Women in Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining in Central and East Africa

A SNAPSHOT OF CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR EMPOWERMENT

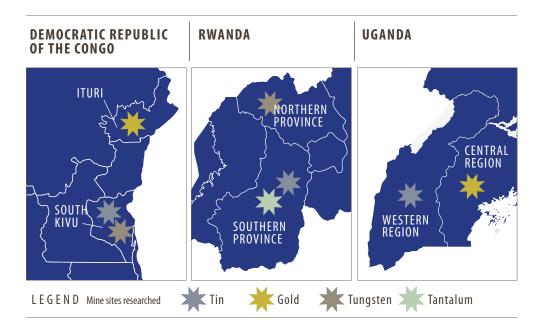
frica holds an estimated onethird of the world's mineral reserves. Millions across the continent rely on artisanal and smallscale mining (ASM)—a practice using basic techniques and equipment for their livelihoods.

Governments are stepping up efforts to further integrate artisanal miners into the formal economy. Policies are being reformed to increase benefits from mineral wealth, including through taxation. At the same time, the ICGLR Regional Certification Mechanism and chain of custody schemes are being implemented across the region to bring responsibly sourced minerals to international markets.

Women are an essential part of artisanal mining, taking on roles from panning and processing, to trading goods and services. They rely on the income from this informal mining economy to support their households and dependents. Yet, at the most basic level—women's diverse and active participation in the artisanal sector, and the gendered experience of artisanal mining, is often ignored.

A team of researchers is exploring women's livelihoods in the artisanal and small-scale mining of 3Ts (tin, tantalum, tungsten), and gold within the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, and Uganda.

The study is exploring dynamics in and around two mine sites in each country to reveal how gender inequality limits women's contributions and potential as economic and social actors within the artisanal mining sector. In addition, the



research team is examining how initiatives, policies, regulations and laws fail to acknowledge the gender inequalities within mining communities, making women even more vulnerable. The three countries are at different stages of implementing reforms targeting the integration of gender equality into artisanal mining, providing comparison across the region.

The following presents an overview of the challenges women face in the artisanal mining sector based on preliminary analysis of 878 surveys, dozens of focus groups, and interviews. Based on these key findings, the research team makes the following recommendations for international and regional policymakers, multistakeholder initiatives, and donors to improve women's opportunities in the sector.

KEY FINDING ONE: The structure and division of labour characterizing

the ASM sector overwhelmingly disadvantages women, despite the fact they are a significant part of the workforce.

KEY FINDING TWO: Patriarchal norms, beliefs and values prevent women's full participation in ASM, despite the fact that many women surveyed find it a good job and seek improved working conditions and training in the sector.

KEY FINDING THREE: Women are often prevented from accessing credit that would allow for increased income and security, and are often denied direct access or control over minerals, blocking their participation in decisionmaking and leadership opportunities.

KEY FINDING FOUR: Women economically and socially benefit from working in ASM, with the income helping to meet household needs and providing them with increased status.

23-73%

of the workforce are women; depending on the mine site surveyed 15%

of women vs 62% of men are "diggers" a higher paying job

RECOMMENDATION ONE: Maximize opportunities to challenge patriarchal gender norms, beliefs and values

- » Collaborate with existing initiatives aimed at empowering women and establishing greater gender equality.
- » Identify good practices that challenge prevailing norms, beliefs and values, and integrate into stakeholder engagement strategies and publications.
- » Ensure meaningful participation and representation of women in multistakeholder and governmental initiatives, institutions, as well as national and provincial-level forums.

RECOMMENDATION TWO: Recognize and take into consideration the gendered impacts of mining sector policy reform

- » Provide capacity and support for government agencies to conduct Gender Impact Assessments ahead of mining sector policy reform and before implementation of programs targeting mining communities.
- » Support cross-collaboration between mining-focused government departments and others.

» Ensure meaningful participation and representation by women in any consultation on mining sector policy reform.

58%

of women are the main

contributors of income

for their dependents

» Integrate gender-specific impacts on mining policy reform into trainings for government officials and institutional actors.

RECOMMENDATION THREE: Support efforts to strengthen women's leadership

- » Promote, support and host information sessions for women that explain mining sector policy and their rights.
- » Identify and support the creation of alliances and networks, with the goal of reducing costs and vulnerability for women working in the sector, as well as promoting peer-to-peer training.
- » Promote policies that support women's participation in decisionmaking roles within ASM governance structures, and support the creation of associations for women in the sector.

RECOMMENDATION FOUR: Increase women's capacity to access more lucrative work

» Promote and support skillbuilding and capacity for women including technical assistance and leadership skills.

- » Reduce the barriers for women posed by illiteracy and lower rate of education, by offering translation services, materials in local languages, or other participatory techniques such as theatre.
- » Promote policies and laws that advance women's employment and access to mineral rights.

RECOMMENDATION FIVE: Facilitate access to capital

- » Support microcredit initiatives targeted at women in the ASM supply chain.
- » Reduce financial vulnerability by facilitating collective savings for women working in the ASM sector.

RECOMMENDATION SIX: Establish gender-responsible policies and systems in ASM governance structures, including cooperatives or companies

- » Promote and support the introduction of gender across all policies and new programs.
- » Encourage and provide support for private sector actors or technical assistance providers to conduct Gender Impact Assessments to ensure equal benefit of their program for women.
- » Ensure there are effective ways for women to communicate their concerns to management and support the development and implementation of gender-specific grievance mechanisms, as well as health and security initiatives.

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