

Examining Child Labor In Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining In The DRC, Burundi, and South Sudan

Scott Boxer

Megan Prybyl

Emmaly Read

Barbara Taylor

Sarkis Zoubian



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PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

- ❖ Statement of Work
- ❖ Methodology
- ❖ Harm to Children
- ❖ DRC - Cobalt and Coltan
- ❖ Burundi - Coltan and Gold
- ❖ South Sudan - Gold
- ❖ COVID-19
- ❖ Future Areas of Focus
- ❖ Concluding Thoughts

STATEMENT OF WORK

Conduct in-depth research on the **linkages between the extractive industry** and the recruitment and **use of children** by non-state and/or state actors for mining, commercial sexual exploitation, child soldiering, and other illegal activities in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, and South Sudan.**

METHODOLOGY

→ Desk Research

- ◆ Examination of existing literature
- ◆ Academic & Grey Literature
- ◆ News reports and miscellaneous documents

→ Interviews

- ◆ Conducted online and over the phone with field experts

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Trends	What are the negative and positive trends in the supply chains in relation to child labor?
Illicit Activity	What role does illegality play in tracing the origins of X mineral?
	What role do children play in the illegality of X minerals?
Government	What are the barriers that are preventing the gov't from regulating X sector?
	What are the things that X gov't could fix?

Security Sector	What is the role of the state and non state weaponized actors?
Child Labor	Where do you see children working the most and in what role?
	What, if any, of the worst forms of child labor are present in X country?
Covid-19	What has the impact of Covid-19 been on this industry?

MULTIPLE SOURCES OF HARM TO CHILDREN

- Moving away from “explicit” forced labor
- Harm comes from other sources
 - ◆ Environmental Degradation
 - Lead and mercury are byproducts of gold ASM
 - ◆ Conditions in ASM
 - Physical harm is prevalent, and children are more at risk
 - ◆ Socio-Economic Factors
 - Declining agricultural sectors
 - “Necessity” of ASM

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COBALT
COLTAN

- Two ways to impact children
 - ◆ Direct involvement
 - ◆ Presence
 - Parents bring children if they have no caretaker(s)
 - Health and environmental impacts

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

- How do children participate?
- ◆ Smuggling
 - ◆ Search through LSM tails
 - ◆ Washing and sorting
 - ◆ Going into smaller tunnel sections



Copper-cobalt/CuCo/2C ASM operations in Lualaba.
2017. Photo credit: Afai Consulting BV.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO



Images courtesy of
CNES/Airbus DS,
produced by Earthrise.
Original Source: The
Guardian

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COBALT
COLTAN

- Children participate in informal sector
- What sustains informal sector?
 - ◆ Corruption/bribery
 - ◆ Insufficient implementation
 - ◆ Overbearing regulations
- What drives children to participate?
 - ◆ Family poverty, illness, divorce
 - ◆ Lack of child care
 - ◆ School funds

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

COBALT
COLTAN

→ Dangers to Children

◆ Education

- Estimated 30% drop out rate

◆ Geological risks

- Tunnel collapses in residential areas

◆ Chemicals

- Water and air pollution
- Parent participation in ASM correlated with birth defects

BURUNDI COLTAN GOLD

Findings

- Children's roles
 - Underdeveloped formal system
 - ◆ Little protection in laws
 - ◆ No incentive to act legally
 - ◆ Mine of Origin documents
 - ◆ Smuggling
 - Gap of \$4 billion in African gold exports with UAE gold imports
 - ◆ Dubai's 'Good Delivery Standard'
- February 2022

BURUNDI COLTAN GOLD

Gaps & Suggestions for Further Research

- Insufficient data
 - ◆ External reports from 2014
 - ◆ Underrepresented Interviewees
- Relevance to children
- Future supply chain research needed
 - ◆ Level of corruption and/or clientelism
 - ◆ Unknown actors and amount of actors (comptoirs & cooperatives)
- Shift in the economy from agriculture to mining

SOUTH SUDAN GOLD



USAID Food Assistance Fact Sheet, South Sudan, March 2020

Overview

- ASM sites
 - ◆ Central and Eastern Equatoria
- 60k ASM miners
 - ◆ Roles of children
- EITI; Mining Act of 2012
- Stunted implementation

SOUTH SUDAN GOLD



A family pulls their possessions and livestock on a homemade raft. They traveled 15.5 miles to find dry land. Photo Credit: Sebastian Rich/UNICEF, CNN, Dec 2021.

Causes of Children Entering ASM

- Poverty
- Displacement and Flooding
- Armed Groups

SOUTH SUDAN GOLD



Child miner standing in artisanal mining hole in Greater Kapoeta. Photo credit Azaria Gillo, Cordiad Report, January 2016

Gaps & Suggestions for Further Research

- Insufficient data
 - ◆ Lack of reporting
 - ◆ Interviewees familiarity
- Further Research
 - ◆ What are the driving factors?
 - ◆ Who is present? Why?
 - ◆ Who controls ASM gold mines?

COVID-19 EFFECTS ON CHILDREN AND ASM

- Visibility
 - ◆ Border closures and bars to international and domestic travel complicate monitoring of ASM
- Education
 - ◆ Children have been out of school for an extended period of time
 - DRC: 10 months
 - Burundi: 5 months
 - South Sudan: 14 months

FUTURE AREAS OF FOCUS



Man selecting stones and holding toddler. Copper-cobalt/CuCo/2C ASM operations in Lualaba. 2017. Photo credit: Afai Consulting BV.

- Regulation
 - ◆ Better targeting
 - ◆ Understand consequences
- Governance
 - ◆ Ensure both sufficient and efficient capabilities
- Private Sector
 - ◆ Responsibility at all levels
- Development
 - ◆ Reduce education costs
 - ◆ Economic alternatives

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Harmful trends to children

- Climate Change
- Environmental Degradation
- Conditions in ASM
- Socio-Economic Factors

QUESTIONS?

Thank You