



RELUGA

ARTISANAL MINING, A CHALLENGE TO THE KIMBERLEY PROCESS:

CASE STUDY OF THE KADEY DIVISION, EAST REGION OF CAMEROON



This work is the product of the RELUFA Extractive Industries Program team. RELUFA would like to thank the German Technical Cooperation GIZ in Yaounde for the financial support that made the conduct of this study possible.

Authors: Willy Cedric Foumena and Jaff Napoleon Bamenjo

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The production of this study was led by Willy Cedric Foumena, RELUFA Extractive Industries Program Manager with the assistance of Jaff Napoleon Bamenjo, Coordinator of RELUFA. The decision to conduct the study was partially inspired by the recent admission of Cameroon as a participant in the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme that seeks to avoid trade in conflict diamonds.

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Foreword

Since 2001, Cameroon has engaged a series of mining sector reforms aimed at attracting foreign investments as a way to maximize government revenue streams that will contribute to development and poverty reduction. But besides the promotion of industrial mining projects, artisanal mining has been an important activity for thousands of people in the east region of Cameroon for a very long time but has not resulted in significant improvement in the economic and social situation of those involved.

The start of artisanal diamond and gold mining in Cameroon can be traced back nine decades ago essentially concentrated in some localities in the east region of Cameroon. Artisanal diamond and gold mining activities continues in these areas unabated up till today and the advent of industrial mineral exploiters competing for the same resources may be a hindrance to artisanal miners.

We can argue that artisanal mining in general has for a long time constituted a source of employment for some people in the east region of Cameroon. The government attaches some importance to this activity and in 2003 created the Framework Support Unit for Artisanal Mining promotion commonly called CAPAM in its French acronym. However, like in most countries, fundamental problems hinder artisanal mining activities notably the lack of access to formal market and poor social and economic conditions under which artisanal miners work. This raises serious concerns about the benefits that accrue to them from this age old activity.

One of the major constraints faced by artisanal miners is the commercialization or marketing source for their minerals since their activity is largely very informal. Cameroon's admission as a participant country in the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme, whose objective is to assure that diamonds from conflict zones do not enter into official commercial circuits can constitute an important framework for artisanal miners to sell their diamonds through official channels and earn a bit more revenue from this activity. The Cameroon Minister of Mines, Industry and Technological Development has also expressed the wish to include other minerals like gold to go through traceability channels just like diamonds.

There is no doubt that with appropriate laws and policies, artisanal mining can improve the lives of those who are involved in this activity.

It is against this backdrop that RELUFA is conducting this study aimed at examining the situation of artisanal miners in the Kadey division of the east region in an effort to generate reflection on how to assist them break out of the systemic poverty cycle inherent in artisanal diamond and gold mining in the Kadey division of the east region of Cameroon.

This study identifies the problems of artisanal diamond and gold mining in the east region of Cameroon and brings out some of the potential challenges to be encountered with the implementation of the Kimberley process as far as artisanal mining sector is concerned.

Jaff Napoleon Bamenjo

COORDINATOR RELUFA

List of acronyms and abbreviations

BRGM:	Geological and mining research office
CAPAM:	Framework support unit for artisanal mining promotion
CED:	Centre for Environment and Development
CEPEDIC:	Centre for environmental protection and the defence of community interest
MINMITD:	Ministry of Mines, Industries and Technological Development
CAR:	Central African Republic
SNPPK:	Permanent National Secretariat for the Kimberley Process
SOMEGAD:	Gold and Diamond Mining Company

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Introduction

a. Context

The Kadey division of the East region of Cameroon is endowed with abundant mineral resources identified since the colonial period. Thus, the first artisanal mining activities date as far back as the 1930s. The Cameroon Mining Code of 2001¹ defines in its Article 2 as "artisanal mining: All exploitation aimed at extracting and concentrating minerals using manual methods and procedures with little mechanization." According to the BRGM, there are two forms of artisanal mining: artisanal mining proper, as well as business-artisans partnerships that can be called "small scale mining"². "Small scale mining strictly speaking presents the profile of an industry. Recognized administratively, it has minimum fixed installations and equipments and it is mechanized and operates in a planned manner with semi-industrial processes in a deposit of modest size previously established. According to the United Nations (UNCTAD), a small mine produces less than 50 000 t / year with an investment of less than € 1 million, an annual turnover of less than € 1.5 million, employs less than 40 employees and has a life span of less than 5 years. "

In this report, we focus strictly on artisanal mining itself: "Artisanal mining refers to operations carried out by individuals or small groups in an opportunistic manner. Largely informal, it operates without planning using rudimentary methods and tools".

Our report focuses specifically on artisanal mining in the Kadey division of the East Region of Cameroon. In our study area, the minerals concerned are mainly diamond and gold. There exists only one operating industrial diamond mining permit belonging to C & K mining company with operations in Mobilong and which has just recently started industrial diamond production⁵. Artisanal diamond production

therefore requires greater attention according to the Moscow Declaration of the Kimberley Process in 2005. The Moscow Declaration of 2005 made several recommendations to the member countries of the Kimberley process :

- Ensure the traceability of production at the mine to point of export by the introduction of production records at the level of the artisans as well as sales records at the local level;
- Regulate artisanal mining of diamonds in particular by introducing a "cadastre system to maintain accurate and updated information on the areas of production and mining licenses granted";
- Fight against the illicit diamond trade by harmonizing cross-border regional tax rates;
- Encourage miners to move into the formal economy.

These recommendations are very important and can be considered the ideal channel to achieve the proper implementation of the Kimberley Process as far as artisanal mining is concerned in Cameroon.

This study is the result of the literature review on artisanal mining in Africa and in Cameroon. It is estimated⁶ that 7-10 million people in Africa are dependent on artisanal diamond mining for their livelihood. This number range between 13 and 20 million people in 50 underdeveloped countries across the globe. According to a study by the BRGM in 2007 and 2008 in the areas of Kette and Yokadouma, "the number of diamineurs involved in alluvial diamond or gold mining was estimated at about 500 diamineurs. This activity was carried out for more than 60% in the area of Kette alone. Production capacity at the time was in a range between 3000 to 4500 carats per year⁷ ", according to the audit of artisanal mining carried out by the BRGM in 2011.

This audit describes the institutional and legal framework related to artisanal mining in Cameroon and analyzes three main minerals that are gold, diamond and sapphire. Concerning diamond, it establishes that diamond production is limited to an area of 28,000 km² "along the border of the Central African Republic in the East Region⁸. " The Kadey division falls in this corridor.

¹ Law No. 86/PJ/AN amends and supplement certain provisions of Law No. 001 of 16 April 2001 Mining Code, Article 2.

² Definition of "small mine" in the legislative framework within Law No. 86/PJ/AN amend and supplement certain provisions of Law No. 001 of 16 April 2001 Mining.

³ Eric Jacques, Jean-François Orru, Rémi Pelon, « Développement durable : quelle place pour la mine artisanale ? », <http://www.brgm.fr/dcenewsFile?ID=251>

⁴ Eric Jacques, Jean-François Orru, Rémi Pelon, « Développement durable : quelle place pour la mine artisanale ? », <http://www.brgm.fr/dcenewsFile?ID=251>

⁵ First export under the Kimberley Process, dated January 15, 2013.

⁶ Steven Van Bockstael, Koen Vlasenroot, « From conflict to development diamonds: the Kimberley Process, and Africa's artisanal diamond mines », *Studia Diplomatica* Vol. LXII, 2009, N°2.

⁷ BRGM, Audit of artisanal mining in Cameroon, April 2011.

At the institutional level, artisanal mining is handled in Cameroon by the Support Framework for the Promotion of Artisanal mining (CAPAM). CAPAM handles supervision of artisanal mining (including assistance in obtaining authorization for artisanal mining, creation of common initiative group of artisanal miners etc), while the service in charge of artisanal mining at MINIMIDT is responsible for drafting administrative acts (monitoring artisanal mining, monitoring activities, administrative supervision and technical control).

b. Aims and objectives of the study

This section is aimed at dwelling on an issue that has not yet been addressed in Cameroon. As earlier seen, the artisanal mining audit carried out by BRGM considered the topic in general, whereas the research done by CED was solely on the Boumba and Ngoko Division. Therefore, our work consists in filling the gap of information that is lacking. We intend to throw light on the practice of artisanal diamond mining in the Kadey Division by achieving the following objectives:

- Draw the first map for artisanal mining fields in Kadey;
- Carry out a brief inventory of the living and working conditions of the Kadey diamond miners;
- Carry out a brief monitoring of the mobility of diamond produced during a pilot process of traceability.

C. Methodology for data collection

In order to achieve this, we successively proceeded to:

- A literature review on the topic
- Followed by a one week preliminary survey carried out by a local civil society organisations,
- Accompanied by a 3 week trip to the field during which visits were made to the mining fields
- Also conduct of interviews with resource persons (local elected officials, village chiefs, officials of the health centre) and also 120 artisans⁹ (100 men and 20 women) representing around 40% of the artisans met during the study
- Then interviews were granted by resource persons (local elites, village heads, heads of health centres ...) as well as 120 miners¹⁰ (100 men and

⁸ BRGM, *Audit of artisanal mining in Cameroon*, April 2011.

20 women who represent about 40 % of the miners interviewed) ;

- We also preceded to the collection of GPS data, which was processed by the ARCGIS software.

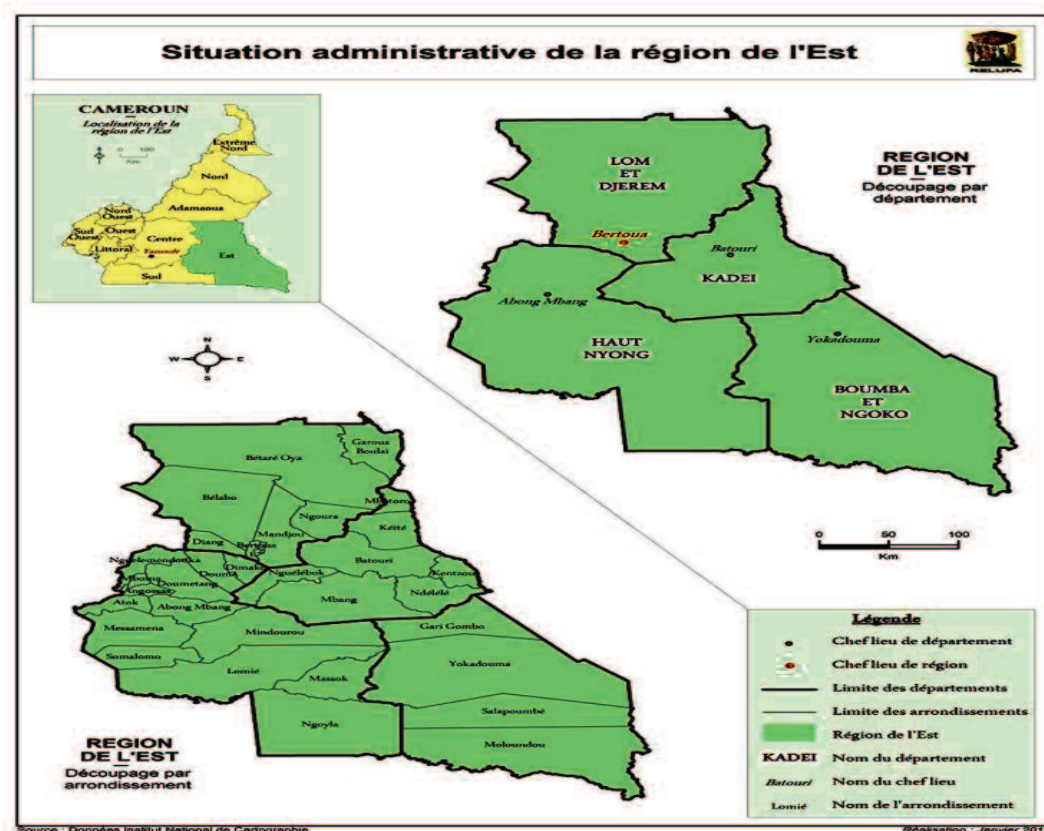
These 03 weeks have been pretty enriching thanks to the observations we had the opportunity to make from the field.

⁹It is only partially true, the pioneer work by Paul Ntep Gweth, *Ressources minérales du Cameroun*, juillet 2001 is still very relevant. It gives details of diamonds occurrence in the Kadey division

¹⁰Guide for data collection in the annex. This guide is indicative. We will collect more data from focus groups and from direct interviews with opinion leaders

1. Kadey: A Division specialised in artisanal mining

Kadey is a division situated in the East of Cameroon with a surface area of 15 884 km². The division is divided into 7 districts: Batouri, Kentzou, Kette, Mbang, Ndelele, Nguelebok, Ouli. We covered 3 of the districts (Kentzou, Kette, Ouli) and had frequent trips to Batouri. The Kadey division derives its name from the River Kadey which cuts across it. The first paragraph will dwell on the physical and human aspects of the districts visited. We shall then focus on the realities of artisanal diamond mining in the afore mentioned districts.



25 640 habitants sur 900 km² d'après le Plan communal de Développement de Kentzou, Terre et Développement, juillet 2012.

a. The districts that were visited are (rich in resources but under-developed) poor at times and landlocked.

The three districts that were visited have common and divergent characteristics. The Ouli district is demarcated by the difficulty with which cars go through the road coming from Kette. The road was accessible but in a bad state when we took it. The two other districts, Kentzou and Kette, enjoy much better roads.

Wood-transporting-trucks drive across the Kentzou " district from the Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic. The Kentzou and the Ouli Toktoyo City Councils are exchange zones and markets for surrounding communities from far and near the CAR border as we shall see later.

The Ouli¹² district stretches out on a 2548km¹³ for a population of about 17 415 people. It has two main ethnic groups which are: GBAYA DOKA and the BORO-ROS. Christianity and Islam cheerfully rub shoulders. Their main economic activities are agriculture, (more than 2/3 of the inhabitants), animal rearing, trade and artisanal mining. Like in other places, one can notice a plurality of activities according to seasons and the savings of the habitants. Therefore, the GBAYAs usually practice agriculture during the rainy season and do it alongside artisanal mining in the dry season. On their part, traders and other animal rearers also contribute to the mobility of mineral substances in addition to their main activities. In easy terms, they are in charge of buying and selling mineral gotten from their community and even those coming from the CAR.

The Kette district, likewise the others, is characterised by a high poverty rate which is glaringly manifested by the difficulty with which some food items are purchased (for instance milk in Toktoyo-Ouli) from petty traders or food stores. Moreover, all these districts do not have energy supply. Electricity is gotten from generators which, added to the fact that they are noisy, produce pollution. An artisanal activity well exists in this district and this will be explained in detail later.

¹² Cf. Community Development Plan for the Ouli District, CEPEDIC, 2011

¹³ 2500 km² for a population of about 48 000 inhabitants; source: Mayor of Kette

b. A traditionnel and artisanal mining activity

i. Several fields of different sizes and restricted access were visited

We visited many artisanal mining sites as demonstrated by the table below

Date	District	Village	Visited site		Access
			active	inactive	
22/24 November 2012	Bertoua+Batouri=Planning and discussion Minepded Delegate				
25/27 November 2012	Kentzou	Lolo1	none		car
		Sandji2	none		car
		Kentzou	none		car
		Mboumbe sato	Loma		Motorcycle + foot
		Mboumbe Bakari	Wolo'o		Motorcycle + foot
		Boumbete	Belidongue		Motorcycle
02 au 04 December 2012	Ouli		Ondjo		Motorcycle + foot
			Yenge		car
		Toktoyo	none		Motorcycle + foot
			Guemini		
09 au 10 December 2012			Tamouna guesse (tamouna mining site, bornou, wa tamouna)	Mboumbe Nasse (namosamzan, ngonguera, nasse, ngonrga)	Motorcycle + foot
		Bengue Tiko	Likaso, gbata, gbalongo, gari		Motorcycle+foot+canoe
05 au 09 December 2012	Kette	Gbiti	Mbutu, morongo, nangadora, mengo, mboumbe dewa,	sololo	Motorcycle+foot
		Boubara			
		ondjiki	Roma, Mboumbe Jacky		
		Kana	Kana mining field		
		Roma	Roma, bedobo		Foot
		Rigue	Rigbim, rigue mining field,		Motorcycle+foot
		Béké mining site		Rikoko	Foot

It was noticed that almost all the artisanal mines were accessible by motorcycles and by foot. Due to time constraints, we privileged our visits to the active ones. We went to 32 of these artisanal mines in all. We are aware that we did not go to some mines like Tamouna Guese and Mboumbe Nasse, as confirmed by the traditional leaders. These inactive mines are mostly characterised by their small sizes, except the Loma, Ondjo and Kana mining fields (approximately one hectare each). The work is done in marshy areas, as illustrated by some images.

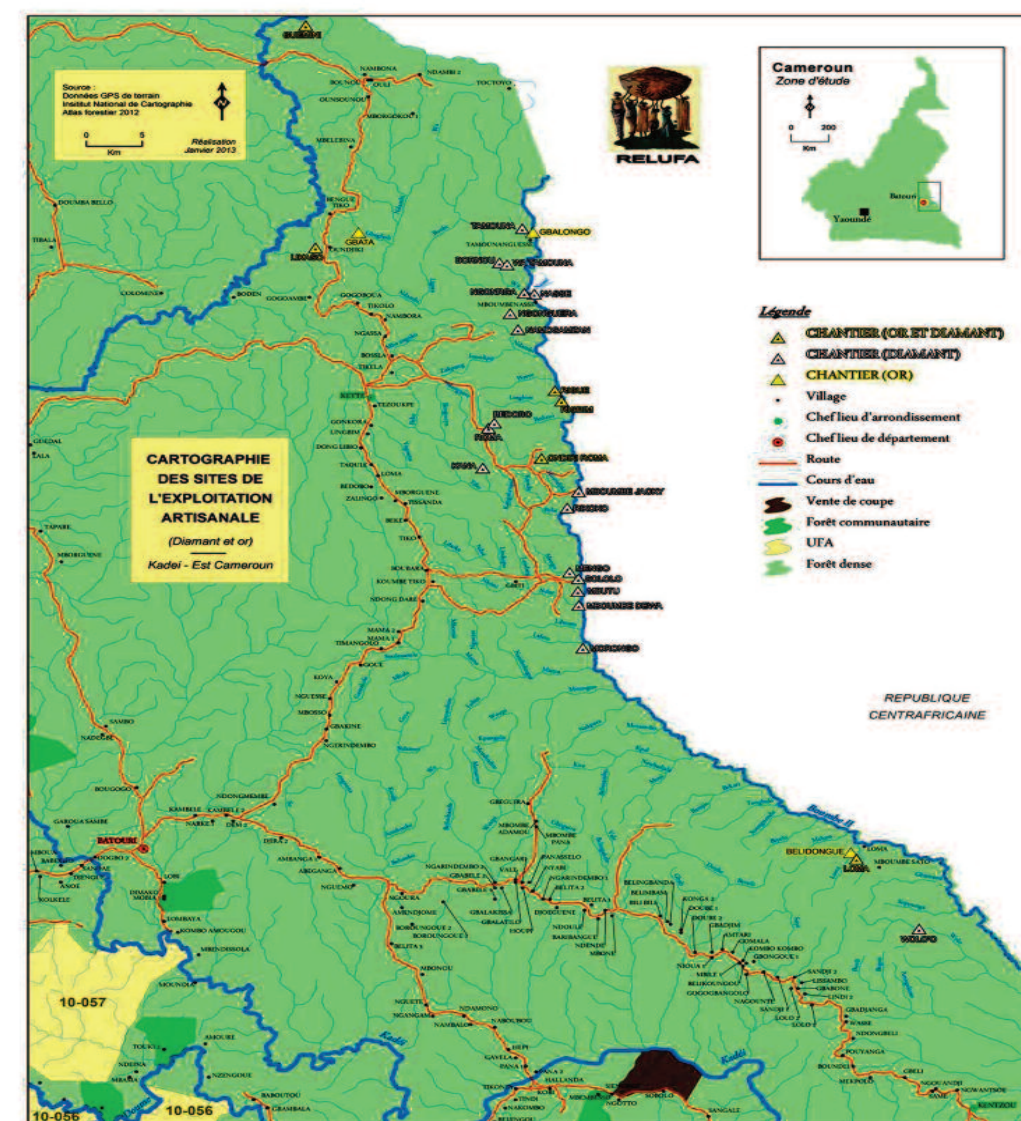




Image 1: The Loma mine: children present at the site



Image 2: The Loma mine: stagnant water and uncovered pits

ii. A traditional artisanal activity with relative impacts on the environment, health, safety and the hygiene of the labourers.

As illustrated by the images, the artisanal diamond mining has effects on the environment. The pits dug by the miners are almost never refilled. They do this because they will dig another pit just near the one that has been dug. At times they are obliged to divert a stream from its course in order to dig into their beds respectively.

Practically, what are the steps of various stages of panning for gold or diamond¹⁴ ? After locally detecting any indication of the presence of gravel, for instance, by identifying it under a tree near the stream, or indentifying its veins, one must start by clearing the place, cleaning all greenery or trees that can hinder access to the ground; Then, comes the drilling ; the drilling takes place till the gravel is found; during this phase, the pit should stay without water; therefore, water should be removed regularly; either using a motor-pump or a basin to drain it out (draining);

When the diggers get to the gravel, it should be extracted from the ground. In order to do that, depending on the depth or width of the surface area of the pit, external help may be needed. Given that the zone is marshy, the water that filters in should be regularly removed;

After extracting the gravel, (*the earth's layer which usually contains the mineral in question*), it should be washed using a special material, the table and the jig. It is after washing that the mineral can be found in its crude form.

¹⁴For details, refer to Didrot NGUEPJOUO and Eric Manyacka of CED, page 23 and ss. or Ntep Gweth page already quoted



Images 3 & 4: Gravel washing at the Nangadora field

Like in other places, the practice of artisanal mining in this division ends up with a period of abandonment so that the field can be re-endowed for exploitation some years later. This is the case with the Rikoko mine (Béké) which has been abandoned, as illustrated on the image below. It can be noticed that nature unfailingly takes its course, though with almost irreversible effects like the difficult reproduction of water species. Then, the landscape is forever deformed because of this activity.



Image 5: The abandoned Rikoko field at the famous Béké mine

Cf. point I.b.4 : L'activité diamantifère artisanale : une symbolique socioculturelle.

The end of a mining activity can be explained in many ways:

- Either the minerals sought after “dries up” and the diggers move to other fields;
- Or there is magico-religious explanation which will be elaborated later¹⁵ : concerning diamond, its search does not tolerate « quarrels

», or the

diamond will disappear, declares the chief of Mboumbe Sato.

The labourers usually suffer from common diseases like malaria or hernia. We however noticed the difficult access to potable water in remote villages, especially in the bushes where the fields are found. One can imagine that they also suffer from water borne diseases. Given that the miners consume a lot of alcohol and tobacco in order to have courage and energy, one can add diseases caused by the consumption of harmful substances like cancer, pneumonia etc.

iii. A mutual and dependent relationship: Miners versus collectors

We interviewed 120 artisanal miners, 100 men and 20 women¹⁶. The latter did not have prospector cards. We learned that collectors are in charge of selling these prospector cards at 10000 FCFA (5000 FCFA official price) in the Gbiti village. This seemed abnormal to us since this prerogative belongs to the Divisional Delegate of Mines. The miners are therefore working clandestinely... even the collectors, since they are not legally recognised.

The 120 miners mentioned above represent about one third of all the miners we met. Out of the 120 miners interviewed, 5 are leaders of mining fields. 15 of them are from CAR, the rest are Gbaya or Kakoo natives. Central African miners are regular in the field but they are not more than Cameroonians. This portrays the cordial relationship that exists between the people living far and near the border with the CAR.

Half of the number of miners is between 19 and 33 years of age. The population is young, and only 5 of the miners are 60 and above. More than 90% of the miners are married. 50% of them have more than 5 children in their care. More than 90% have a CEPE¹⁷ (First School Leaving Certificate) or below.

¹⁵ Cf. point I.b.4: Artisanal diamond mining: a sociocultural legacy

¹⁶ For more information on reforms on the artisanal mining sector in Cameroon, refer to BRGM, Audit on artisanal mining in Cameroon, 2011, p.36 and ss.

¹⁷ Children not going to school may be appear at times as a cause and a consequence of poverty ; cause because the illiteracy can lead to mismanagement which in turn maintains poverty ; consequence because the initial state of poverty leads to child labour which hinders them from going to school

For most of them, mining is a seasonal activity, about 06 months a year during the dry season. 50% of the interviewees have been working in the mine for more than five years, with 40% having another activity for 2 to 5 years. 75% of the interviewees have a monthly income that is below or equal to 30 000 FCFA. Almost all of them (90%) have an agricultural activity alongside mining.



Figures 1&2 illustrate the profiles of interviewed miners

Artisanal mining has a traditional classification which is headed by the Village chief, who is almost like the head of the mining field¹⁸. The hierarchy is as follows: The field leader is in charge of partitioning the fields allocated to mining. He may play the role of a trainer to beginners in the mine. He normally receives a percentage of the income allotted to miners. Then, the pit leader who is in charge of allocating the space called a pit. He often works with his family members like his brothers, women and children. Lastly, we have simple diggers who can be hired by the leader of the pit.

In most cases, children learned artisanal mining from their parents who were former diggers. This activity provides jobs to this marginalised population and gives them hope for a better future. It is therefore a contribution to local development by the jobs created in the informal sector.

Students who reach the secondary level go to the main secondary school found at Kette. Generally, they are much more active in the mines during holidays. We ac-

¹⁸He who found the mineral-rich-zone

tually met children working in some fields we visited, but it is still a minor phenomenon which is not recurrent.

As for women, they do almost all the tasks their husbands do, especially washing gravel. We noticed that added to the role the mother plays at the mine, she still has to take care of the younger ones in her responsibility. The latter grow up in an unhealthy environment.



Images 6 &7: Children seriously working while a mother is breastfeeding at the Loma field

1. A Relationship of dependence

Investing in artisanal mining does not require big sums of money. The miners at times benefit from sponsors who take care of their feeding and the purchase of necessary materials. Most of the miners we met said they did not have sponsors¹⁹. Yet, they have friendly relationships with the collectors, middlemen in charge of selling the minerals.

Most of the times, it is difficult to make a difference between collectors and sponsors /servers. The latter pre-finance the activities of the “Nagbata “(diggers) by providing them with material (motor-pump, shovel, etc.) and food. The latter must, in exchange, bring all the fruits of his labour. The relationship is a complex one. The collector does not consider all of the expenses he makes on a miner.

¹⁹Cross-checking during the semi-directive interview

The miner has no means of evaluating his production, whether in terms of gold or diamond; this evaluation is done by the collector, who subtracts the total sum of money spent during the digging phase. The diggers have very little left at the end. That is why they are always complaining about their financial partners' craftiness. Even when there is no financial relationship between them, collectors are the ones to fix the prices since they possess the materials for the mineral evaluation (basically a magnifying glass and a scale). The miners are totally dependent on the collectors for the sale of their minerals. Nonetheless, they can decide to change partners if the latter is very crafty, which unfortunately enough, is their normal behaviour.

2. How do they locally fix diamond prices?

The price of diamond is determined by its weight, colour, shape, clarity and most of all the bargaining power of both parties²⁰. As mentioned above in the literature review²¹, the price of diamond is in no way connected to its real value. One of miners' typical characteristics is their low bargaining power. They have no instruments for evaluation but appear to be very convincing, unable to get rid of the «collecting net» that imprisons them. Especially because this «net» is a sticky one. Most of the collectors are Muslim traders who are around and who do this job either as their primary or secondary job. They have been implanted in the community for years and can claim the title of natives. By the way, every village has a «djaoro» who is the Gbaya village chief and the «ardo», head of the Muslim community.

According to the observations of the BRGM, we consider that the number of miners who do solely mining is very small. We met only about ten (between fifty and seventy) of them during all of our survey. All the same, as we shall see later, gold mining sites are also sources of diamond supply. If things are seen from this angle, it is possible to consider a good number of gold washers to be passive or secondary diamond washers. The outcome is obvious: All miners of the three districts we went through should be part of the traceability process.

ii. Artisanal diamond mining: A sociocultural legacy

An extinction of a magico-religious justification or a depletion of a rich diamond field will be mentioned below. It is about imagining the region in its entirety. Dia-

mond has always been known to be a mystical mineral. It is locally believed that in order to ensure a significant collection of it, one needs to make bigger sacrifices and that he who finds it is blessed by the gods. The sacrifice can consist in slaughtering a roster or better still, many sheep. The amount only depends on the investor's pockets. Sacrifices are made by the village head. Once the sacrifice is done, meat is first given to children, who are believed to be lucky charms²². It seems the reason for these rites is to reduce uncertainty which determines the discovery or non discovery of minerals in the pits that are drilled. Actually, the discovery of minerals is traditionally done by applying some ancestral bench marks like the presence of some trees near a stream. According to the miners, they trace the gravel through the marsh, after the vein has been found; which is the source.

iii. Relation with state institutions

In 75% of the sites that were visited, miners said they did not know CAPAM, which is the secular arm of the government in charge of the supervision of miners, but better known in Kette than in other places. It seems their activities are yet to be developed in Kette and Ouli. We too did not meet any CAPAM worker on the field. The situation seems to be temporary and will soon be fixed. When the miners identified problems on their job, they were referring to:

- Access to working materials (shovels, motor-pumps...)
- Difficulty in negotiating with collectors;
- Difficulty in finding food during periods of intense activities (thus financial support).

These problems can be solved by the government and that is what the miners are looking forward to. It is worth noting that they also desire for the government to create some social works in the health, educational and road sectors.

We noticed CAPAM's achievements in this light, at the Beke field, notably a school and a bridge. But, compared to the expectations of population through the mouthpiece of the Mayor of Kete, these works are far from satisfactory.

²⁰Interview with Kamba Jean-Claude, Municipal Counsellor and collector

²¹Jolien Schure et al. *Op.cit.* p.304, Steven Van Bockstael et al., *op.cit.*p.83

²²Interview with the Tamouna Guesse head

II. The Origin and transportation of diamond in the Kadey Division

The aim of this section is point out elements on the production and commercialisation of diamond in the Kadey Division. It starts with a comment on the extraction point and then followed by an analysis of the procedures and the methods of exchange of the mineral.

a. A mixture of diamond and gold are found at the local extraction zone...

Most of the sites we went to in the Kentzou and Ouli districts are meant for gold mining although diamond can also be found there, which happens occasionally. Nonetheless, there are still active mines in this zone which are almost diamond bearing exclusively. This is the case with the Wolo'o (under the Mboumbe Sato village), most of the Tamouna Guesse et Mboumbe Nasse mines which we had to pass through Ouli to get there. The Kana, Ligue, Roma, Ondjiki Roma and Mboumbe Jacky mines are not left out. A good good number of the villagers know these sites because they have worked for the SOMEGAD company²³, which has a research license but that was used for exploitation. SOMEGAD²⁴ is therefore known to have worked on the diamond fields of which some have been mentioned above.



Image 8: Wolo'o mine: A miner in search of diamond

In as much as gold and diamond washing techniques are slightly different, the search for gold can occasionally lead to the discovery of diamond. Why do Cameroonian miners concentrate on gold and not diamond mining? Many reasons can be given for this. The first reason is the random nature of discovering diamond: “one can dig for months without finding a single stone “a miner told us, unlike gold which is always present. Some needs can be met even when one sells only a little quantity (rod).

The next reason is that almost all miners know the price of gold which is unanimous and standardized, not like diamond with highly varying prices and access. Although part of it comes from CAR, specifically from border areas we went to, all the leaders we met (Mayors among others) affirmed that a significant quantity of diamond found in their community was from neighbourly CAR. This is because of the easy access to the borders. It is very easy to cross to the other side, like we did given that control is not too strict.

²³Gold and Diamond Company which activities ended in 2008, source: Gaston Omboli CEPEDIC, local CSO

²⁴Details on this company are found in the archives which we were not able to lay hands on.



Images 9 & 10: On the other side of the border, in CAR, with the 2nd Assistant Mayor of Ouli, based in Toktoyo

The community around the border is one that has been artificially partitioned into two. Consequently, the people are closely related and some are family members. This close relationship is obvious. For instance, many CAR neighbourhoods get their food supply from Cameroon, specifically from the Kentzou, Toktoyo and Gbiti Divisions.

In the same vein, many Cameroonian collectors have mining fields in CAR that they supervise and invest in. When these mines produce minerals, they are systematically brought to Cameroon under the nose of Central African brigade controllers.

The question now is if “the diamond found in Cameroon is both Central African and Cameroonian”? This is a small grudge the collectors and miners expressed through us. “The former insisted on the main source of diamond which to them is from CAR diamond while the latter instead argued that their sub soil is rich in diamond”.

The former discredited miners’ representatives (village heads) by calling them liars, those who do not keep their word. On their part, the village heads called the collectors crooks, people who are scared of competition²⁵. Finally who is right? We do not

²⁵Most of the people we met took us for « smugglers » in the making or future collectors in spite of our ceaseless denial of that allegation Smugglers are rich people who buy and sell black diamond.

have the necessary instruments to measure the quantity of diamond from CAR, especially diamond smuggled in from another territory. So at times one needs to be watchful in order to get the truth: As earlier said, there is a substantial quantity (according to what the actors, collectors and authorities say) of diamond from CAR. Nonetheless, the quantity of Cameroonian diamond seems to be insignificant due to little financial investment from the country, as compared to the colonial period which the elders cannot help but remember. The work done by SOMEAD²⁶ in Kette and Ouli testifies to the truthfulness of what the miners said, whereas the collectors’ credibility comes from their experience in the field.

b. The Toktoyo, Boubara and Gbiti diamond markets

This section talks about places and moments of periodic exchange of supplies and other materials in the region. Those in the market agree on the fact that the collectors carry out transactions among themselves or with miners behind the counters. In Gbiti for instance, the market that holds every Wednesday witnesses a massive affluence of people from all the eastern villages and most especially, neighbourly Central African townships. Food stuffs are the main commodities, but cloths, livestock and other items are also sold.

Although these markets are special days for the trade in diamond, (Thursday in Boubara and Friday in Toktoyo), these exchanges are done out of people’s sight, behind the counters or in houses. It is almost impossible to know the rate of transactions unless one is initiated into it. Generally, the « Centro » (Central Africans) sell their minerals with primary aim of buying food stuffs. We have already made mention of the methods and instruments of diamond evaluation which, does not favour miners.

The biggest of these markets is that of Gbiti. Most of the market products from Toktoyo and Boubara are sold here. This is therefore the turntable of the trade in diamond in the region. Its operations are done behind counters as said before. Let’s not forget that most of the collectors who are also traders know enough on diamond and enjoy a consistent investment capacity. Some of them have been in the region for more than twenty years and may be foreigners. So, we had a talk with a Mauritanian and a Malian.

²⁶ Source: Interview with a leader of a local CSO

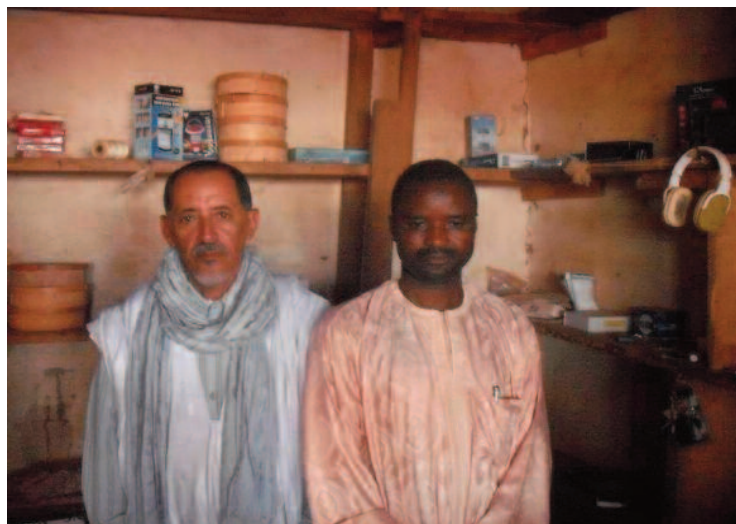


Image 10: Two collectors in Boubara

Why does Central African diamond leave but from Cameroon in spite of the tight controls, coupled with the regular traceability in CAR? It seems the complicity of the people is the first reason for that. This goes hand in gloves with the easy access to the borders, which has been mentioned before.

c. The unresolved question : Exporting diamond from Cameroonian territory

We were able to identify where diamond circulating in Kadey was from. It is left to know where the diamond in question goes to, from the Gbiti market which is the main diamond exchange pool.

First and foremost, we heard about main collectors and we managed to meet a few of them. They are based in Batouri, Gbiti and Boubara etc. Their work is to buy the diamond in great quantities. They receive the minerals from less influential collectors. But still, how does the diamond leave Cameroon?

Our interviewees mentioned the term « smugglers». These are people who may be foreigners who come and buy from the main collectors or at the diamond exchange zones that have been mentioned before. They buy it in large quantities for export. These people are clandestine who go against the laws that have been put in place. They pay no taxes; neither do they have any authorisation to export.

Although this could not be verified, it seemed logical to see how involved the purchase office was in this trade. The main purchase office we saw in Mandjou (Bertoua), owned by Mr Alhadji Djibo, told us about his little interest in diamond. To him, selling gold is more profitable; given that its supply is reliable in Cameroon and the world prices are available on the Internet. This is also because all diamond cannot leave Cameroon through a lone exit. It seems there are « smugglers » based in Yaounde and Douala who often buy minerals. Other purchase offices do probably exist²⁷. In any case, our interviewees gave us a deaf ear, which was a strategy to deny the existence of exportation from Cameroon. How can traceability be implemented when the ancient exit points are not yet known?

d. What are the potential effects of the present conflict in CAR on Cameroon?

The Kimberley Process imposes on all member states the supervision of the production of crude diamond from the extracting to exporting stage by implementing control measures within the legal framework.

The most recent plenary session on the Kimberley Process was held last November in Washington. The Washington Declaration on artisanal diamond mining for the completion of the 2005 Moscow Declaration was adopted at the end of this plenary session.

This Moscow Declaration notably encourages member states which belong to the same region to be collaborative in order to avoid the transportation of diamond out of the borders. The recent upheaval in CAR is capable of fostering the smuggling of Central African diamond through Cameroon, given the chaos in which Central Africa is found. The question here is what is the quantity of Central African diamond that comes into the Cameroonian territory? Given that it is an established fact that part of the Central African diamond crosses the borders to the international market, how can the impact of these insurgencies on the transportation of diamond in the Kadey Division be measured? Answering this question necessitates a second survey that we could not carry out due to the outbreak of the conflict in Central Africa when we came down to the field.

²⁷ The evidence is that since it was announced that export may be done via the Kimberley Process, some purchase offices have declared their desire to be legally recognised to the authorities. Source: SNPPK

II. Prospects

We shall address the main issues that have been mentioned above in order to have prospects in the absence of solutions.

a. The informal nature of artisanal mining

Artisanal miners generally work clandestinely. They do not have prospector cards as the law stipulates. Many of them do not know about this legal provision. Moreover, collectors who are middlemen are not even recognised by the law. All measures for the traceability of diamond warrant that all those involved in the commercialisation should benefit from a legal backing. The immatriculation of sponsors, miners and collectors poses specific problems²⁸.

First of all, the long term advantages of having a prospector's card should be explained to the miners. This should be done through a sensitization campaign, demonstrating the benefit of adhering to the law.

The formalisation of collectors and middlemen is not much of a problem. The question is if the latter should be considered as mere traders without any prohibited access or like contractors.

The second point, which is linked to the formalisation of the production line is, the fight against poverty in artisanal mining.

Formalising the collector's job is advantageous in that it brings transparency to the production line. This could help clear the difference that can come up at every stage of the process. All the same, this will lead to the legalisation of miners and primary producers' jobs.

The ideal thing to do would be to introduce elements of transparency (information on internationally recognised prices for commercial minerals) on price fixing, especially concerning diamond. In order to do this, miners would have to be trained on the evaluation of diamond and then, they should be given the necessary instruments for this.

²⁸For an all-round development, cf. *The BRGM audit report on artisanal mining rapport d'audit de l'artisanat minier du BRGM* quoted above

Moreover, after observation, we also deem it necessary to give the miners their autonomy, by giving them a capital to start with (loan) which they will manage independently without asking help from the collectors. We are thinking of a microcredit mechanism which will solely be in charge of the finances and CAPAM will be in charge of the technical supervision. This microcredit can be combined with social welfare in order to address the problem of tobacco and alcohol consumption, and most of all, the low education rate and income mismanagement. It is therefore not more or less about giving an alternative to the collectors.

Most of all, majority of the miners are farmers. It will be interesting to put a food management program in place that will enable them store food during 06 months which will feed them for one year.

a. Diamond transportation chain still not clear

As identified earlier, the easy access to the borders, coupled with the complicity among the people, are real obstacles to the traceability of diamond at the CAR borders. It is necessary to know the customs and habits of the place which may be very difficult. The first step determined by SNPPK, consist in comparing the Cameroonian tax rate with that of Central Africa (12.5% and 12% respectively). This is aimed to cutting down interest in the transportation of diamond within borders.

The second step, following the ministry's new organisation chart, is the installation of the Cameroonian "control brigade". We think a smooth collaboration between the two control units around the borders can help considerably curb the illegal importation of diamond from Central Africa to Cameroon.

Concerning the transportation proper of diamond, we were not able to contact former diamond exporters. The Kimberley Process will be useful here since this will have to be done later. Their role will be to systematically do research (every six months) on the countries that import diamond from Cameroon, for instance.

Nevertheless, we believe that the present chaos can only stop, thanks to the collaboration of forces of law and order. By the way, the latter is represented in the PK pilot committee.

c. The advantage of connecting the miners' purchase offices and legalising the collectors' job: what of the middlemen?

At the end of our stay in the Division, we came to the conclusion that as far as the commercialisation of diamond is concerned, the middlemen seem to locally monopolise the bigger share of income gotten from this trade. This state of things, among others²⁹, keeps the miners poor.

Because of this situation, we think it would be better to bring the purchase offices closer to the diamond extraction sites. This supposes that these prices are the same that are exacted even in the international market. This will enable the miners who cannot wait to see the fruit of their labour to not be duped no matter what happens. Here, we are counting on an actor deemed to be independent since he does not involve in the complex miner/collector relationship. The latter intend to exact prices that can be harmonised with the international market prices. This means that miners need to be really autonomous; thereby, the necessity for a microcredit and social assistance.

Nevertheless, we totally agree with Van Bockstael & Vlasenroot's³⁰ idea according to which, the solution proposed by actors should be given pride of place than imposing one from above. Trying to brutally dissolve the office of middlemen-collectors may be counter-productive.

In other words, for us, it is not about trying to dissolve with the back of one's hand, a social activity which has been existing for years (collectors) and which undoubtedly contributes to social balance in the communities. Nonetheless, we cannot leave the situation the way it is. That is why our proposal is to make the miners autonomous by giving them credit while encouraging them to do agriculture as their secondary activity. These miners can also benefit from social assistance in order to solve their social problems.

²⁹ It is worth mentioning that miners are obtain huge sums of money that they squander in alcohol consumption and motorcycles, instead of investing in comfortable houses for instance. These problems concern the social assistance that has been mentioned above.

³⁰ From conflicts to development diamonds: the Kimberley Process, and Africa's artisanal diamond mines", *Studia Diplomatica* vol. LXII, 2009 N°2, pp16-17

Conclusion

It is quite clear that the zone we covered is characterised by an easy access to the borders, which is suitable for the transportation of diamond from CAR. As for the actors we met: both miners and collectors, their activities are not legally recognised due to several reasons. These actors are intertwined by a dependent relationship which affects the fixing of prices. These prices are fixed without considering the real value of diamond, partly because of the miners' weak bargaining power. Our research has also permitted miners to confirm to us that gold and diamond can be found in the same mine. It is therefore advantageous to fit them into the framework of the Kimberley Process in Cameroon. The implementation of the Kimberley Process, that is, the institution of a traceability chain for diamond, from their extraction to their exportation, will be more efficient if the circulation of people and goods at the borders was better managed. The mining fields should be given more attention by the authorities, with the establishment of a real cadastre, according to the recommendations from the 2005 Moscow Declaration. The latter also demands that member states should include artisanal miners in the legal framework. By applying these recommendations, coupled with progressively breaking the dependency chain of of Cameroonian artisanal miners, we can then look forward to seeing the living standards of the primary producers of precious substances improve.

Signalons aussi le fait que régulièrement les artisans bénéficient de sommes importantes qu'ils dilapident dans l'achat d'alcool, de motos au lieu d'investir par exemple dans un logement de bonne facture. Ces problèmes relèvent de l'assistance sociale évoquée plus haut.

« From conflicts to development diamonds : the Kimberley Process , and Africa's artisanal diamond mines », Studia Diplomatica vol. LXII, 2009 N°2, pp16-17

ANNEXES

Interview guide - collectors

Name of field:

Localisation:

Head of field:

The year work kicked off

Name and Surname of interviewee				
Region of origin	a. EAST	b. SOUTH	c. Others (Specify please)	d. RCA
Age (in years)	a. 18	b. 19 – 33	c. 34 – 60	d. + 60
Marital status	a. SINGLE	b. MARRIED	c. WIDOWER	d.
Number of people responsible of	a. NONE	b. 2	c. 2 – 5	d. +5
Level of education	a. C.E.P.E	b. B.E.P.C	c. PROBATOIRE	d. BAC et +
Number of months on the job	a. 3	b. 3 – 6	c. 7 – 10	d. +10
Seniority in the job(in years)	a. 1	b. 2 – 3	c. 4 – 5	d. + 5
Monthly income derived from the job(in thousands)	a. 0 – 30	b. 31 – 100	c. 101 – 250	d. + 250
Other activities	a .STUDENT	a. Employe	c.Self – Employed	b. Civil Servant
Other activities	a.STUDENT	a. Employee	c.Self – Employed	e. Civil Servant

1. Artisanal activities

- How did you learn diamond mining? (family, learning on the field, employment, etc.)
- What motivates you to do this job?
- How do you work? (as a family, alone, in a groups...)
- What are the difficulties you encounter?

a. The social, economic, and environmental aspects

- Accidents at work
- Blocked pits
- Health problems (cholera, malaria, HIV /AIDS, etc.)
- Do you have a sponsor? If yes, for how long?
- Do you sell your stones to him alone?
- Is he alone at your disposal or are there others?
- Do youths work in the field? What is their age range?
- Are they productive? What difficulties do they encounter on their job?

j. What is women s role in the field?

k. Do you have a clue on the percentage of those schooling in this village?

2. Institutions (relationship with the administrative and traditional authorities)

- Expectations from the government
- Relating with MINMIDT and CAPAM representatives
- Relating with local authorities

Interview guide - collectors

Name of field:

Localisation:

Head of field:

Means of movement (car+road time)

Coordinated by GPS:

The year work kicked off:

Nom et Prénom de l'enquête				
Région d'origine	a. EST	b. SUD	c. Autres (à préciser)	d. RCA
Age (en année)	a. 18	b. 19 – 33	c. 34 – 60	d. + 60
Statut matrimonial	a. CELIBAT AIRE	b. MARIE	c. VEUF	d.
Personnes à charge (expliquer à partir de la proposition b.)	a. AUCUNE	b. 2	c. 2 – 5	d. +5
Niveau d'étude	a. C.E.P.E	b. B.E.P.C	c. PROBATOIRE	d. BAC et +
Nombre de mois d'activité	a. 3	b. 3 – 6	c. 7 – 10	d. +10
Ancienneté dans l'activité (en année)	a. 1	b. 2 – 3	c. 4 – 5	d. + 5
Revenus mensuels tirés de l'activité (en millier)	a. 0 – 30	b. 31 – 100	c. 101 – 250	d. + 250
Autres activités	a. ELEVE	b. EMPLOYE	c. AUTO EMPLOYE	d.fonctionnaire

1. Artisanal activities

- a. How did you become a collector?
- b. What prompted you to be a collector?
- c. How do you work? (as a family, alone, group, network)
- d. What is your capacity to store diamond? How do you evaluate it?
- e. What are your openings?

2. The social, economic and environmental factors

- a. Do you have a mining field? If yes, since when?
- b. Do you collect all the stones the diggers produce?
- c. Why?
- d. How is the price of diamond fixed?
- e. Have you ever lost on an investment you made?
- f. What do you think about child labour in the mine?

3. Institutions (relationship with the administrative and traditional authorities)

- a. Relationship MINMIDT and CAPAM representatives
- b. Relationship with local authority
- c. Have you heard about the Kimberley Process? If yes, on what occasion?
- d. Expectations from the government

Interview guide – Purchase office

Localisation:

Name and Surname of interviewee				
Region of origin	i. EAST	j. SOUTH	k. Others (Specify please)	l. RCA
Age (in years)	i. 18	j. 19 – 33	k. 34 – 60	l. + 60
Marital status	i. SINGLE	j. MARRIED	k. WIDOWER	l.
Number of people responsible of	i. NONE	j. 2	k. 2 – 5	l. +5
Level of education	i. C.E.P.E	j. B.E.P.C	k. PROBATOIRE	l. BAC et +
Number of months on the job	i. 3	j. 3 – 6	k. 7 – 10	l. +10
Seniority in the job(in years)	i. 1	j. 2 – 3	k. 4 – 5	l. + 5
Monthly income derived from the job(in thousands)	i. 0 – 30	j. 31 – 100	k. 101 – 250	l. + 250
Other activities	i.Student	j.Employe	c. Self – Employed	l. Civil Servant
Other activities	i.Student	j. Employee	c. Self - Employed	l. Civil Servant

1. Activities

- a. How did you become a trader in minerals?
- b. Why do you do this job?
- c. How do you operate (as a family, alone, group, network of collectors...)?
- d. What are your working tools?
- e. How is diamond supplied to you (place and period)?
- f. What kind of clients do you have?
- g. What difficulties do you encounter in the diamond business (Administrative, low production, collectors s behaviour, others)?

2. Social, economic and environmental aspects

- What are your observations on the production trend as far as quality and quantity is concerned?
- Do you have mining sites? If yes, since when?
- Are they diggers who sell their stones to you alone?
- What is your relationship with the diggers?
- How are the prices of stones fixed?
- At how much do you evaluate your monthly income? (OPTIONAL)
- What do you think about child labour in the mine?

3. Institutions (relationship with administrative and traditional authorities)

- What is your relationship with MINMITD and CAPAM representatives?
- What is your relationship with MINCAF representatives?
- What is your relationship with local authorities (Divisional Officer, Mayor, Traditional Heads)?
- What are your expectations from the government and the SCPK?

List of Interviewees

	Leader s name	Function
	Gbanga Emmanuel	Mayor of Kette
	Mbele Maurice	Chief of the Rigue village
	Bouba Sidiki	Chief of the Loma village
	Ley Victor	Chief of the Kana field
	Ngbangui Remi	Chief of the Gbiti village
	Djoule Daniel	Prince of the village, the Beke field
	Ndambele Paul	Chief of the Ondjiiki village
	Cheou Camara	Collector in Boubara
	Ndanga Yoruba	Chief of the Boubara district
	Idriss Mohammed	Collector
	Chalil Mohammed	Collector
Ouli	Kamba Jean-Claude	Municipal Counsellor
	Boukar Bongo	Divisional Officer
	Madi Boukar	2 ^e adj. Maire Ouli
	Ndoko Nicolas	Mayor of Ouli
		Chief of the Tamouna Guesse village
		Chief of the Mboumbe Nasse village
Kentzou	Dobil Bakari	Paramount chief of Bengue Tiko
	Ndoa Faustin	3rd class chief of Kentzou
	Moumini Mohaman	Master of the Koran
	Lime Pierre	Notable
	Ndjomo Denis	Notable
	Issa Bouba	Assistant Mayor
	Behina Desire	Municipal Counsellor
Kentzou	Sanga Thomas	Municipal Counsellor
	Belekou Louis Aime	Mayor of Kentzou
		Divisional Officer of Kentzou
Batouri	Besso Dawa	Divisional Delegate of MINEPDED
	Golike Bathelemy	Divisional Delegate of MINMITD
	Gaston Omboli	CEPEDIC
Bertoua	Alhadji Djibbo	Purchase office
	Mbock Lynna	AHA Financial administrator
	Nandi Deukoue	Chamber of commerce for Industries and Mines
Yaounde	Nyeck Bruno	MINMITD
	Yannick Ndikum	SNPPK
	Herminie Delanne	World Bank