

3. WORKING CONDITIONS IN THE MINES

(PHOTOGRAPHS 8 - 12)

What are the characteristics of the people who appear in the photos (age, sex, clothing etc.)? What are they doing? What do you think someone who works in a European mine would look like (work clothes, tools they might use, general characteristics)? Are there any differences between the people you see in the photos and the ones you have imagined? (You can do a comparison with the photo that appears below).

The miners in Rubaya (Congo) work in shafts at a depth of 50 metres below ground, without suitable lighting. There is not even enough oxygen down there, making the work more difficult because low oxygen levels mean any movement takes much more effort.



The majority of people who work in mineral extraction in Congo work by hand, in very difficult working conditions, without the safety provided by suitable work tools, without a set working day, with meagre salaries and, in many cases, using child labour. The working conditions are similar to slavery, which has serious consequences for both people's health and the environment. All this leads to numerous deaths and serious effects on health including blindness, respiratory problems and workplace accidents. It is common for people under legal working age to work in



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the mines, including small children. As well as the people who are directly involved in extracting minerals, many more work around the mine, such as the carriers and cleaners (mainly women), and those who provide services for the people who extract minerals.

There are many initiatives that aim to tackle this situation. The International Conference of the Great Lakes Region certification system means the mines are visited several times a year and categorised through a three-colour system (green, yellow or red), according to whether they are controlled by armed groups and whether there is child exploitation.

To find out more about this situation, you can watch these short videos:

- Video taken by Iván Benítez in the Mines of Rubaya:

<https://exposiciontlc.tecnologialibredeconflicto.org/exposicion-3/>



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