

Société Minière de Kolwezi 2007 Programme for Employment & Livelihoods for Artisanal Miners

Artisanal mining has been a means of survival in the Democratic Republic of Congo for decades.

The work is very hard, often dangerous, and in many cases, illegal. There are many negative social factors associated with artisanal mining, including the use of child labour, family breakdown and the burden of debt. However, in the absence of other forms of employment, artisanal mining has been a vitally important livelihood for literally millions of people.

Anvil Mining Kolwezi, Société Minière de Kolwezi (SMK), has been working to find new economic opportunities, and peaceful solutions to transition challenges, for the artisanal miners working on the company's concession. So far in 2007, 717 artisanal miners have been employed or, through SMK's social development programme, have been assisted to start new livelihoods. This is over and above SMK's local employment figures for formal work in company, and in addition to SMK's other social development projects and commitments to the permanent village communities living on the concession.

65
women farmers



In 2006, 33 women miners joined the SMK-Pact programme for women and, in partnership with the government service for artisanal mining, SAESSCAM, a farm was found for them outside the town. Also that year, SMK identified and cleared a site on the concession for another co-operative of 32 women who are now producing fresh vegetables to meet the company's catering needs. Waiting for the first harvest was very difficult for the women who were used to having a daily income to feed their families. But their diligence paid off and now they are diversifying their activities.

In the mines, women frequently suffer health problems, discrimination and abuse. Some of the women in these projects were, themselves, child miners and desperately want a better future for their own children.



165
security guards



Maintaining security on a site where there are many artisanal miners requires constant communications, a strong emphasis on positive community relations, and a thorough understanding of how artisanal mining communities function. One of the most effective ways to achieve these objectives is through engaging the artisanal miners themselves directly in security activities. SMK now employs 200 ex-artisanal miners as security staff at various sites around the concession.

For the ambitious young men who want to learn a profession, as well as for the older members of the artisanal community who command respect and authority, a role in the SMK security team is a good fit.



68
women starting
small businesses



Providing opportunities for Congolese women to have more control over family finances has been shown to be an important factor in reducing poverty and improving living conditions for families. Through the Pact WORTH programme, SMK is assisting 101 women ex-artisanal miners to learn to read and write, to start saving money and to develop small business enterprises. The women are supported to identify the enterprise they can best undertake, to develop a business plan and budget, to develop their skills, to employ staff, and to win contracts.

33 of the 101 women in the WORTH programme established the market garden at Kamboye whilst the other 68 women are in various stages of developing a restaurant, a hair salon, sewing shops and other activities.



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gravel makers



The new mining sector in Kolwezi is stimulating a massive boom in construction and a resulting demand for materials, including sand, aggregate and building stone. SMK already has 115 ex-artisanal miners working on a gravel-making project, with another 90 joining the team as a new site is developed. Whilst currently employed by the company, the men will be assisted to transform the operation into a gravel-making business enterprise over time.

Production is based on 'appropriate technology'. The hand-turned rock crushers maximise the number of people employed on site and are also easy to use and maintain. Once graded, the gravel is used by SMK or sold to other companies.



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exploration support workers



The exploration and drilling teams on any mining concession are usually the first staff to interact with the artisanal miners. Indeed, the arrival of an exploration team may also attract new artisanal miners who know that their presence is a sign of a possible resource. Whilst a degree of co-habitation can be possible, once expensive drill rigs are on site then the security of personnel & equipment must be assured. It is at this potentially complex and tense stage that negotiations must be carried out to find a means of co-habitation and transition.

Job creation is a very important means of assuring this co-habitation. Artisanal miners can assist with site clearance, equipment transport, sampling and many other functions.



10

site rehabilitation workers



Artisanal mining communities are highly migratory and can rapidly establish themselves in areas where minerals are discovered, moving on only when the resource has been depleted. On the SMK concession, villages have been invaded by groups of artisanal miners resulting in social and environmental destruction. One village of 26 homes became a sprawling camp of 500 shacks overnight. When the miners moved on, the area was left full of rubbish, creating an on-going health hazard and a depressing environment for the village.

10 ex-artisanal miners will carry out a programme to clean and rehabilitate the area in and around the village. Social recovery, however, may take a long time.



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men farmers



Whilst many artisanal miners express an interest in farming, to date it has been the women ex-miners who have so far had greater success in the transition from mine to field. Many of the younger men see artisanal mining and the life in the camps as a 'macho' lifestyle and do not want to settle into a village or to tend crops. As in many countries younger people are less attracted to the rural life and want jobs, training and a future with a company.

However, there are examples of miners successfully turning to farming with the assistance of the SMK and Pact. Maize and vegetables are being produced by ex-artisanal miners, and livestock rearing is being started.



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