**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.