascot, Miss Eke Yakema to students in Porgera.

The schools targeted were Mungulep primary, Porgera Station primary, Anjokale Elementary, Alipis Elementary, Yarik school and Paiam Primary.

The approach taken by CDS involved the use of a theatre group to deliver the safety message around juvenile trespassing through an act performance.

Four key messages were communicated; 1) The mine is a dangerous place. You can get killed, badly injured or risk living with a disability for the rest of your life; 2) Not everyone who gets injured on the mine site dies; 3) The PNG government has strong laws to punish parents who do not protect their children from danger; and 4) That communities need children who will stay in school and become good leaders in future.

The local performing theater, all raw talent was formed after a days' training with visiting professional performing arts coaches from the Niu-Age Marketing and Investment Group.

They included Ellen Mesibere – a choreographer and theatre performance artist, Elton Kili, a comedian and choreographer and Julia Gaia Kila, an early childhood educator, theatre performance artist and choreographer.

At the Aumbi Elementary School on 10 April, Community Development Manager Jacqueline Nen told the young school children, there were many other options for a playing field and the open pit was not one of them.

“The open pit is a dangerous place for a child and you can get hurt in so many ways; you can get hit by a truck or machine, you can get chased by security dogs or hit by rocks and boulders. There are other options for a playing field, either at home or in the village. The pit is no playing field,” Mrs Nen said.

The same message was reiterated to the other schools with the program involving question and answer sessions and fun activities with prize rewards for the children.

To put a human face to the dangers of illegal mining and trespassing, the local theatre involved Thomas Petale, a local and former employee of the Community Development section who has had to live with a permanent disability of being an amputee as a result of illegal mining.

PJV Governance and Operations Manager Graeme Nielsen said trespassing remains a big problem for the Porgera mine operation and said the use of theatre art to communicate the safety awareness on illegal trespassing can be a very powerful tool to use in the community.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

The Porgera Gold Mine in Enga Province, Papua New Guinea, is operated by Barrick (Niugini) Limited (“BNL”)– through an equal partnership between Barrick Gold Corporation and Zijin Mining Group Company Limited – which owns 95 percent participating interest in the Porgera Joint Venture (PJV). The remaining 5% in PJV is owned by Mineral Resource Enga (MRE) Limited – a consortium consisting of the Enga Provincial Government and the Porgera landowners.

The Porgera Mine employs over 3,300 Papua New Guineans, and over the life of the mine has produced more than 20 million ounces of gold and contributed approximately 10% of PNG’s total annual exports.



Mrs Nen facilitates a question and answer session with Mungulep students.



The Porgera theatre group performing at the Lutheran Primary school.



Mr Kili with the microphone assists a student from the Aumbi Elementary school during the question and answer session.

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