

Mining Dialogues: From Troubles to Transformation

Episode 5 overview

Building Sustainable Relationships in Mining: Insights from the Lima Workshop - A Groundbreaking Initiative

The Lima workshop in June 1998 will mark a significant moment in mining policy development, with seventy-six participants from 11 countries in the Americas gathering to discuss mining policies and practices. This diverse group, including industry representatives, government officials, researchers, NGOs, communities, indigenous peoples, and multilateral organizations, will collaboratively craft a vision statement and establish five working groups to act on it. Glenn Sigurdson will recall how this workshop fosters momentum and significantly influences mining practices, particularly in Peru, where the principles discussed will continue to resonate.

Glenn Sigurdson and Luke Danielson will reflect on the importance of learning from past initiatives like the Lima workshop, expressing concern over the loss of historical memory in the mining sector and emphasizing the need to revisit foundational documents such as the Brundtland Commission's report on sustainable development. They will underscore how contemporary frameworks like ESG often lack the integrated, holistic approach needed to address the complex realities of sustainable mining.

The discussion will highlight Canada's influential role in global mining, particularly through initiatives like the Mineral Policy Research Initiative and the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD). These efforts will aim to foster participatory approaches and share best practices across borders. The Lima workshop will exemplify this collaborative spirit, bringing together diverse stakeholders to create actionable plans for sustainable mining.

Luke Danielson will note the disconnect between the expertise of geologists in the Canadian junior mining sector and the complex social contexts in which they operate. He will share anecdotes illustrating the industry's historical disregard for community engagement and social responsibility, such as the "window test" used to gauge community relations superficially. Both Danielson and Sigurdson will emphasize the need for a more sophisticated understanding of social dynamics and community impacts.

Placer Dome will emerge as a pioneering company in the conversation, recognized for its forward-thinking approach under the leadership of John Wilson and Jim Cooney. Placer Dome's sustainability policy and initiatives in community engagement, such as the Las Cristinas project in Venezuela, will set a high standard for the industry. Jeffrey Davidson's role in integrating social and environmental considerations into mining operations will exemplify this progressive approach.

Monica Ospina will add a critical perspective on the importance of building trust over merely being liked by stakeholders. She will argue that the industry's focus on short-term gains and



immediate approval from communities often undermines long-term trust. Effective engagement will require a long-term vision, where quality conversations and impact assessments lead to sustainable, mutually beneficial relationships.

The conversation will conclude with reflections on the need for the mining industry to balance control with genuine engagement. Both Sigurdson and Danielson will emphasize the importance of developing clear, mutual understandings and building a competency in stakeholder engagement. The goal will be to create a level playing field where all parties can negotiate effectively and work towards sustainable outcomes. The Lima workshop will serve as a reminder of the power of collaborative, inclusive approaches in shaping the future of mining. By learning from past initiatives and fostering genuine engagement, the industry will better navigate the complexities of sustainable development and build trust with the communities it impacts.