

success story

Nyabibwe comes back to life

Charlotte Irasafari arrived in Nyabibwe in 2010, when the iTSCi traceability pilot project was launched. Soon after she arrived mining was suspended, first by the DRC government, and then due to the withdrawal of international buyers. During the two years' suspension the situation was difficult for her and her family. Since the re-launch of the project in October 2012, the economy has revived and her children are back in school. Nyabibwe has come back to life.

Below: Charlotte reading the homework of one of her children.



In 2010, the iTSCi pilot project...

Charlotte Irasafari, her husband and her six children were internally displaced on the *Hauts Plateaux* of the South Kivu Province. They were living in constant fear because of the regular incursions of rebel groups. In 2010, they decided to leave the insecurity of the *Hauts Plateaux* to find jobs in Nyabibwe (in the territory of Kalehe, South Kivu). In order to provide for the family, Charlotte and her husband started to work in the fields selling their production to the mines. At that time, there were around 1,000 miners working in Nyabibwe under the pilot project of the iTSCi system.

The suspension of mining in South Kivu

In September 2010, the Congolese Government decided to suspend mineral exploitation in Eastern DRC as an effort to break the link between conflict and minerals. This was followed by a de-facto embargo as international end-user industries cut non-traceable minerals from the DRC from their supply chains. Thus, iTSCi could no longer operate in South Kivu and legitimate sales outlets disappeared. Miners started to leave the town. Less than 100 miners stayed in Nyabibwe during the initial suspension and subsequent embargo. Charlotte describes her life during this period: *"Life became more and more difficult as mining reduced. We were hardly able to survive. Nyabibwe looked like a ghost town. No one was there to buy our production. I could not provide for my kids anymore. Four of them were chased from the school, as I was unable to pay for the fees."*

In 2012, when a delegation of donors came to visit Nyabibwe, Charlotte was there. She took the floor to give an emotional explanation to the delegation that the relaunch of activities was the only chance for her, her family and the whole community to survive. She begged them to re-start the tagging system so that her kids could go back to school.

Hope is back

Thanks to the Conflict Free Tin Initiative funded by the Dutch Government and the Development Bank of South Africa, traceability re-started in October 2012. More than 1,200 miners have returned to the mine and the shops re-opened. Nyabibwe has come back to life. Charlotte is once again able to sell her produce and her kids are back in school. One of them even started University and studies management at the University of Bukavu.