



MINING, GENDER AND SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS

6-7 November 2008

Jointly organized by ANU College of Asia and the Pacific and
The World Bank

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*Contributing Towards a Post-Conflict Transition in the Democratic Republic Of Congo:
Experiences with Women in the Artisanal Mining Sector of Katanga Province and Ituri District*

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Venue:

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Cnr Liversidge Street & Garran Road
Australian National University
Acton Canberra AUSTRALIA
Web: <http://empoweringcommunities.anu.edu.au/workshop.php>

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**CONTRIBUTING TOWARDS A POST-CONFLICT
TRANSITION IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
OF CONGO:**

**EXPERIENCES WITH WOMEN IN THE
ARTISANAL MINING SECTOR OF KATANGA
PROVINCE AND ITURI DISTRICT**

**Written by Rachel Perks
Pact Peace and Stability Program Manager**

Preface and Acknowledgements

The following paper represents a range of experiences by development actors, foreign donors, Government and mining companies in response to the challenge of women's issues in the artisanal mining sector of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Though some statistics and trends are common across the country, this paper speaks more specifically to the contexts of Katanga Province and Ituri District of Orientale Province. It does not in any way attempt to generalize what is a very diverse economic and social environment. It draws from Pact's work within a public-private partnership aimed at improving governance and livelihoods in the DRC mining sector.

The learning found within this paper would not be possible without the concerted efforts of actors to tackle the issues despite the obvious risks of working with such a volatile, illegal and opportunistic sector. In particular, Anvil Mining Ltd, Anglo Gold Ashanti and USAID have consistently supported Pact's work in this domain. Other funding partners over the last two years have included the International Finance Corporation, Tenke Fungurume Mining, Katanga Mining, and DCP/Nikanor.

One cannot ignore the prime role played by Congolese women. All societies battle with stigmas and discrimination though not all produce an environment in which confronting them is acceptable. In the Congo women face great personal security risks in speaking out against abuse, discrimination and exploitation. The courage to share their stories with Pact staff and researchers is sincerely recognised.

Lastly, from a personal perspective, this paper would not be possible were it not for two dear colleagues, Karen Hayes and Alexis Gardella. Without their commitment to women globally and in the artisanal and small-scale mining sector of the Congo in particular, the words in this paper would not be possible.

List of Acronyms

ASM	Artisanal and Small-scale Mining
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDA	Global Development Alliance
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
ILO	International Labor Organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Agencies
SAESSCAM	Service d'Assistance et Encadrement des Artisans et Small-Scale Mining
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
TFM	Tenke Fungurume Mining
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Executive Summary

Artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) presents one of the greatest sources of economic opportunity for millions of Congolese citizens. It is estimated that 2 million people work as artisanal miners across the country,¹ producing 90% of the minerals exported from the country². With their dependents, it is estimated that the ASM sector provides economically for 18% of the national population. Ironically, though this sector contributes to the livelihoods of such a large proportion of the population, it exhibits consistently some of the worst forms of labor, environmental and social practice found in the DRC today.

As with all recovering conflict countries, DRC's peace and future for sustainable development rests largely on economic revitalization. While humanitarian and development aid provides temporary relief to the most vulnerable population groups in an immediate transition period, long-term economic growth depends on outside investment and Government regulation of its most profitable industries, with the mining sector being the most obvious.

However, whereas industrial mining will surely constitute the backbone of the economy in the decades to follow, the real wealth and livelihood for individuals is presently found in the unregulated and largely illegal artisanal and small-scale sector (ASM). The transition period from ASM to large industrial mining is wrought with potential conflicts and severe challenges as livelihood opportunities will be lost and access to resources will be restricted.

While most advocacy and lobby groups focus on issues of revenue transparency, and the implementation standards practiced by industrial companies, the deplorable conditions and

¹ World Bank, *The Democratic Republic of Congo Growth with Governance in the Mining Sector*. November 2007.

² See Hayes, Karen. *The Economics of Artisanal Mining in Africa* (first draft still to be published). October 2008.

discrimination facing artisanal miners remains largely overlooked, including women and young girls.

Women constitute between 40-50% of the ASM workforce in Africa³. They constitute a significant economic force and are often carrying the burden of providing for whole households. In the DRC, as in most other African countries, women perform support service work to the industry and rarely engage in the physical act of mining. They also provide the majority of services at the mine sites and adjacent mine camps such as restaurants, markets, and small kiosks. Women work voluntarily and forcibly in the sex trade, often unprotected and under intimidation.

Focus on transformation of DRC's ASM sector is critical for ensuring overall stability in the country. In this process, gender considerations are imperative given the sheer numbers and levels of poverty. Failure to address these conditions and enhance social capital will most likely result in further social instability, prevent the overall transition from war to peace, and ultimately potentially undermine mining companies' 'social license' to operate in such tenuous environments.

There are emerging lessons from the work of Pact and its partners in addressing gender issues in ASM that can inform further best practice:

- Given the sheer number of women artisanal miners and their levels of poverty, overall sustainable transitions and reform of the ASM sector is not possible without targeted support towards gender challenges and issues;
- However, while gender-focused programming is essential, it must rest within a larger framework for ASM reform in order to ensure buy-in by other ASM actors;
- Experience shows that investment in women artisanal miners is more likely to increase broader social capital due to their role often as sole income providers and their relationship to rural village life. They constitute a bridge between two very distinct and often isolated development contexts, and their role in bringing ASM into the wider development agenda of the DRC is of great value;
- Thus, gender issues should be at the forefront of all social development initiatives whether through public-private partnerships, NGO and UN programs, or concession-based mining programs in order to enhance social stability;
- To ensure this coherence, all actors – including mining companies – should align their development objectives and work within a commonly agreed framework to increase potential for impact. This is important as the ASM sector has limited funding opportunities and actors presently;
- In this regard, private-public partnership can enhance benefit and limited resources, and ensure complementarities.

³ Hinton, Jennifer J, Veiga, Marcello M & Beinhoff, Christian. *Women and Artisanal Mining: Gender Roles and the Road Ahead*. As Ch.11 in *The Socio-Economic Impacts of Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining in Developing Countries*. Swet.publ, ed. G.Hilson. 2003

I BACKGROUND TO ARTISANAL MINING IN THE DRC

Aftermath of the Conflict and the Continued Dependence on ASM Activity

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is a country of great natural resources, mineral wealth and agricultural potential. But a debilitating colonial past and two civil wars have resulted in 30 years of neglect: seventy percent of its 57.5 million inhabitants⁴ live below the poverty line, infant and child mortality rates have risen to 92 and 148 deaths per live births, disease is endemic, infrastructure is virtually non-existent, and the general investor climate is marred by the still-unconcluded Mine Contract Review Process, and by fears of another war re-surfing in eastern Congo.

Conflict in the DRC has typically been associated with the drive to gain and maintain control of natural resources. This relationship is not unique to the DRC as exhibited in Sierra Leone and Liberia, and equally at the heart of persistent conflicts in places such as Sudan.

The DRC war from 1999-2003 claimed over 3.3M lives, both directly and indirectly as a result of active fighting⁵. In Ituri District (Orientale Province), it is estimated that 55,000 people died and that another 200-300,000 suffered from severe human rights abuses, often at the hands of fellow villagers and family members⁶. Today, 1.5M internally displaced persons are estimated nationwide with the third and fourth highest concentrations in Ituri District and Katanga Province, 185,500 and 175,815 respectively. While most conflict areas underwent relatively extensive and successful Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) processes, large numbers of ex-combatants in parts of Ituri District, Maniema Province, and northern Katanga Province now work as artisanal miners. For example, it is estimated that up to 10% of artisanal gold diggers in central Ituri District are ex-combatants⁷.

The transition from war to peace in the DRC is, and continues to be, slow with a completed phase of DDR and humanitarian aid, and what should naturally evolve to a more strategic development and social recovery agenda. Within this framework of post-conflict transition, the security of communities remains fragile at best, as the pillars of local governance, economic opportunity and social cohesion re-build at an alarmingly slow pace, bedeviled by individual opportunism and a culture of impunity. Insecurity is largely economic in nature, as the majority is unable to find sustainable livelihoods and thus continue to find recourse in artisanal mining.

Artisanal Mining at a Glance in the DRC

The profile of artisanal miners in the DRC varies from province to province. One encounters individuals who abandoned school at the age of 9 and now at 41 continue to work as gold diggers in Orientale Province. One can also encounter law students from the University of Lubumbashi panning for surface ore during school term breaks in the Kulu River of Kolwezi. The irony of artisanal mining in the DRC is that it exemplifies the greatest

⁴ World Health Organisation. 2006

⁵ International Red Cross. 2004

⁶ *ibid.*

⁷ Pact baseline research into demobilized fighters on the Ashanti Goldfields Kilo concession. July 2008.

examples of Congolese ingenuity and entrepreneurship, and yet similarly reveals the greatest horrors of abuse, violence and exploitation.

As stated in the introduction, it is estimated that up to 2 million people work as artisanal miners across the country⁸. With their dependents, it is estimated that the ASM sector provides economically for 18% of the national population. Diamonds, copper, cobalt, gold, uranium, and tantalum are the main resources extracted.

It is very important to view this statistic in global terms. Globally, large mines generate more than 95% of the world's total mineral production. The industry employs an estimated 2.5 million people worldwide and is dominated by some 50 major mining and metals companies. Global ASM generates about 15% of the world's minerals yet is a major source of income in about 30 countries around the world for at least an estimated 13 million people. Between 80 million and 100 million people are estimated to depend on small-scale mining for their livelihood with 52 million of them residing on the African continent.

The DRC is the reverse. 90% of minerals are produced by ASM, only 10% by large-scale mining⁹. This comparison serves to demonstrate the enormity of the transformation and the length of time that will be required for a peaceful formalization of the mining sector.

Artisanal workers come from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds such as public security forces (current, demobilized and deserters), displaced farmers, and even skilled professionals. In the last decade, these individuals have become highly migratory, adapting to shifts in product demand across the country. Their temporary settlement in traditional communities can often have very negative social impacts including family breakup and polygamy, an increase in prostitution, abuse of alcohol and drugs, competition for - and destruction of - the communities' resources, and distortion of local market prices of basic goods due to their relatively higher daily income earned. Artisanal miners are frequently trapped in cycles of debt and poverty as a result of financial obligations to middlemen and women, known as *negociants*.

In practice, artisanal miners' relationships with both traditional and local authorities are often governed by predatory taxation and bribery, and their entry into indigenous sedentary villages is often viewed with mixed feelings by the local inhabitants: on the one hand artisanal miners inject significant cash flow and attract services (such as kiosks, bars, and second-hand clothing stalls) otherwise unavailable in rural villages, while on the other hand, artisanal miners flout and attempt to coerce traditional and local government authority and impose a generalized social insecurity.

The Challenge for ASM Within the Broader Development Agenda of the DRC

ASM is provided for under the current 2002 DRC Mining Code. However, Government regulated artisanal zones are extremely limited forcing the majority of artisanal mining to occur in a void of Government oversight and support. This makes interventions by interested partners limited. International agencies and donors are hesitant in general to be

⁸ World Bank, *The Democratic Republic of Congo Growth with Governance in the Mining Sector*. November 2007.

⁹ See Hayes, Karen. *The Economics of Artisanal Mining in Africa* (first draft still to be published). October 2008.

seen working closely with the extractive industry sector in the DRC and even more so with ASM given its associated reputation with corruption, bribery, and abuse.

For example, in Katanga Province only six development projects—private and public sources—currently target ASM issues. Of these programs, none have a specific gender focus though women are beneficiaries of child education, health awareness, and economic alternatives activities. In Ituri District, only two projects focus on ASM presently. Neither targets women directly.

Contributions by industrial companies are equally limited as companies shy from intervening in a sector that is still largely illegal and exploitative. The most common strategy used is the offer of alternative employment. However, artisanal women, who are largely uneducated, rarely fulfill employment criteria for industrial recruitment as it often entails high-intensity manual labor or operating of machinery. As confessed most recently by a senior mine manager, affirmative action to recruit women is not easy as “they just don’t have the base qualifications.” Thus women rarely gain from transition opportunities due to their inability to physically respond to manual labor positions or due to their lower education background.

Justification for “Women in ASM” Development Focus

Thus, if limited funds and interest exist for ASM sector reform in the DRC, what then becomes the case for a focus on women’s interests in particular?

Firstly, women make up roughly 50% of the ASM labor sector and carry more economic burden and responsibility than their male counterparts. Women on average constitute up to 70% of single ASM households with an average of 6 child dependents. This includes widowed, abandoned and divorced women as well as those with unemployed husbands. Yet as demonstrated above, they are often the least considered in ASM programming currently in the DRC.

Secondly, working with women artisanal miners often increases sustainability of economic livelihood alternatives and enhances social change as women are not as mobile as men when seeking ASM opportunities, and thus generally remain rooted in their communities. They constitute a bridge to more traditional social life and structures, and thus increase the chances of influencing the broader dynamics for behaviour change.

Thirdly, Pact experiences show that women are more likely to abandon mining and work on economic transition opportunities if given the chance. They are less reticent towards alternatives and do not make high demands for compensation. Though men in general have proven to be far more entrepreneurial when it comes to taking new business risks, female artisanal miners remain committed to an opportunity and save more from their earnings over time.

However, as with any other attempt to address equity and equalization of gender roles, programming focused solely on women can quickly alienate them from the broader society and make men even more resistant towards change. Especially concerning sexual violence against women, the roots are often found in male feelings of powerlessness and social marginalization. By focusing on women alone, efforts could in fact produce violent backlashes and make women more insecure than before.

Thus any efforts to address gender issues in the ASM sector need to be within a broader framework for change where all parties find their interests represented.

The Challenge of Addressing Gender Issues in a Post-Conflict ASM Context

Gender mainstreaming seeks to examine and redefine the roles attributed to men and women in a given social context. In DRC's artisanal mining sector, as synonymous with the country as a whole, this is inherently linked to re-building the roles of men and women, and the values of each gender, following a period of conflict.

This last aspect is important to consider. Societies learn to adapt during times of conflict with men often out fighting in the war and women home providing for families. Today one witnesses this continued adaptation in the migratory patterns of artisanal miners who leave wives and children in search of economic opportunities across the country. Rarely does money reach the family and women are in turn forced to seek livelihoods of their own. In concentrated artisanal environments, women will become laborers themselves or turn to supply businesses around the sites, including the sex trade. The vicious cycle of abandonment and resulting destruction of 'normal society' is witnessed when young females from as far as Kasai Province or North Katanga can be found working as prostitutes in artisanal areas along the southern border to Zambia.

Endemic to war and gender issues is also violence against women where in the DRC it was used as an institutionalized tool of warfare. Today, in artisanal mining communities, where high concentrations of ex-combatants reside, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is common practice.

As often with societies emerging from war and conflict, the traditional structures that once governed culture and social practice are either eroded or significantly diminished. Though Congolese women today would argue that the majority of past culture and social practice did not in fact promote respect and equal opportunity for women, they would agree that at least before the conflict, traditional structures existed for positive influence and change. Compounded with the usurpation of traditional authority and general disorder in ASM communities, gender re-definition becomes extremely complex as societies naturally evolve by grounding constructed roles and responsibilities in local leadership structures. Equally so, the multi-ethnic composition of most ASM communities further complicates approaches as tribal values and practice varies significantly, and occurs within the void of an overarching traditional governance structure.

II WOMEN AND ARTISANAL MINING IN THE DRC: CASE STUDIES FROM KATANGA PROVINCE AND ITURI DISTRICT OF ORIENTALE PROVINCE

The following elements touch upon Pact's experience with partners across two distinct geographic areas of the DRC. Katanga Province is the hub of industrial mining renaissance at present with companies mining primarily copper and cobalt. Ituri District of Orientale Province is slowly recovering from the impact of conflict in this north-eastern corner of the country. Few companies are present. Main commodities mined are gold and tantalum.

Economic Empowerment and Livelihood Alternatives

Women work in and around artisanal mines, most often as transporters and processors of raw material, as well as service providers to the mine such as commerce, catering and, frequently, prostitution. Such periphery roles have significant impacts on the potential livelihoods for women as rarely do they participate in the core of the activity and thus do not have a voice in operational decision-making. In Katanga Province, examples do exist of women *negociants*, the middle person who sells raw ore to traders. Though these examples are rare.

In 2007, Pact with support from the International Finance Corporation (IFC), USAID, and four major mining companies (Tenke Fungurume Mining, Anvil Mining Ltd, Katanga Mining, and DCP/Nikanor) completed an eight-month research into the artisanal mining sector of Kolwezi, Katanga Province. A socio-economic survey interviewed 255 artisanal women miners to ascertain levels of income, social circumstances, and barriers faced in the ASM sector.

The survey revealed that single, divorced or widowed women make up 36% of the female population with an average of 6 children. Thus, this segment can be effectively classed as female-headed households. Such a large percentage of female-headed households in any given population is an indication of several underlying conditions. First, it indicates by virtue of the absence of male heads that nuclear family norms have been disrupted, either through poverty and loss of assets or through migration of males or through generalized breakdown of overall societal norms.¹⁰ Second, it indicates a greater dependency ratio of children to adults, with single women actors carrying a greater burden to provide for their children than standard nuclear joint-spouse households. Third, it indicates diminished access to resources in these households, due to limited household assets such as land (normatively accessed through males) and unequal access to employment and fair wages by virtue of being women and subject to economic discrimination.

Unfortunately, the number of these vulnerable female-headed households must be augmented by another 52% of married women's households in which the spouses are unemployed and thus dependent on a single source of income. In effect, fully 70% of all of the women surveyed were the sole income sources for their families.

¹⁰ There is one exception to this generalization and that is when female heads are dependent on remittances from spouses who have migrated *successfully* in search of employment – this exception does not appear to be the case for Kolwezi given that it is itself is a magnet for labor migration.

As a response to such staggering figures, Pact with Anvil Mining Ltd. has been modeling economic transition alternatives with female artisanal miners in Kolwezi. It combines literacy and savings programs with vocational training and technical accompaniment. Over the course of one year 80 former artisanal women miners have successfully transitioned out of artisanal mining into other economic opportunities. In most cases, women are pursuing two income-generating activities due to the seasonal nature of agriculture, thus combining farming with small businesses in town such as bakeries and restaurants. Beyond the tangible economic and health benefits, women attest to a greater sense of self-worth and confidence provided by the literacy program.

Economic transition activities do present challenges, though easily overcome if recognized at the outset. Of greatest importance is ensuring income is available during the initial transition period as artisanal miners are used to gaining on a daily basis. When presented with business opportunities where initial income will not be generated, creative solutions to bridge the earning gap must be identified and supported.

Reproductive Health

Health and safety is major area of concern in the ASM sector as a whole. Men and women alike suffer from a variety of respiratory illnesses, many chronic due to long-term exposure to highly mineralized ore bodies, or mercury used to in gold recovery processing.

For women, the impact of these working conditions has generational consequences. In Kolwezi, alarming rates of stillbirths, miscarriages, and birth of deformed babies are documented by SAESSCAM, the Government body responsible, and Paraclisis Research Group at the University of Lubumbashi. These cases are most common with women exposed continuously to high radioactive substances such as uranium, copper and cobalt. Out of 350 children surveyed in 2007 by Paraclisis Research suffering from respiratory problems, 41% had parents who worked as artisanal miners and frequently accompanied their parents to site. The ignorance as to the health consequences of artisanal mining is high and necessitates concerted efforts in education awareness campaigns.

Further, across artisanal sites and camps, women have little exposure to health prevention measures. Women sex workers are frequently forced to engage in unprotected sex, increasing their chances of contracting sexually-transmitted diseases (STDs), and HIV/Aids. In partnership with USAID, Pact has trained 20 women artisanal miners in basic health and reproductive education in Kawama, the Katanga Province's first official artisanal zone. This sensitization created a demand from women in the market to sell condoms at their kiosks. Pact couples their rural women's health outreach programs with artisanal women working and living in adjacent communities.

Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV)

Perhaps the most troubling aspect of women working in the artisanal mines and camps is their exposure to a violent and volatile community dominated by men unattached to either family, traditional community or place.

In a March 2008 DRC visit, the former UN Special Envoy for Aids in Africa, Stephen Lewis, remarked that the "DRC is by far the worst place in the world for women. The destruction

of women is beyond the capacity of the mind to absorb.” Though most of the media and advocacy efforts focus on the problem of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in eastern Congo, two recent surveys carried out by Pact reveal alarmingly high rates of SGBV in and around artisanal mining environments in Katanga Province and Ituri District.

The research showed that reported SGBV violence fell into four categories: sexual assault and rape, prostitution, forced marriage (*le mariage précoce*) and domestic violence. Sexual assault and rape was further assigned to three kinds: (i) predations against girls and women of all ages by individuals or groups of men, usually under the influence of alcohol or drugs and including police and military personnel, (ii) violent assault and rape of girls under the age of 11, mostly victims of local sorcery prescriptions to individual men for the acquisition of wealth and virility, and (iii) gang rapes of girls between the ages of 12 and older participating in parties, street revelries or other community social festivities. All the above corroborate data in a UNICEF qualitative study on GBV against children in the artisanal mines of Katanga Province in March 2008¹¹ and the work of CARE in eastern Congo.

The presence of SGBV in such socially unbalanced circumstances as mining camps should not be surprising. Given the weakening of traditional village authority together with the overwhelming predominance of single men, coupled with the already socially inferior position of local women, especially young women and girls, alongside the more worldly women providing services to the camps, the unmitigated vulnerability of women and children is exacerbated.

However, the influence of sorcery, fetishes and superstitions heavily influence violence against women in all social contexts of the DRC. In the ASM sector, sex with young virgins, often children as young as 5, is encouraged by witch doctors as a means to secure wealth. In one month alone in 2008, Pact received reports of the rape of three children, two between the ages of 2 and 4 years old. In one case, the child was left in the woods after having been raped. The local Chief discovered a group of men attempting to burn her alive as she was suspected to be a witch.

In select parts of Ituri District, increasing rates of SGBV are linked to artisanal mining, and according to local partners working in one highly dense artisanal mining town, Mongbwalu, constitute the main perpetrators of SGBV incidences¹². In 2007 alone, 1,289 SGBV cases were reported in Mongbwalu and its surrounding area, with less than 20 percent addressed. This is in comparison to a total of 1,881 cases reported for the entire Ituri District in 2007 by the UN coordination mechanism.¹³

In Katanga Province, this vulnerability of women and children living within the spheres of artisanal communities is equally staggering. Here, as is common elsewhere, incidents of SGBV are consistently underreported, so that the following figures are only indicative of a

¹¹ Pact participated in the presentation of the report results on May 17th 2008 in Lubumbashi. The official report was released in mid-June 2008.

¹² Mongbwalu Stakeholder Forum is actively recording incidences from 2007 onwards and maintains a database.

¹³ Source: UN OCHA SGBV Coordination, Bunia. January 2008

much larger problem. In fact, local professionals working in the sector estimate underreporting as great as 80 percent.

Figure 1: Reported Incidents of Rape in Katanga Province, January-March 2008

2008	January	February	March	Total
Reported Rapes	40	141	153	334*
	Only 4% of health centers reporting.	Only 25% of health centers reporting	Only 30% of health centers reporting	28 centers reporting out of 67 total health centers.

Source: *Rapport des Nouveaux Cas des Violences Sexuelles Survenus au Katanga au Cours du Premier Trimestre, Mars 2008*, UNFPA: *Initiative Conjointe de lutte contre les violences sexuelles faites aux femmes, aux jeunes, aux enfants et aux homes en RDC*.

However male artisanal miners are not the sole perpetrators of SGBV in and around ASM areas. The presence of police and army officials on industrial mining concessions, and in ASM zones, contributes to increased insecurity. In most cases, a family will settle a rape case with a public security officer for as little as a goat¹⁴. Rarely are cases reported to the authorities and even more rarely do they make it through the judicial system.

General prevention and reduction of SGBV incidents requires a varied approach including treatment of victims, strengthening of judicial systems, re-definition of gender roles in communities, and economic and social re-integration for victims and their families. With mining companies and UN partners, Pact is piloting models of prevention and reduction of SGBV in both Katanga Province and Ituri District. These models build on current UN coordination mechanisms for reporting and addressing SGBV while introducing stronger economic and gender re-definition aspects. This includes literacy and savings programs to build positive male social capital, reduce indebtedness towards *negociants* and traders, and allow for economic transition opportunities to facilitate family reunification and normalization of social relations.

Also, the presence of social development projects in and around heavily-populated ASM sites is proving to contribute slowly to behaviour change, particularly around reporting of incidences. This is important as a first step to reducing SGBV, as silence and fear of victims and their families to speak out against these violations encourages on-going impunity of aggressors. Through Pact's women's literacy and savings program, WORTH, women are reporting more frequently incidents of rape and sexual violence. Through a monthly human rights and security meeting between the Security heads of mining companies, private security companies, public security forces, the UN, and Pact, incidents of rape and intimidation are reported on concessions. In addition, mining companies have committed to train their public and private security agents in SGBV related-laws and penalties in the DRC, and establish SGBV monitoring and reporting mechanisms on their concessions.

Children and Education

A troubling impact of current women ASM practice relates to their children. A plethora of factors drive women to bring their children to site on a daily basis, including the need to

¹⁴ Average market price of a goat is between 50 and 60 Usd.

supplement family income, lack of affordable education facilities, and insufficient child care alternatives. It is not uncommon to find babies sleeping under trees in the shade, with older children partaking in mining activities such as sorting and washing. In Kolwezi, it is estimated that 23.7% of child miners work with their mothers at site¹⁵.

Women cite school fees as a prime element of household income supplemented by their ASM work. Free primary education is not universally practiced in the DRC and even in areas where it is, it is often over-subscribed and under-resourced.

Through a partnership with Solidarity Centre and Save the Children UK, and with funds by the US Department of Labor and Anvil Mining Ltd, improvement of education facilities and resources, staff training, and after-school activities are working to target ASM-vulnerable communities in Kolwezi and Mongbwalu.

Leadership and Representation

The DRC's regulatory environment and capacity are weak, and existing laws such as the Mining Code are not enforced effectively. A range of government actors perform specific roles and responsibilities within the ASM sector, though much confusion exists around actual field practice. The manipulation of these mandates is a continued source of frustration to artisanal miners that drives suspicion, discrimination and exploitation, and often leads to violent conflict on mine sites.

The first key Government actor is SAESSCAM, the *Service d'Assistance et Encadrement des Artisans et Small-Scale Mining*, that theoretically provides technical input and support to artisanal miners, including protection and safety. The second is the Division des Mines with an inspector role for mine sites. The third are the authorities tasked with creating artisanal mining zones and issuing cards for artisanal mining, trade and transport. Finally, the state is a buyer, through Government bodies such as Gecamines (Katanga Province), MIBA (Kasai Orientale Province) and OKIMO (Orientale Province). However, given the veritable lack of specific artisanal zones established and functioning in most parts of the country, the majority of these Government bodies is entangled in webs of predation and exploitation, and is often highly distrusted by the very people they are meant to protect and represent.

Cooperatives should logically emerge to fill the gap in veritable representation of interests. To date in the DRC, very few cooperative or association structures do in fact perform such a role. Rather most are synonymous with high 'membership fees,' ei: taxes, and few benefits. At best, these structures pay for ad hoc requests such as hospital bills and funerals.

None of the above structures have specific gender policies. It is one of the most serious gaps the ASM sector faces for ensuring effective representation of women's issues.

¹⁵ Pact Inc. *Economic Development and Governance Transition Strategy for Kolwezi, Katanga Province*. November 2007.

III MOVING FORWARD

Artisanal mining will remain an important economic recourse in the coming years for thousands of individuals across the DRC. In fact, it is anticipated that artisanal mining may even increase as a result of several factors:

1. Liberalisation of the ASM sector in certain Provinces by Government—Orientale Province as one example
2. Continued instability in eastern Congo that fuels access to resources, and forces displaced persons to seek economic livelihoods outside their home areas
3. Limited economic alternatives following industrial consolidation of mining concessions
4. On-going high demand for mineral resources by countries such as China, India and Russia

However, as this paper demonstrates, the challenges facing the sector are great, let alone those that are gender specific. How then to build on the few lessons that do exist?

Overcoming the challenges: Lessons

The following are examples of increasing collaboration and understanding of ASM within the broader development agenda for the DRC:

- Securing a policy framework for coordinated action and investment—SAESSCAM, with technical support from Pact, has proposed an ASM framework for the DRC to encompass all potential partners and funding sources over the coming 5 years. Gender mainstreaming is an integral part of the framework.
- Lobbying the Government and UN agencies to respond to specific women’s sectoral challenges that cut across ASM and rural populations—HIV/Aids and SGBV are two examples where Pact places great emphasis on integrating women artisans into regular development programming
- Establishing public-private partnerships that respond to both global development objectives and standards, and that are in line with the national development plan of the DRC Government—whereas companies may not wish to fund ASM reform, public funds to support initiatives within a broader extractive industries public-private partnership is possible and has proven to work. Through USAID funding four industrial companies in the DRC have benefited from select ASM initiatives by Pact and partners.
- Creating small pilot opportunities for collaboration with UN agencies and other development organizations—the Katanga Provincial Ministry of Mines works in collaboration with UN Agencies and Pact to establish its first artisanal zone, Kawama. To date, a joint UN-Pact mission established baseline needs and statistics, and on-going technical support is provided to the Ministry. A strong component of this support is to improve access to health and reproductive services for women artisanal miners, including education and testing facilities through local clinics.
- Integrating artisanal populations into community development projects if in the same operational area as a publicly-funded development program—Pact includes artisanal women into their literacy and savings’ programs for rural women in addition to their education work with women on HIV/Aids.

Annex 1: Pact's Gender ASM Partners in Katanga Province and Ituri District

WHO	SECTOR	WHERE
DRC Government		
Ministry of Mines	Artisanal zones	Katanga Province
SAESSCAM	National framework for ASM, economic transition	Kinshasa, and Katanga Province
Donors		
USAID	SGBV, economic transition, HIV/Aids	Katanga Province and Ituri District
US Department of Labor	Child miners education	Katanga Province and Ituri District
International Finance Corporation	Research into ASM	Katanga Province
UN Agencies		
International Labour Organisation	Labor practice, representation and leadership	Katanga Province
UNFPA	SGBV, HIV/Aids, STDS, Health and reproduction	Katanga Province and Ituri District
WHO	HIV/Aids, STDS, Health and reproduction	Katanga Province
Unicef	SGBV against child artisanal miners	Katanga Province
UNDP	Economic transition	Katanga Province
International NGOs		
Pact	SGBV, economic transition, leadership, WORTH, and HIV/Aids	Katanga Province and Ituri District
Save the Children UK	Prevention of child miners through education and support to artisanal mothers	Katanga Province and Ituri District
Solidarity Centre	Prevention of child miners through education and support to artisanal mothers	Katanga Province and Ituri District
Groupe One	Prevention of child miners through education and support to artisanal mothers	Katanga Province
National NGOs, Universities, Local Associations and Networks		
University of Lubumbashi	Health and safety of women	Katanga Province
Réseau Action Femme	SGBV	Katanga Province
WORTH	SGBV, savings and micro-credit, small business set up	Katanga Province and Ituri District
Mining Companies		
Anvil Mining Ltd	SGBV and economic transition	Katanga Province
Anglo Gold Ashanti	SGBV, economic transition, and employment	Ituri District

