Industrial RECYCLING
Unlocking Hidden Value
Niza Sikwese oversees employee health and safety standards at Metalco Industries Company Ltd., a recycling firm in Zambian mining city Kabwe—ranked in the top 10 on *Time* magazine’s 2016 list of The World’s Most Polluted Places. Lead pollution levels there are startlingly high, a legacy of past mines shut down with no formal closure or rehabilitation plans, leaving toxic conditions affecting the health of local populations.

Where others might see crisis, Niza and her colleagues see opportunity. Using a sustainability-driven business model, Metalco recycles local scrap metal into batteries, aluminum sheets, utensils and other high-demand products. Now Kabwe’s top employer, it has created 400 jobs and steadily made its workplace cleaner and healthier. Its future is bright—impacting several local value chains in ways that also build incomes of traders, transporters, shopkeepers, and others.

IFC provided a $200,000 advisory program to help the company improve corporate governance, improve worker safety, enhance quality control, and increase energy efficiency. Finally, we invested $10 million in the company and mobilized an additional $10 million from the OPEC Fund for International Development. The goal: helping Metalco reach its target of being a world-class manufacturing firm by 2020.

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