



Building bridges from mineral revenues

Imagine a small town in a lush green landscape with two mighty rivers running through it. Residents - farmers, nurses, children, merchants, mothers, miners, teachers - all going about their daily business. The town is called **Bihambwe**, located in North Kivu province in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Like any other town, rush hour can be a stressful time of day, but the people of Bihambwe faced particular challenges. The Mumba and Mema rivers flowing through the town had no bridge or any type of infrastructure connecting opposite banks. The town was effectively cut off from roads and cities such as Goma, capital of North Kivu which was limiting many kinds of socio-economic opportunities.



Bihambwe's residents crossing the Mumba River before revenue from mineral trade funding the construction of a bridge [Photo: Pact]

Hope Yese Kireka runs one of Bihambwe's schools and explained that *"before the construction of the two bridges, the population suffered a lot. We had to pay to travel by piggyback on young men to cross the rivers. We had many cases of drowning, especially children, but also our cows, goats, sheep, and pigs"*. Local hospitals and health centres were supported with medical provisions from civil society groups, but the sick and injured were also transported on someone's back to reach the other side of the river to hospital. Farmers and miners transported their goods to trade and sell outside of town with great difficulty, depressing production and income for the area.

"We had many cases of drowning, especially children, but also our cows, goats, sheep, and pigs."

...local government and communities were able to raise revenue from contributions from mineral exporters...

“The construction of the two bridges was a sigh of relief ...”

After the implementation of the **iTSCI programme** in North Kivu province in 2014 to support responsible trade in tin, tantalum, and tungsten minerals, local government and communities were able to raise more revenue from contributions from mineral exporters and reinvest it back into the community through a locally managed basket fund. The Bihambwe community and the North Kivu provincial government decided to allocate **over 400,000 US\$** from their basket fund to build two bridges over the Mumba and Mema rivers. Bihambwe Bridge was inaugurated in July 2015 and Mema Bridge in May 2016.



Residents and businesses enjoy using the new Mema Bridge inaugurated in May 2016
[Photo: Pact]

Now, thanks to the increasing mineral trading activities as a result of the introduction of the iTSCI programme in the province, Bihambwe’s residents can cross the rivers safely, minerals and other goods can be transported and traded rapidly, and flood control has been improved. *“The construction of the two bridges was a sigh of relief for us moto-taxi bikers. Before, customers were scarce since they had to walk and then take the moto-taxi on the other side of the river. Now, we have plenty of customers and more earnings than ever”* said Eric Nsabimana, a Bihambwe resident. Similar basket fund initiatives have also succeeded in South Kivu province, where they have helped build schools and health centres for the benefit of the communities.

iTSCI Programme

Supporting responsible mineral production



c/o iTSCI Secretariat at ITRI Ltd
3 Curo Park
St Albans
UK, AL2 2DD
Phone: +44 1727 875 544
E-mail: itsci@itri.co.uk

iTSCI was developed and is managed by the global not-for-profit tin and tantalum industry associations ITRI and T.I.C. as an inclusive, sustainable, multi-stakeholder programme. We assist all actors in implementing OECD recommended due diligence to create responsible 3T mineral supply chains and benefit from trade, even from high risk areas. iTSCI has a track record of global co-operation and achievement contributing to capacity building, better governance, human rights and stability through monitoring more than 1,500 mine sites in Burundi, DRC, Rwanda and Uganda, and protecting the livelihood of tens of thousands of miners plus their communities.

See more news and information on <http://itsci.org>

The field activities of iTSCI are implemented through Pact Inc. The programme is funded by the 3T mineral business with support from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.