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Her Security

Promoting Due Diligence and Improving Women's Security to Tackle Child Labour in Democratic Republic of Congo's Artisanal Cobalt and Copper Mining Sector

IMPACT's Her Security project aims to decrease child labour in Democratic Republic of Congo's (DRC) artisanal cobalt and copper mining sector by addressing its root causes—specifically women's insecurity. The project seeks to improve the overall well-being of women and youth in artisanal mining communities, while also strengthening capacity of the private sector and local authorities to implement due diligence. This 4 year, 2.9 € (\$3 million USD) project is funded by the European Union.



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What is the link between women's security and child labour?

In the first phase of the Her Security project between 2022-2023,¹ IMPACT sought to understand how women's security in DRC's artisanal cobalt communities affects child labour. Through analysis of existing research, as well as focus groups and interviews with women artisanal miners in Kolwezi, we found that:

- Women are main contributors to household incomes in artisanal cobalt mining communities but the income they earn is not enough to cover basic needs
- Children work in artisanal cobalt mining to boost their family's income and help pay for food, clothing, and school fees
- Women understand children are not allowed to work in mine sites but see no other alternatives for their survival
- Cobalt mining is the preferred income in the area for women and children as it requires no start-up capital and guarantees cash everyday

- Children circumvent bans on child labour by moving between mine sites, adjusting hours they work, and paying informal "access fees"

IMPACT's research report, *How Households Depend on Children's Income: The Case for Improving Women's Livelihoods to Eliminate Child Labour in Democratic Republic of Congo's Cobalt Sector*, outlined how poverty is a driving force behind child labour in the sector.² When mothers are struggling, children step in to help—some encouraged by parents, or independently follow siblings, friends, and neighbours.

Artisanal cobalt mining provides the highest income in the area for children and other community members, with children earning up to \$2.50 USD each per day. Children usually give their earnings to their mothers who use it for basic household necessities like food.³ IMPACT found that if children's income is paying for family needs like food, then as a first step to tackle child labour, the income of the main breadwinners—the women—needs to increase.

1 IMPACT, Her Security, <https://impacttransform.org/en/work/project/her-security/>

2 IMPACT, How Households Depend on Children's Income: The Case for Improving Women's Livelihoods to Eliminate Child Labour in Democratic Republic of Congo's Cobalt Sector, July 2023, https://meetgloria.impacttransform.org/documents/Briefing_Paper_EN.pdf

3 IMPACT, How Households Depend on Children's Income, p. 8.

How will Her Security improve women's livelihoods and decrease child labour?

1 Improve security for women in ASM communities



Women are struggling to cover basic household expenses, leading to a reliance on income from child labour to cover basic needs. The project will employ strategies to increase women's incomes, improving their overall security, and helping to keep families above the poverty line. Through local savings and credit associations, training on technical skills, and financial literacy support, women will be supported to diversify their incomes and access alternative economic opportunities. Training on human rights, health, and safety for women and girls will increase the security of mothers and their children across the artisanal mining communities.

2 Increase leadership to tackle child labour and strengthen gender equality in ASM sites



To influence collective action across communities, the project will launch an awareness campaign targeting socio-cultural and gender norms that perpetuate child labour and impede the rights of women working in the ASM sector. This campaign will support local actors to more effectively develop strategies to tackle child labour, while strengthening the leadership capacity of women and girls on these issues. Women leaders will be trained on human rights, relevant laws, as well as advocacy tactics to support them to speak out on decisions relevant to their homes, families, and communities.

3 Support due diligence and transparency in ASM supply chains



The project will train and support artisanal supply chain operators to implement due diligence. Training will emphasize the risks associated with child labour and the norms that perpetuate it. Local authorities will also be trained on due diligence implementation, and importantly, how to monitor and mitigate child labour at mine sites. By understanding how they can support economic actors establish more responsible and transparent supply chains, the local authorities will be able to implement their duties more effectively.

Theory of Change

Prevent child labour in the artisanal cobalt and copper mining sectors.

Improve the socio-economic situation of women and youth in mining communities in DRC's Haut-Katanga and Lualaba Provinces.



Strengthen duty of care in the artisanal mining sector by increasing the capacity of the private and public actors involved.



Logic Model Summary

Our ultimate impact: Prevent child labour in the artisanal cobalt and copper mining sectors by promoting socio-economic support for mothers and adolescent girls, as well as the duty of care in the sector.



INCOMES AND SECURITY

OUTCOMES

- Increased ability for women to safely improve their income and economic status
- Increased access to alternative economic opportunities for women and adolescent girls
- Increased knowledge and capacities of women and adolescent girls to improve their safety

ACTIVITIES

- Support for local women's groups
- Implementation of Village Savings and Loans Associations
- Training on income generating activities
- Training on human rights, due diligence, and role of mining services
- Health education and provision of basic medical care services
- Community dialogues



LEADERSHIP IN COMMUNITIES

- Increased knowledge of community actors to counter child labour and mitigate negative impacts of gender norms that harm women and girls
- Increased collective capacity of women and adolescent girls to influence decisions related to child labour and gender equality

- Research on local perceptions
- Awareness campaign
- Training on leadership, decision making, and advocacy
- Training for women on responsible business conduct in artisanal mineral supply chains
- Support for women and youth advocacy



DUE DILIGENCE IN SUPPLY CHAINS

- Increased capacity of economic operators to carry out due diligence with particular attention to risks of child labour and the socio-cultural and gender norms that perpetuate such labour at ASM sites
- Competence of local authorities and state mining services to carry out their mandate strengthened
- Training on due diligence

- Support for economic operators to implement due diligence
- Support for local authorities on their role to carry out due diligence
- Support for local authorities to monitor and mitigate child labour





Meet Gloria

Gloria⁴ is an artisanal cobalt miner in Kolwezi, Democratic Republic of Congo.

Cobalt mining has always been a part of her life. But never did she imagine her young children would be working alongside her. This was not the life she dreamed of for them.

Gloria's family is struggling. One day, her two oldest children go to the mine site with her. Now Gloria relies on her children's income to help pay for food and cover rent.

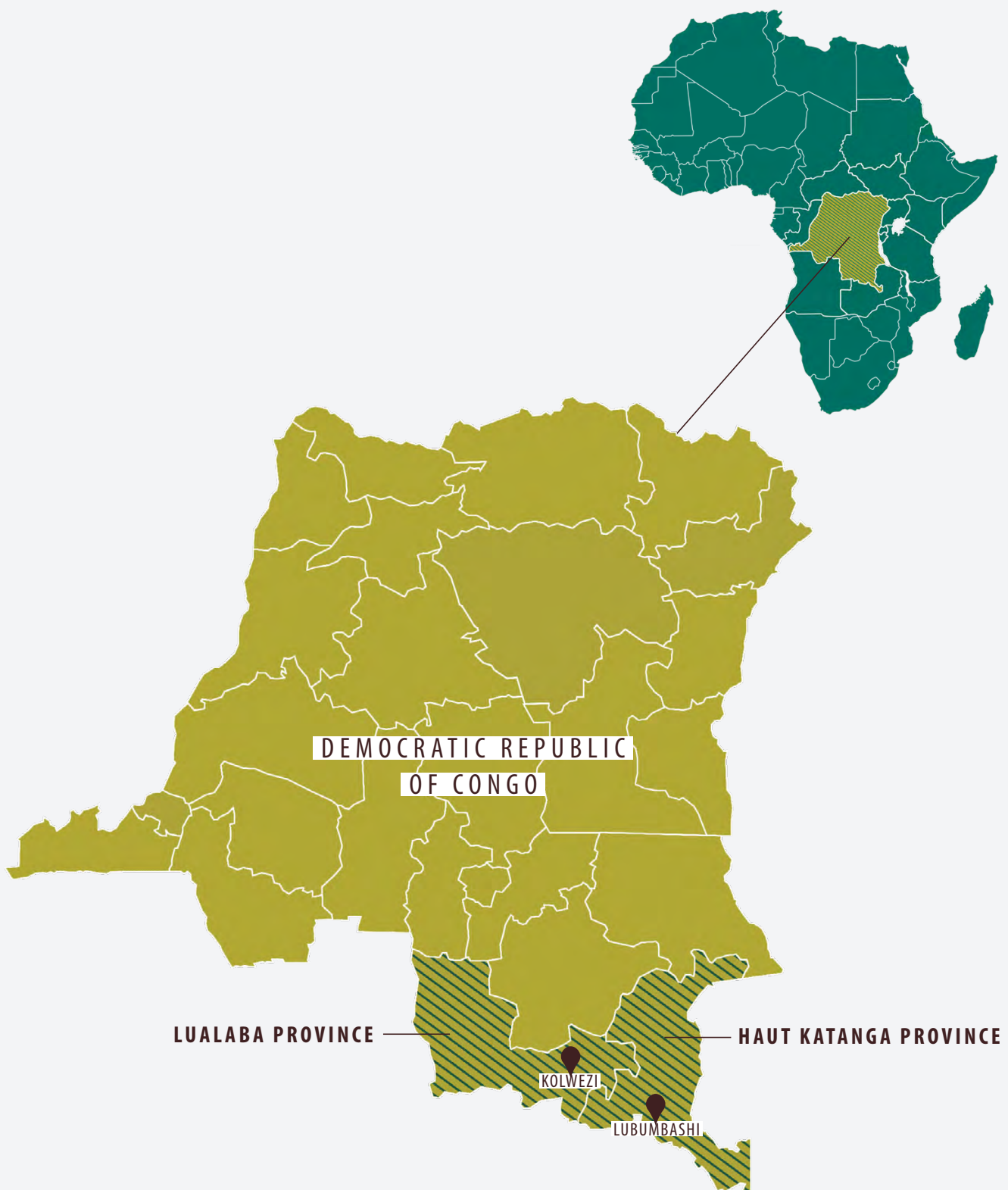
Gloria knows it's not right, but they have no other choice. She makes sure her children stay close and if she hears the security agents coming, she warns them to run back home.

Gloria wants her children to go to school and to have a better life. If she is given the chance and the resources, she could change the future.

WATCH THE VIDEO AND LEARN MORE



⁴ Gloria's story has been written to reflect the experiences of interviews with women in Kolwezi, protecting their anonymity. While names and details have been changed, Gloria's story is true to what we heard. Information throughout is based on interviews with women artisanal cobalt miners and traders in Kolwezi during 2022 and 2023. Learn more: <https://meetgloria.impacttransform.org/>



About the Implementing Partners

IMPACT transforms how natural resources are managed in areas where security and human rights are at risk. We investigate and develop approaches for natural resources to improve security, development, and equality. We are an independent non-profit, collaborating with local partners for lasting change. IMPACT has worked in DRC and neighbouring countries for more than a decade with multiple projects supporting responsible supply chains and transparency in the artisanal gold and cobalt sectors.

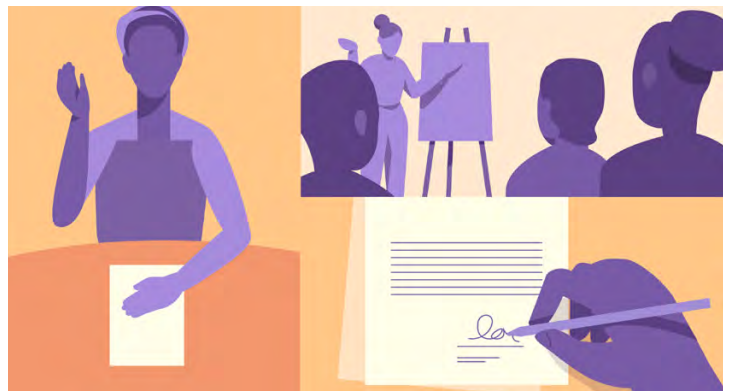
Bon Pasteur Kolwezi is a Congolese nonprofit established in 2012 by the Good Shepherd sisters to improve the situation of artisanal miners by promoting community development, women's empowerment, and child protection. The organization continues its activities in Kolwezi, Lualaba Province, strengthening its support in seven artisanal mining communities in the surrounding area.

EITI-DRC is a global standard that aims to strengthen transparency and responsible management of natural resource extraction. In DRC, a National Committee ensures its implementation and is formed by an Executive Committee steering body represented by the government, extractive companies and civil society as well as a Technical Secretariat. The executive body of the National Committee is led by a National Coordinator.

In Collaboration With:

The project is implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, Education, Social and Humanitarian Affairs, Gender, Family and Children of Lualaba Province, as well as the Good Shepherd International Foundation and Missio Austria.

The implementation of the project is supported by the Responsible Minerals Initiative and Bloom by IMPACT. The project works in close collaboration with numerous government ministries including the DRC's Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Affairs, and the Ministry of Mining, as well as the DRC government's ongoing initiatives to tackle child labour and introduce responsible artisanal cobalt mining.





IMPACT transforms how natural resources are managed in areas where security and human rights are at risk. We investigate and develop approaches for natural resources to improve security, development, and equality. We are an independent non-profit, collaborating with local partners for lasting change. IMPACT is headquartered in Canada and has offices in Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, and Côte d'Ivoire, as well as projects in Burkina Faso, Burundi, Mali, and Zimbabwe.

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