

## 4. WOMEN'S WORK IN THE MINES

### (PHOTOGRAPH 13)

*First of all, what are the characteristics of the people who appear in the photos (age, sex, clothing etc.)? What are they doing? Do you notice any difference between this photo and the previous ones?*

Following the “coltan boom”, many rural families have stopped working in the countryside in favour of small-scale mining, which has had a significant impact on the lives of the women in these communities. Firstly, in small-scale mining, women are often not allowed to work in the quarries, partly because of sexist prejudice but



also due to a biased interpretation of the law. They are, however, more involved in the work of cleaning, processing and transporting the minerals, which consists of crushing stones, washing them in nearby streams to separate the valuable substances from the impurities, bagging them and transporting them to nearby towns. The use of chemicals in the washing process not only harms the environment but also causes serious damage to the workers' health. They also carry out dangerous transport work.

Secondly, due to the scarcity of resources, boys' education in schools is prioritised and many girls living in refugee camps are obliged to marry very young or are prostituted. As well as this, women's voices have not been taken into account in the mining certification processes and, since their launch, women have been requesting an integrated development plan that includes the representation of women's interests and needs.

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