Transformations to sustainability:
Small-scale gold mining in Eastern Region Uganda

PhD candidate: Esther van de Camp | Supervisors: Sabine Luning, Peter Pels | Paris 15-17 November 2022

Why?

This PhD project investigates T2S in Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining (ASGM). ASGM has been the subject of many moralising debates and ASGMiners are typically excluded from the decision making processes that concern them.

- *Globally 20 million people are active in ASGM and 100 million people live off ASGM.*
- *Globally and locally, the scales, organisations, technologies and landscapes of ASGM are **diverse**.*
- *Problematically, the sustainability **burden of proof is put on ASGM**.*
- *Mercury is emblematic for ASGM as unsustainable. Sustainability research needs to become defragmented and inclusive.*
- ***Co-labour** with miners as well as diverse local knowledge is key.*

What?

Q: How do goldminers in Busia District (Uganda) negotiate in-depth geopolitics with diverse temporalities of sustainability?

Gold lifeways (above ground) are intertwined with embodied knowledge of materialities (underground), including rock, water, soil and gold veins. This requires a '3D' approach.

***Busia District** miners mine in their residential area & the area has an abundance of NGOs and groundwater.*

How?

Both anthropology and industrial ecology informed a combination of 5 methods.

1. Ethnographic fieldwork, semi-structured interviews and transect walks.
2. Life Cycle Assessment: a quantification of 11 environmental impact categories based on Busia's gold supply chain.
3. Scenario Planning: an imagination, in 7 steps, of the edges of uncertain futures (see poster's top-right) plus a strategy assessment.

Duration: 7 months (2019, 2020, 2022).

***In co-labour** with goldminers of 6 government recognised 'Artisanal and Small-scale Mining Organisations' (ASMOs), goldminers outside ASMOs, Local Council 1 chairpersons and vice-chairpersons of various villages, the Community Development Officer, the Senior Environmental Officer, NGOs, geologists, mining engineers, teachers, farmers and police in Busia District.*

Findings

T2S thinking is integral to gold lifeways in Busia District.

Materiality (and more) informs **non-linear mine design**.

Law, land and position are of **key** uncertainty for miners.

Uncertainty affects **miners' plenty and diverse actions on T2S**.

Universiteit Leiden

Environmental Women In Action for Development (EWAD)

NWO

BELMONT FORUM

NORFACE NETWORK