

HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT IN DR CONGO'S ARTISANAL AND SMALL-SCALE GOLD MINING: A PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT

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Abstract

Artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) has a number of environmental and health effects, ranging from mercury pollution over respiratory diseases to asphyxia. Yet despite these risks, hundreds of thousands of people continue working and living in the mines, as they (in) directly depend on them for their livelihoods. What remains little understood, is whether the persistence of harmful mining practices is mostly a matter of limited information, of limited resources (financial, material), of prioritization (trade-off between short-term economic gain and long-term gains), of structurally unequal power relations, of bad governance or misguided government policies, or due to something else. As long as this is insufficiently understood, all proposed solutions risk to either not be adapted to the context, or not be accepted by local populations. Together with a CEGEMI team, we set up a participatory action research in one selected mine, Kamituga, aiming to document health and environmental effects, study their causes and possible solutions, and develop sensitization material that can be used by the miners to adopt better practices.



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Keywords

1. Artisanal and small-scale gold mining
2. Health
3. Safety
4. Environment
5. Sensitization

Output so far

- Seminar Health in ASGM on 10 November 2022, IOB, University of Antwerp
- Special issue in The Extractive Industries and Society (2022):
 - Nkuba, B.; Muhanzi, A.G.; Zahinda, F. (2022) [How do technological changes in artisanal and small-scale gold mining affect the environment and communities' health?](#)
 - Geenen, S.; Kabilambali, G.; Mussa Bashizi, F. & Vanlerberghe, E. (2022) [Women who "age too fast": Female work, bodies and health in the gold mines of Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.](#)

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Timeline, funding & partners

- 2021 - 2022
- VLIR-UOS Global Minds
- Centre d'Expertise en Gestion Minière
- Université Catholique de Bukavu