

### **Publishing lines:**

*In this seven-minute Sesotho podcast, Investigative Journalist and Bertha Foundation Fellow Pascalinah Kabi, talks to two rural women leading their villages in the fight for the right to access clean water. This podcast is a part of a series leading to the publication of Pascalinah's maiden book, Pollution, Profits and the People, which will hit the shelves in January, 2023.*

## **Meet Rural Women Leading from the Front**

### **BLOCK 1 INTRODUCTION**

#### **Scene 1**

#### **Pascalinah:**

Globally, women and girls face worst ramifications of lack of access to clean water. Lack of access to clean water bring challenges such as lack of food in the house, insecurity, high disease rate as well as girls struggling to successfully attain educational qualification of their choice.

Despite these challenges, water related decisions are left in the hands of men in Lesotho. Those responsible for water in the Ministry of Water or any water related department are mostly men.

On the other hand, women, whose primary responsibility is to ensure that there is water in their households, do not really have a voice on water related issues in Lesotho.

#### **Break**

My name is Pascalinah Kabi, I am an investigative journalist. I spent the year 2022 investigating water related issues. I met three brave women during my investigations. These women stand firm, holding the knife by the blades, as they fight to ensure that their communities have access to clean water. These women are up against big mines in Lesotho.

However, today we are speaking to only two of three. This is because the recorded voice of the third one - 52-year-old 'Mapontšo Lematla from Patising, is not friendly to the ear due to a background noise coming from the Patising stream. The stream is adjacent to her house. Today we are looking at Letšeng and Kao mines.

#### **Music**

### **BLOCK 2 - INTRODUCING GUESTS**

#### **Guest 1:**

My maiden name, which I am widely known for, is 'Maseaka Lekhela but my other name is 'Manalana Molefi. I stay at Ha Sheshine village in the Kao area. I am 54 years old.

**Guest 2**

My name is Mrs Mamapholo Ntsiki. I am the resident of Maloraneng village. I am a Village Health Worker, my primary responsibility is to look after patients here at Maloraneng. I am 62 years old.

### BLOCK 3 - THE PURPOSE OF THE PODCAST

**Pascalinah:**

I trust that you have been following my published investigations throughout the year because today we are looking at possible solutions to water pollution in Lesotho. These solutions are proposed by the two women we are featuring today.

Maloraneng and Patising villages are located downstream the Letseng mine. Let us hear from Maloraneng Village Health Worker, Mamapholo

**Guest 2:**

We request the Letseng mine to construct taps for us because it has contaminated our water. They can pump water from our village well. This will allow us to have access to clean water and allow the polluted water to just pass by our village. It would be best for us to have access to clean water because we truly do have such access.

**Pascalinah:**

Where is this spring?

**Guest 2:**

It is located on top of the plateau. We request that water from the well be pumped and transferred down to the village through pipes. It is our most reliable spring and it would be helpful if its water is transferred down to the village.

**Pascalinah:**

Is the well not in anyhow connected to the seepage dams that Maloraneng villagers complain about?

**Guest 2:**

Not at all, it is located far from the dams and the only way to transfer water from that well is through pipes straight into the village tank.

**Pascalinah:**

'Manalana stays at Ha Sheshile, a village located just below the Kao mine.

**Pascalinah:**

How do you feel by being mockingly referred to as clever?

**Guest 1:**

I initially told you that being brave is a blessing from God. So I tell them indeed I am clever. But this can sometimes become extremely challenging, particularly when those responsible, government officials, drag their feet on this issue. These are people expected to complete the circle of revolution by taking action and instead of doing that, they leave us out in the cold. I sometimes end up losing hope because I am a human being.

#### **BLOCK 4 - PRESENTING SIDE OF THE MINES**

**Pascalinah:**

Letseng chief executive officer Kelebone Leisanyane says the mine is doing everything in its power to ensure that its operations do not pollute water. He says there are demonstrable results in this regard. On the other hand, I spoke with Kao mine chief executive officer Ralikiriki. He says the mine is not polluting water and that it is closely working with government to prevent water pollution.

**Break**

**Pascalinah:**

I came across a confidential LHDA report during my investigations into water pollution by the mines. The report reveals that Letseng, Kao and Liqobong mines continue and has been polluting water for many years now. The latest pollution was last year. This LHDA report further indicates that captains of the mining industry once promised to work hard to mitigate water pollution in their operating areas. However, water pollution continues unabated.

Detailed response from the mining companies is captured in a book which will be available at MNN offices in January 2023. The book is titled Pollution, Profits and the People.

#### **BLOCK 5 - CONCLUSION**

**Break**

**Pascalinah:**

If there is anything I learnt from my investigations, we all think this water pollution only affects the Mokhotlong and Botha-Bothe people, or few smaller villages downstream Letseng and Kao mines. However, this is far from the truth because we are all affected by the water pollution, directly or indirectly. One day we shall be all hit by the aftermath of this water pollution.

I therefore appeal to all of us to try and assist the Lesotho government to take water pollution seriously. We should all make government aware that sweeping issues of water pollution under the carpet, hoping that they will disappear on their own, is far from the truth. Water is one of the natural resources Lesotho is abundantly blessed with, that which we must preserve and protect.

Whether you have access to clean water or not, let us make it our individual responsibility to ensure that we all have access to clean water.

Soft music

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