

Partnering up for progress: sourcing responsible gold in Uganda

Gold will never lose its allure. It's useful, beautiful, rare, and an essential material for many different products. But many parts of the gold sector remain blighted by environmental destruction, conflict and human rights abuses. Currently, only a limited amount of small scale gold mines can meet standards as high as Fairtrade. That's why in 2017, Fairphone, Philips, Solidaridad, Fairtrade, UNICEF and Hivos/Stop Child Labour entered into a five-year partnership to support a more responsible approach to gold sourcing. One-and-a-half years into this partnership, we're making progress towards our goals and learning valuable information from the challenges we're encountering.

Finding the right partners on the ground

Globally, artisanal and small scale (ASMs) are responsible for 12% - 15% of the world's gold supply, but their informal status leaves 1.5 million child laborers vulnerable to exploitation, collapsing mines and toxic chemicals. In Uganda in particular, 26% of children are identified as laborers, with 15,000+ estimated to be working in ASMs. At the same time, income from ASM mining is key to many livelihoods and some ASM mines have demonstrated that they are able to meet high performance standards and contribute to further local development.

We are partnering with three carefully selected ASM associations in Busia, Uganda: Tiira Small-scale Miners' Association, Tiira Landlord Miners' Association, and Busia United. By helping these three associations to access investment, equipment and training, they can become a template within their wider industry. Step by step they will demonstrate that yes, you can gradually increase productivity that contributes to improved economic capacity; yes, you can improve social and environmental performance; and no, you don't need to rely on child labor.

Sharing resources to scale-up ambitions

By pooling our expertise, our international coalition is better able to advance our goals. While Fairphone steers and aligns all the different parties in the group, Royal Philips is conducting **international market outreach** to encourage suppliers to integrate responsibly sourced gold in their **supply chains**. At the same time, Solidaridad is **building capacity** at the mines to **increase safety, efficiency and profits**. An **investment facility** will soon start providing capital to the ASMs in the form of gold processing equipment, led by the Fairtrade Foundation. This capital provision is implemented against the commitment and efforts of the artisanal mining

organisations to show gradual improvements against set social and environmental criteria that, eventually, can lead to Fairtrade **certification**.

In the communities surrounding our partner mines, Hivos/Stop Child Labour is implementing two **Child Labour Free Zones**. It is a major outreach effort, aiming to have contact with over 700 households, positively impacting the future of over 400 children. These children will either be prevented from entering into child labor, or withdrawn from work and reintroduced to school. While this work happens on the ground, UNICEF is actively lobbying Uganda's national parties for **better legislation** surrounding child labor concerns.

Keep the momentum going

We're feeling excited about what the future holds for this consortium. Just nineteen months into the project, we have established social and environmental criteria for ASMs in Uganda to work towards, increased the transparency of our own supply chains, and have begun building a coalition willing to source this responsible gold. Off course, programs like this are not without challenges but as we keep on progressing, we are confident that in close cooperation with our partners, we can develop a sustainable, traceable gold supply in Uganda.

Join us.

We are looking for companies that are willing to source gold from our project, or to contribute financially. Together we can extend and expand this life-changing project beyond 2019. With your help, we can make a fairer future possible for miners and their families.

Get in touch:

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