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The woman in the artisanal mine: from crusher craft to a motorized grinder. The case of Matili-Shabunda mining site, South Kivu, DR Congo

Munga, T.¹

¹B2B Engineering, DR Congo, thierrymunga@gmail.com.

As part of the environmental approach in the mining sector of the Democratic Republic of Congo, our major concern is to contribute in an elementary phase to the development of craftsmanship for the improvement of working conditions for artisanal miners working in small mines. Given the gender-related inequalities, often women do not have the same rights of men to access to geo-resources.



Figure 1: Motorized grinder.

This discrimination against women is compounded by limited access to social resources such as credit, education and technologies; women have a limited influence in the decision-making both at a local and national level. The pauperization, the necessity to get the vital needs of their families, and to ensure food, health and tuition fees for their children, the lack of financial capital, push these women to work in the mining sector for many hours per day, to plunder stones, under terrible conditions for their health, in some cases by handling toxic composites that can provoke severe poisoning.



The objective of this paper is to present an example on how it is possible a passage from a status of marginalization to a status of emancipation for women working in the Matili-Shabunda mining site, through technological improvements (the mutation from the crusher craft to a motorized grinder). Since 2014-2015, our invention has permitted to these women to improve their lives by crushing more than 2.5 Tons of stones equivalent to 250 USD per day. They are already working on cooperative called "TWANGEZE".

Figure 2: Women crush stones by hands.

