

UNTOLD STORIES OF ARTISANAL AND SMALL SCALE MINING IN ZAMBIA



Caritas
Zambia



Diakonia
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PREFACE:

FOR ALMOST 100 years, Zambia's mineral resources have been exploited and have been such key contributors to the country's economic activity that mining has been dubbed the backbone of Zambia's economy. Hailed the second largest copper producer in Africa, Zambia is also the seventh largest copper producer in the world! Zambia produces other minerals such as cobalt, gold, silver, uranium, coal, lead, semi-precious gemstones and others. Copper and Cobalt, Zambia's traditionally exploited minerals, account for over 80% of the country's foreign exchange earnings¹ and the mining sector in general remains one of Zambia's biggest formal employers.

It is true that much of Zambia's mining industry growth is attributed to the large investments made by international corporations to exploit copper and cobalt among other things. However, the emerging Artisanal and Small-scale mining sector in the country has become of increasing importance. In Zambia, the ASM sector is dominated by gemstone extraction, mainly emerald, amethyst and aquamarine, and, accounts for about 20% of world emerald production²; a definite indicator of the importance of this sector to Zambia's economy.

There are other minerals being extracted in the ASM sector though, and these carry a gloomier outlook on the story of mining in the ASM sector. This is in the more rural parts of Zambia, far removed from the prospect of formalised mining, where the activities are unregulated, undercapitalised, underequipped and lack technical and managerial know-how. These mining activities employ large numbers of generally uneducated people who are poor and with fewer options to earn an income, and for whom mining stones without proper equipment, documentation or aid seems like the only way. This is also in a setting that has allowed for increased illegal mining and the most exploitative activity related to mining despite formal recognition of the Artisanal and Small-scale mining sector in Zambia.

The ASM is duly recognised as an opportunity for growth of the local mining industry, especially owing to the fact that it is mostly locally run. However, who benefits? Why are locals in rural mining areas still not benefitting from their work?

Caritas Zambia implementing the Strengthened Accountability Program phase II (SAP II) supported by Diakonia Zambia, funded by the Embassy of Sweden or with funding from the embassy of Sweden, has taken particular interest in giving answer to this very important question surrounding such mining activities. This is in tune with the Caritas mandate to uphold integral human development and with work on issues of good Natural Resources governance, Transparency and Accountability in Zambia's mining sector. In visits to small mining communities in rural Zambia, the Economic and Social Accountability team has been able to explore the dynamics of a sector that is believed to have much economic potential yet has had little benefit for the people doing the actual work.

We believe that pictures speak louder than words. This publication is an initiative towards telling the seldom told story of Artisanal and Small-scale mining through the power of picture. We have taken account of stories from two provinces, Luapula and Southern Provinces, where there has been an influx of artisanal mining activities, a huge number of which are illegal, do not uphold best practices in mining and have not benefitted the locals as they should. We hope that through this publication we will be able to better convey the message of a reality of ignored and fuel advocacy for, among others, three very important things:

1. An Artisanal and Small-scale mining sector that is formalized and progressive, adheres to good mining standards and is an economic powerhouse contributing to development of the country.
2. An Artisanal and Small-scale mining sector that promotes ownership of the mineral resources we have to local entities and individuals and retains returns from this kind of mining activity for diversification and development.
3. A sector that removes exploitation and indiscriminately benefits everyone, especially the more disadvantaged rural class that do the work and yet suffer all the bad effects of this mining activity, women, children and youth included.

“ In Zambia, the ASM sector is dominated by gemstone extraction, mainly emerald, amethyst and aquamarine and, accounts for about 20% of world emerald production... ”

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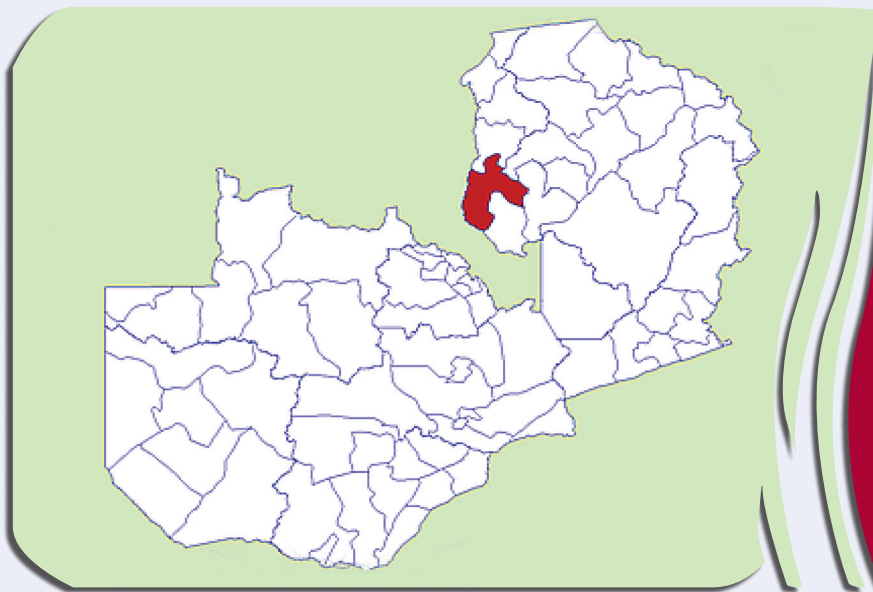
¹ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/249551712_Approaches_to_sustainable_minerals_development_in_Zambia

² <https://www.scribd.com/document/91703318/Small-Scale-Mining-in-Zambia>

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MANGANESE MINING – MANSA, LUAPULA (NORTHERN ZAMBIA)



MANSA DISTRICT is the provincial headquarters of Luapula Province, in Northern Zambia, and is located 790km from the State Capital, Lusaka. The district is a former industrial hub for the province, having been home to Mansa batteries which was closed down in 1994. In the absence of this, the town continues to be a commercial hub offering access to good market, banks, a number of large stores, depots and dealers. Since discontinuation of battery production, manganese mining seemingly presents a commensurate substitute and the province is now dotted with many mining licenses for the mineral, large and small scale. Other minerals are copper, iron, gemstones, silver, gold, ruby, green tourmaline, and emeralds. Mansa district is home to the manganese mines considered for this study.

During project implementation of the Strengthened Accountability Programme phase 2 (SAP II) in Mansa District, the Caritas team has identified and visited five mines where they have been able to interact with the mine workers as well as mining communities. Focus is given to two mines in rural parts of Mansa district. It should be noted, however, that there are about 72 mining and exploration licenses all over the district. The mineral commodity most exploited in the ASM in Mansa is the highly demanded Manganese (Mn). Among other uses such as iron and steel production, it is the primary material for battery production, including electric car batteries and has its biggest market in automobile manufacturing countries in Asia, Europe and the USA.

ARTISANAL MANGANESE MINES IN MANSA:

S and I mines are both manganese mines in Mansa district, located across town from each other, that is off Mansa-Chembe road and off Mansa-Samfya road respectively. Both are small scale mines that employ the local communities, both men and women, to extract the mineral and later sell it to the mining license holders. No investment is made in these mines.

Among other things, licensing restraints, displacements from land, unsafe mining and deaths resulting, violation of Human and Labour Rights, unfair market pricing, environmental degradation and occupational health problems are some of the most prevalent issues faced.

Consider the following examples:

³ Original names of the mines have been withheld for this research

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This is Bana Mary (Mother to Mary). She lives in a community in Mulenshi ward of Mansa district, an hour and a half drive from the main town on badly deteriorated road. She has five children, three of whom are in school.



David has grown up in the same community in Mulenshi ward and has lived here all his life. In the footsteps of his father, he has settled here and is raising his three children.



Bana Mary and David would both be farmers. But the land is so degraded here that they can only grow cassava and this would be for subsistence use. They cannot grow maize because the land is not very fertile and they cannot afford fertilizers. So they have resorted to mining manganese as a direct source of disposable cash.

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← This mass of ditches is the site of mine S, located less than 200 metres (about 5 minutes' walk) from the community in Mulenshi ward.



← Though the younger folk would date operations back to 2013, the older folk refuse this saying the mine has long since been there. It now extends far over a large area, some of which is long mined and abandoned.



← This is where Bana Mary and David work on a daily basis. No safety gear or proper equipment. Just hoes and picks and the determination to make a living.



Bana Mary and a fellow mine worker prepare to enter the ditch to continue their day's work. Their aim is to dig up a ton of manganese which they can sell to the mine-owners.





The manganese extracted is sold to the mine's owners who come fortnightly to the site to buy the commodity at a price of K7/bucket (\$ 0.52) or K200/tonne (\$ 14.8)⁴. The price is dictated by the buyers/mine's owners who hold license to mine manganese in the area. The locals cannot sell the stones to better bidders. Bana Mary is only one of approximately 40 women who come to the mine daily in search of an income source to take care of their families, despite the conditions⁵.



⁴ Dollar pricing may fluctuate according to dollar rates. The exchange rate used is the higher extreme for dates 9th-12th September, 2019.

⁵ Not all the miners were present at the mining site when the Caritas team visited. Other workers were reportedly at other sites belonging to the same mine where they were working.



David has an even more painful story to tell. In 2018, while digging for Manganese in one of the trenches, David and three other workers, including one female, had an accident. The unsupported walls of the mine collapsed, completely burying the miners. David suffered a ruptured bladder and a broken arm from the accident.

In a sad narration of what followed, he revealed that he had spent months trying to get treatment, first in Mansa and later in Chingola and Kitwe, and with no assistance from the mines' owners.

Less than a year has elapsed since the incident and David is back at the mines. Though he is still unwell, he needs to support his family and this is the only source of income he has.

Bana Mary had this to say:

“ We cannot say that the mining we are doing is really helping us at all. But this is the only way we can make money to feed our families and take our children to school. The mines have promised us safety gear also but nothing has come, we only see them when they come and collect manganese every two weeks. The Ministry of mines has come to this place also. All that they do is chase us but do not help us... The job we do is hard and we can only sell the manganese for a small price which is of little benefit to us. The government should help us to talk to the mines so that they can increase the price of manganese to K15/bucket and maybe we can benefit.

”

Bana Mary and David's story is not so different from what one would find all the way on the other side of Mansa district where mine I operates. Consider another example:

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Another mine I, located more than two and a half hours off Mansa-Samfya road, is an open cast surface mine, fairly newer than S mines, but having just as much impact on the communities around it.

It shares borders with another bigger mine, Genesis Mines operated under Genesis group of companies. The extensively large trenches filled with bluish colour water here tell a tale of much manganese mining of a significant amount of time.



Both formerly mechanised mines are operational at present, employing labour from the local communities. The miners dig with picks and shovels and sell the stones to the license holders.

The Caritas team had the opportunity to meet the workers at Impondo mines as a group. The mine employs a total of sixty workers, 39 males and 23 females at the time of visit, and has 20 permanent employees while the rest are casual workers. The group voiced out the following as the issues they face:

- ❖ Low and unfair manganese prices: A bucket of manganese sells for only K2.50 (\$ 0.19) here and only K100 (\$ 7.0) is paid for a tonne of the commodity. This is too little for their survival, especially with the increased costs of living in the country.
- ❖ Late pay: As of September, 2019, the workers had not been paid since the month of July. They complained that late payment of even their paltry pay for manganese sales had added to their suffering. Yet they still went to the mines because there was no alternative.
- ❖ Safety issues: As is the case in Silaupa, the miners are not provided with any safety gear for their work. Here, the workers are told that they have to buy their own safety gear, something that is generally quite expensive for people of their income bracket.
- ❖ Zero Contracts: The workers at Impondo mines have no contracts, permanent and casual workers alike. This in itself is a violation of labour laws that require contractual employment for any workers to provide terms of service that would ensure prescribed wages, healthcare provision and safety provision for each worker. The mine also maintains casual workers for over the allowable time of three months, with no hourly wages. Instead, they work and sell manganese for the unfair prices that the mine owner decides.
- ❖ Gendered issues and grievances: The women in the group complained that they were being mistreated and disrespected by the men they work with in the mines. They are reportedly insulted and sometimes physically assaulted and stoned by the men. They appreciated that the mines employed women, however, they made a plea for their workplaces to be made more gender sensitive and also for a proper grievance system to be created for them.



The workers at I mines complained that their prices for a bucket and tonne of manganese were different from those at Genesis mines which are at K5.0 and K200 respectively. They said this was really unfair as Genesis mines is their immediate neighbour, the work is the same and the workers there are their fellows from the same communities.





Peter, one of the workers at I Mines, digs for manganese around the area bordering with Genesis Mines. He revealed that work hours at the main mine were restricted and in order to get more of the commodity (to increase his tonnage) he sometimes dug around already mined area for leftover stones. He complained that he had not been paid in over two months





The women working at I mines leave their homes at 4 AM to make it to work at 7AM. Most of them have families they solely care for because their husbands have left them. They asked to be respected as workers and not chased away or discriminated against because of their gender.



“...we believe that the work a man can do, even us women can do. The men sometimes insult us and stone us. They also accuse us of adulterous acts. All we come to do is work so that we can feed our children. Must we be disrespected because of that? - Lizzy”

RECOMMENDATIONS:

FOLLOWING THE visits to the mining areas in Mansa, much needs to be done to improve the very saddening state of miners in the rural areas. Caritas Zambia suggested the following interventions for the miners:

1. ADVOCACY FOR PROPER IMPLEMENTATION AND ENFORCEMENT OF MINING LAWS:

The law is there. It provides for a safe, labour and human rights compliant, fair and gender sensitive mining industry. These laws stemming from the Constitution, Mines and Minerals Development Act and the Employment Act must be implemented properly.

The capacity of relevant legislative structures such as the Labour Office and Mine Safety Department should be built for this colossal task.

2. PUBLIC AWARENESS ON THE LAW AND BASIC RIGHTS OF THE COMMUNITIES:

The biggest reason for exploitation among rural mine host communities is ignorance and illiteracy. There is, therefore, need to build the communities' resilience by arming them with knowledge of the law and their rights, needed to respond to some of the issues they face. Our principle aim is to ensure they are able to understand these issues and speak out about them, for themselves, while we amplify their voice.

3. PROVIDING PLATFORMS FOR ENGAGEMENT:

To ensure an all-round sharing of information, it is essential that there are platforms for the communities to engage with both their civic leaders and mining companies extracting in their areas. Communities have complained that they rarely have useful engagement, let alone any engagement with these key stakeholders. We, therefore, recommend the following two platforms:

- Worker's Unions to be created in the small scale mines to represent the workers and be an information bridge between the mine owners and miners.
- Building capacity of the Luapula Small Scale Miners Association to be a platform for engagement and representation for the Small Scale Mines in Luapula province.

4. GENDER EDUCATION AND GENDER SENSITIVE WORK SPACES:

We understand that the women in the communities we work with have had to live with a social system that does not allow for them to be above men and that in most cases, their customs and norms would not allow for a shift in this. However, it is important that so far as the gender sensitive systems we now have allow women access to the same opportunities as men, the women know what their rights are and have working environments that render them safe and able to thrive. They should also be empowered to speak for and defend this right.

TIN MINING - KALOMO, SOUTHERN ZAMBIA



KALOMO DISTRICT is one of the 13 districts in Zambia's Southern Province lying 120 km north of the tourism capital, Livingstone and 400km south of the state capital, Lusaka. It serves as the provincial headquarters for Southern Province and has a rich historical importance for the country – it served as the first ever administrative centre when Zambia was Northern Rhodesia. It is home to the tin mines considered in this study. Other minerals found in Southern Province are coal, amethyst, and natural flat stones (The Siavonga slates). Also under exploration in Southern Zambia are uranium, limestone, gypsum and fluorite.

There are total five mining sites in Kalomo district. During project implementation of the Strengthened Accountability Programme phase 2 (SAP II) in partnership with Diakonia Zambia, the Caritas team has visited two of these mines where they have been able to interact with the mine workers as well as mining communities. The mineral commodity here is Tin (Sn), a soft silvery white metal with a bluish tinge that is commonly used for plating steel cans used as containers, in metals used for bearings and in solder.

CHANA AND CHILOBE OPEN-PIT MINES:

Chana Mine and Chilobe open-pit mine are two of many mines in Kalomo district, off Mapatizya road of Chief Simwatachela's area. Others are Chisikili, Chibbonkolo, Kapenda, Siankope, Chilubwa and Macula mines. Chana and Chilobe open-pit mines were visited, initially, and interactions with the miners brought many issues to the fore.

Chana mine has been in existence since 1985; it has no known owner other than prospectors that show up at intervals. Its workforce consists of 18 workers, 11 females and 7 males, all of who are self-employed. Chilobe Open-pit Mine is much bigger with over one hundred (100) workers from two villages, Simalundu and Jisikiri. Most are women of various age groups, ranging from the very young to the old, and the smaller number being men.

Like the mining case of Mansa, Safety issues, Labour and Human rights violation, Unfair and exploitative pricing in an erratic market for the commodity and environmental degradation are cited as prevalent issues. The case of tin mining in Kalomo, however, is riddled with an even more worrying issue, child labour. The following pictorial explains it all.



← Tin mining can be really dangerous. In order to extract the mineral, the men at Chana mine enter deep holes in the ground and dig for hours. They have little to nothing in the way of safety gear, no proper tools for the job and are constantly in danger of injury, even to the point of death, if the walls of those holes collapsed.

The job of the women is to in this case would be select the metal from the stones dug out by the men. There are all age groups of women, very young to old, that leave their homes often with children on their backs to go and do this work



← The situation at Chilobe open-pit mine is much the same. Miners, including the women, go into deep trenches, digging out stones that are then subject to a selection process before the tin commodity can be ready for sale.



The process of extracting tin and preparing tin to be sold is long and tedious. The miners reveal that it can take close to three weeks to acquire a single kilogram of tin. The commodity will then be sold to buyers, mainly from Kitwe and Spain, who show up occasionally and will only buy it for K35/kg. Despite this, the workers say they have no alternative as they need to feed their families. 4 kilograms of Tin can be exchanged for a much needed 25 kilograms of mealie meal. Yes, up to 12 weeks' worth of work for the assurance of a meal!





← There is also the issue of child labour.

Medister Sichaba is a young girl of Simalundu village, aged 12. She is one of the youngest workers mining Tin at Chilobe open pit mine. Owing to poverty, she has had to drop out of school in grade five (5). Her family lacks the basic funds to feed the household and would not be able to provide her with books, a uniform and a fee to attend school and attain her education.

As would be the social norm here, her brother is still in school because it is believed that the boys cannot adequately do such work.



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The Employment of Young Persons and Children Act 2004 stipulates that a child between 13 and 15 years may be engaged in light work which is not likely to harm that child's health or development; or which is not detrimental to that child's attendance at an institution of learning or participation in vocational orientation⁶. Therefore, a child under 13 years of age cannot work under any circumstances.

Medister spends her days in the trenches mining tin and then sorting it in preparation for sale. All returns from this go to her mother that then uses the money to feed their family. In a month, they can prepare 2 kilograms of tin, or just a little more, which would earn an entire household only K70 (just over \$5).

Cynthia or Bina Lweendo (Mother to Lweendo) is one mother from Siankope mine in Siamera village whose children are also exposed to such labour. She goes to the mine site with two of her children every day. She admits that they should be in school but says in the face of hunger, education cannot be a priority. They must survive first and only one of her children can attend school at present.



“

Our children are unable to attend school because there is no money to pay their fee and buy books. So they choose to come to the mine with us, their mothers, so that they can earn this money and hopefully go to school later. -

Mirriam -

”

⁶ United States' Bureau of International Labour Affairs 2017 child labour report for Zambia:

<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/resources/reports/child-labor/zambia>

The tin miners in Kalomo highlighted the following as some of their major challenges:

- ✓ Lack of safety gear or the right equipment for their very dangerous work.
- ✓ Unfair and exploitative prices giving them an income that could barely cover their basest of needs.
- ✓ Lack of access to social amenities such as education and health care. They must travel long distances in order to get this – the closest hospital is 25km away in Chalimungola area and Chilobe community school, which is the closest, only provides education up to grade four.
- ✓ The hunger situation with which the area has been struck as a result of low rainfall and a bad farming season has left the people of these communities with no other choice for an income but tin mining. This desperation to be able to feed their families has left them open to dangerous work and exploitation by those that pay them such paltry amounts that they still cannot afford their basic needs.
- ✓ The communities have limited access to water – there are three villages, sparsely populated that have to use a single borehole for their water. The dry spells that the country has had in recent times has further disadvantaged the situation.
- ✓ Lack of legitimacy to their mining activity. Because the miners do not have licenses for the land that they mine, they fear that it may be taken away from them and they would be left without an income source.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

CHILD LABOUR AWARENESS: Recognising the very huge issue of child labour in the tin mines in Kalomo, Caritas Zambia recommended that there be more awareness raised among the communities on the dangers and effects of child labour. So far, there have been two engagements to this effect; one of which has been with Kalomo and Monze Justice and Peace members trained to work with the communities.

MINES AND MINERALS DEVELOPMENT ACT, CONSTITUTION AND LABOUR LAWS OF ZAMBIA: It is notable that laws that should govern good mining, labour and safety are provided for in state documents such as the mines and minerals development act, the constitution and in the labour laws of Zambia. However, the communities remain ignorant of these provisions and so are exploited. There is need, therefore to educate them on this and encourage that they take on good practice for their safety.

COMMUNITY MINING RIGHTS: Most mines in the Mapatizya area remain unlicensed and the communities fear that the mines may be taken away from them if investors show up. They, therefore, asked for assistance in getting legal ownership and community rights to the mines so that they may continue to benefit from them.

EQUIPMENT: The miners in the various mines complained that they have to use hoes and shovels, equipment that is inadequate for the work they have to do. They requested assistance getting better equipment to ease their workload and increase their productivity.

PRICING: The prices of the tin metal set by the buyers are too low and the money earned by the miners from it is not enough to cover their basic needs. Further still, they have to exchange 4kg of tin, equivalent to almost 8 weeks of work, to acquire a 25kg bag of mealie-meal. There is need to regulate prices and ensure that the workers not only have a say but benefit well from the work that they do.

COMMUNITY/BUYER ENGAGEMENT: The community members only know that there is a buyer for the tin and other metals they mine. The buyer also has agents in the community that buy the tin for him. In order to negotiate better terms for the miners, there is need to have engagement with the buyers of the commodities. This would also give the workers much needed insight on the mining activity and its future.

GALLERY

CHILUBWA WHITE QUARTZ MINE



Chilubwa White Quartz Mine has 40 men working in an unventilated, unsupported tunnel that runs 10 meters deep (vertically) and 70 meters across the rock mass.



They are unsafe but trust that the rock mass will not collapse because of how they navigate it.



SIANKOPE TIN MINE, SIAMENA VILLAGE



Child labour a prevalent issue for children whose parents can't afford to educate them at Siankope Mine. In the face of hunger, Education cannot be a priority.





The Women of Siankope Mine say lack of equipment makes their work hard and reduces their productivity.



KAPENDA TIN MINE



Tin is separated from other materials during the sifting process at Kapenda Mine.



CHIBBONKOLWA AND CHISIKILI TIN MINES



Chibbonkolwa Tin Mine is set right along the belts of tin rock that feed the entire Mapatizya area. Because the tin is embedded in the rock mass, it is much harder to mine here. However, the tin is of the best grade and the miners flock here as well.





Chisikili Mine, much smaller than Chibbonkolwa, shares the same tin belt. There is another mineral here, Black granite, which has little market in the region.



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