

Child Labour in Artisanal and Small Scale Mining: The Case of North Mara Mine

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Abstract: *The study aimed at identifying the reasons for child involvement into North Mara Gold Mines conflicts. The concern of this study was that, children are used in mining activities while giving away their basic rights. Their propensity to intrude the large scale mines and steal rocks rich in gold was examined to establish the forces behind such motives. From the time African Barrick Gold took over the mining activities at North Mara, incidences of child intrusion were on increase. These acts perpetrated by children have negative impacts on their welfare, behavior, growth and development.*

The study sampled children between the age group of 13-17 and employed an exploratory design to establish the reasons behind their pathetic behavior, attitudes and their actions. Focus group discussions are employed using small groups of 6 to 8 participants; whereby a total of 40 respondents were involved. The respondents were purposively selected based on their experience and knowledge on mining activities and children's involvement in such activities. The study has revealed that, children are used by the family members to trespass into the mines with the wrong perception that if children are apprehended by owners of the mines, they will be released without being charged because the law doesn't permit children to be incarcerated or punished. However, there were many cases where children were influenced by peers and environment, especially when they saw small children going around with plenty of money.

Key Word: Child labor, Artisanal and small scale mining, North Mara Gold Mine

INTRODUCTION

The demand for gold globally has been on increase for some time; this in turn has been accompanied by a substantial upsurge in production of gold by artisanal miners and large scale mining companies to keep in pace with demand (Bryceson & Jonsson, 2010). Today, there are many mining companies in Tanzania such as Resolute Mining Limited, Anglo Gold Ashanti, African Barrick Gold (now known as ACACIA Mining PLC). MDN Northern Mining, Tanzania Royal Exploration, Xstrata Nickel, IMX Resources and Mantra Resources to list a few (Lange, 2006).

Artisanal miner's activities were originally limited to old gold mines and alluvial deposits. However, in 1977 the number of artisanal miners increased tremendously which led to the discovery of large gold deposits at Bulyanhulu in Kahama. The small scale miners have continued to discover gold deposits in many parts of the country; some of these discoveries of gold have been reported in Mbinga and Mpanda districts (ILO, 2002).

Artisanal or small-scale mining (ASM) has been defined as subsistence mining, using non-technical or rudimentary tools involving smaller groups of 2 to 5 people working together in a pit (Mwaipopo et al., 2004: 20). This kind of mining is common in developing economies. In most cases, these mining activities are illegal or part of the informal economy. In Tanzania, ASM exists in many parts of the country and it is estimated to be primary source of income for more than 800,000 small-scale gold

miners. It is important to note that, thousands of children work in these ASM (Havnevik and Isinika, 2010: HRW, 2013).

HRW Report (2013). describes the way thousands of children work in unlicensed small-scale gold mines in [Tanzania](#). The report specifies some of the work that children perform while at this informal industry. They dig and drill in deep, unstable pits, work underground in shifts of up to 24 hours. They also carry heavy bags of gold ore and then crush and grind the ore followed by mercury amalgamation of gold. Since they drill deep and many of the pits are unstable, many of these children are traumatized daily experiencing pits collapsing, the accidents which lead to death or permanent disability. Further, the environmental consequences encountered by children in mining are immeasurable, especially on their health. Many of them face long term health problems from exposure to mercury, dust and carrying heavy loads.

Citing the involvement of children mining activities, ILO (2002) noted that, most children living around North Mara depend directly or indirectly on artisanal small scale mining. Children are attracted by the economic gains and are not scared to risk their lives. The North Mara Gold Mine has witnessed incidences where children break into the mining sites to steal gold bearing stones, despite the presence of huge concrete walls. They scale over the mining concrete walls into the mining site to look for gold bearing stones in heaps of selected stones ready for crushing and grinding. Children and young women are at particular risk, due to the fact that, they are used as cheap labor in the artisanal mining processing of gold ores. They commonly crush stones; transport them from the excavation or drilling points often crawling in narrow tunnels while carrying loads. Sometimes, children are used as 'human shields' by grownups intruding the formal large scale mines. In most cases, they are tricked into the belief that the police officials cannot arrest them since they are just children (ILO, 2002).

Furthermore, it is very sad to note that, students in secondary and primary schools around North Mara Gold mine, trade pens and books for gold. As the result, many of them, abandon school and turn into robbers, commonly known as "gold stones smugglers" at the North Mara Gold Mines. The children trespass into the mines and steal gold bearing stones. It is equally important to note that the money obtained by these children after selling the gold, is used recklessly in most cases to satisfy their insatiable sexual appetites. These sexual acts are done at the nearby bars where women and young girls provide sex as commodity at cheap prices (THISDAY, 27 July 2010).

Several studies have been conducted on the history of child labor in Tanzania. Some of these studies have gone extra miles to pinpoint the causes of child labor and suggested possible interventions. These studies go as far back as the colonial times (Khamsini, 1978; Lemelle, 1986) and reveal that children have all along been used as a source of cheap labor. Their welfare has been compromised with the selfish and economic gains of the artisanal and the small scale miners. Tracing the history of child labor in the mining sector, in reference to Africa, Lemelle (1986) asserts that, it was first experienced in mining areas of Lupa gold fields in 1930. The same acts were noted at Lupa, Kasanga and Sira Rivers. At these mining points, several boys were employed to operate a sluice device box to separate or recover gold from sand.

Several studies have been conducted in Tanzania with regards to child labor in mining areas. These studies around child labor ranges from private individual studies for academic purposes to those commissioned by the international organizations. These include studies conducted at the following Chunya, Geita and Kahama districts. Furthermore, sites such as Musoma, Mwanza, Nyarugusu and Ruvuma have equally benefited from the same studies. The intrusion of mining sites at North Mara is very unique since it is done by children. It is for this reason that this study explores the factors behind children acts of persistent incursions and trespassing into the mine in order to steal stones of gold which have been gathered after blasting for crushing, grinding and eventual retrieval of gold through cyanidation process. On the other hand, despite the fact that North Mara is one of the biggest gold mines in Tanzania, it seems it has not seriously looked at the factors behind child labor in the surrounding small scale mines. Therefore, this study is intended to fill in such gap.

Human Ecology Theory explains the reasons for child involvement into North Mara Mines conflicts through mine intrusions. The theory was developed by Carl Linnaeus (Odum and Barrett, 2005) refers to the way in which human beings interact with their environment in order to make sense of their lives. The theory takes into consideration biological, social, and physical aspects of the organism in a particular environment. The environment in this case may be human constructed, natural world or a social-cultural setting in which the organism lives (Bubolz and Sontag, 1993).

The human ecology theory is composed of three major elements which include: human beings, their environment, and the interactions between them. To start with, human beings are a group of individuals who depend entirely on their environment for survival. On the other hand, the natural environment is made up of atmosphere, climate, plants, animals, fish, rocks, soils, water and micro-organisms that support life. Lastly, human constructed environments include roads, machines, shelter, and material goods (Klein and White, 1996). Sontag and Bubolz (1996) emphasize that both natural and human constructed environments are the social-cultural environment. Such an environment includes other human beings, cultural constructs such as language, law, and values; and social-economic institutions such as market economy and regulatory systems.

Human ecology theory emphasizes on how human's behavior is affected by the natural and human created environments. In addition, how the environments are influenced by the individuals and families who exploit it (Bubolz and Sontag, 1993). To explain this further one student at Nyamongo Secondary School said *"More than 30 students dropped out of school to join mining activities, let alone students from other schools surrounding the North Mara Mine"* (THISDAY, 27 July 2010).

Conflict theory was also used in this study as developed by Karl Marx (Sears, 2008). In the conflict theory Karl Marx saw a society constructed upon the idea of "base and superstructure." For Marx, the base is what forms the society's economic character, whereby, the superstructure contains the culture and social institutions. The conflict theory emphasizes, it is the base (economy) that determines what a society will be like (Sears, 2008).

Furthermore, reflecting the North Mara situation it is evident that, gold is the economy that every community member looks at as a way of survival as explained by the conflict theory.

The child labour and mine intrusion by children that exist in North Mara is because gold is perceived as the major economic activity of the area by both parents and children. Children in North Mara forsake school and get involved in Artisanal and Small Scale mining activities so that they can attain wealth at the young age. According to conflict theory, social stratification benefits the rich and powerful at the expense of the poor (Sears, 2008). This is evident in North Mara as well, many parents use children as a way of gaining wealth in their families by sending their children in Artisanal and Small Scale mining. On the other hand, many children tend to be employed as cheap labourers by the small scale mine owners or the gold brokers that seek gold from the mining pits.

The purpose of this study was to explore children's involvement in artisanal and small scale mining activities in North Mara. Specifically, the study sought to identify the reasons for children's involvement in thefts of rocks of gold ores from accumulated heaps of gold ores from blasting in North Mara Gold Mine; and suggest ways to eliminate child intrusion in North Mara mines. Alongside these objectives the study was guided by two research questions: First, what are the reasons for child intrusion in North Mara mines? Secondly, what should be done in order to eradicate child intrusion in North Mara Mines?

METHODOLOGY

This was an exploratory study which sought to identify the reasons for children involvement in-mine intrusions in North Mara. The goal of the exploratory research was to identify key issues and key variables related to child labor in North Mara (Singh, 2007). This was done by using focus group discussions with respondents including children involved in mining intrusion, Village Executive Officers, Ward Executive Officers, Councilors, Traditional leaders, Teachers, Police officers and ACACIA community relations officers. The data collection method provided accurate information on the reasons; current trends, impact and recommendations on how to eradicate child intrusion into the North Mara mines.

This study had a total of forty (40) participants of whom twenty five (25) were government officials, three (3) traditional leaders from Nyabasi, Nyamongo and Wairegi clans, two (2) Community Relations officers from ACACIA Mining PLC and ten (10) children who were once involved into the intrusion of North Mara mine. These respondents were sampled from seven (7) villages of Nyamongo, Kewanja, Nyakunguru, Nyangoto, Kerende, Genkuru and Matongo. The government officials included five (5) Ward Executive Officers (WEOs), seven (7) Village Executive Officers (VEOs), four (4) Head Teachers, three (3) Police Officers and five (5) Ward Counselors. Respondents in this study were purposively sampled, where a deliberate choice of an informant was made based on the qualities possessed by the informants. Moreover, purposive sampling does not require guiding theories or a definite number of informants but the researcher simply chooses the people with the knowledge and experience on the problem who are willing to provide the required information (Bernard, 2002).

Besides, government officials were selected based on the fact that, by virtue of their positions and responsibilities they frequently interacted with community members. In fact, they were involved in identifying child intruders whenever they were caught in the mining areas and have rich information on the reasons that lead to child intrusion into North Mara mines. On the other hand, traditional leaders were selected due to the fact that, they are influential members of the clans; and they wield immense political and spiritual powers. It is from such facts; therefore, the selected respondents were thought to be more informed on matters related to child intrusion in North Mara Mines. Similarly, community relations officers from ACACIA were selected since they are always summoned whenever children are caught intruding the mining sites. Their major function is to identify the children and send them to their respective villages. Children intruders aged between 13-17 were selected for this study since they are regularly arrested while actively or passively intruding the North Mara Mine.

This study used Focus Group Discussion (FGD) to collect data from key informants. Before data were collected invitation letters to participants were dispatched. Greenbaum (2000) explains that, Focus Group Discussion provides a platform for a group of people to share their perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes towards a condition that affects their lives. This study adopted this method due to the fact that, it is flexible, and often it is possible to find out unexpected issues arise in the course of discussions. Showing further the advantage of the method, Greenbaum (2000) asserts that, the method has high validity of the data collected; it is widely understood; and the findings are realistic. Furthermore, focus groups are cheap, provide quick results and the sample size can be increased by allowing more people to be interviewed at the same time (Morgan, 1997).

Focus Group session was conducted for three hours. The discussion was guided by questions which intended to identify the reasons for child intrusion in North Mara mines and the recommendations on how child intrusion can be dealt with in North Mara Mines. The discussion was carried out in Swahili language, given the fact that, all participants were conversant with the language and there was no need of using *Kikuria* language.

Qualitative data obtained from various sources was transformed into findings without using formulas in the transformation process (Patton, 2002). Results from Focus Group Discussion written texts were organized into themes and tape recorded data were transcribed into written notes that could be read and understood easily. The data from various sources were categorized into themes as soon as were collected from the field while the information provided by the participants was still fresh in our minds. Thereafter, the data were explorative analyzed and interpreted in themes simultaneously with many expressed voices from respondents some of which have been presented as respondents' statements.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

This part presents the findings on the reasons for child involvement in Artisanal and Small Scale Mining activities in North Mara Mine. These findings were gathered through Focus Group Discussion conducted to children involved in Artisanal and Small Scale Mining activities and other stakeholders identified for this study. The following reasons for children's intrusions into the Mara Gold Mine were identified: poverty, peer influence, lack of training opportunities, irresponsible parents, community members and government, negative perceptions towards ACACIA, increased street children, and the use of children as human shields.

Poverty is defined as insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individuals, households and communities (World Bank, 2004). During Focus Group Discussions both the children intruders and key stakeholders mentioned that poverty in the families pushes children to intrude the mine. The village leaders elaborated that, most families with single parents and old people find it hard to care for their children due to extreme poverty. Children in such families often are forced by circumstances to intrude the mines so as to support their parents and siblings. This was substantiated by one key stakeholder, during focus group discussions, who said:

"Many children in single and old parent's households intrude the mine sites in order to raise income to support their families. There are a lot of dangers that children face while in the mine; but it's better to intrude the mine than dying of hunger while seated at home" (FGD with stakeholders at Kewanja Village, February 2015).

Furthermore, a seventeen years old boy at Matongo Village who is among the ten children in the family, confessed that, life at home was very hard. There was no food, no school studying materials and other basic needs for all family members. The boy had to drop out of school; and this is what the boy had to say:

"Life at home was becoming unbearable, with ten of us, there was always nothing to eat, no school fees and uniforms. I had to leave school and go to the hills (intruding the mine) at least

I would get money and support my family” (FGD with children in artisanal and small scale mining at Matongo Village, March 2015).

Rimm (2010) explains that children and adults alike are normally influenced by their peers. However, children are most vulnerable to negative influences because they are usually at a stage of the process of developing a value system. This is a stage in child development when parents take a proactive position to help their children learn ways of developing appropriate, durable friendships during early childhood thereby laying a foundation for children making good choices in life. In this study, the influence of both family members and friends was noted to be the second most significant influencing factor for children to intrude the mine. Both children and stakeholders stated that most children are sent by their parents or guardians directly or indirectly to intrude the mine. Children during FGD pointed out that, after seeing their friends with a lot of money at such a tender age, they were convinced that the best option was to join them and get rich. This option motivates them to intrude the mine in order to improve their lives quickly. This was well captured by a child involved in artisanal and small scale mining activities who said:

“It makes no sense seeing age mates getting rich while you go to school. After all when I go to school I am not sure if I can succeed, so this is the reason that motivated me to intrude the mine when I was in class seven” (FGD with children in artisanal and small scale mining at Nyangoto Village, March 2015).

It is worth while noting that, children are influenced by their peers to intrude the mine so that they can get money to satisfy their sexual desires. Prostitution is rampant in Nyamongo, especially at bars that sell alcohol, where young girls and women are readily available, and sex is offered at TZS 5,000 and above. When children get money after selling gold, they often frequent these bars to drink and satisfy their sexual appetites. One of the key stakeholders noted that:

“There is a very famous place known as Pili Kiuno Bar at Nyamongo where girls as young as 15 years old sell their bodies for a price of 5,000/= or more for a single sex bout. This is a price that a child intruder can always afford; hence many more children are attracted to intrude the Mine simply for this reason” (FGD with stakeholders at Kewanja village,

This study found that many children who intrude the mine are the ones who did not get the opportunity to continue with secondary and higher education. In the focus group discussions with children and stakeholders, it was noted that, the North Mara Mine has built several good primary and secondary schools in North Mara. But most children in the surrounding villages don't qualify to progress with secondary education after primary school. Furthermore, students who qualify to carry on with secondary school education do not normally pass their form four exams. Therefore, all these students who did not progress with higher education after primary school and form four and further trainings in vocational training centres end up in small scale mining, where often they join the army of intruders of the North Mara Gold Mine.

Failure of the social institutions in carrying out their responsibilities in the upbringing of children is reflected in children who grow with unregulated behavior. Parents, community and government have been identified as one of the reasons that lead to increased mine

intrusions by children. Parents, the surrounding communities and the government are very much aware of the children intrusion acts at North Mara Mine. Despite the awareness of these acts, no efforts or steps have been taken by the listed above groups to address or discourage such ill practices. One secondary school headmaster summarized the above statement as follows:

“Most people in North Mara think that, the mine is the reason for their survival. Overdependence on the mine has made families and government irresponsible. There is no one to counsel and teach children good behavior and ensure that children grow up with discipline and good manners. Look at all these empty classrooms, no one cares if children come to school or not; and no one is ready to discourage mine intrusion done by the school going children. I wonder what kind of children North Mara will have after ten years” (FGD with stakeholders at Kewanja village, February 2015).

It was noted that, many community members in North Mara are not happy with the mine investors. Their hatred of the investors is associated with the perception that, the surrounding communities have been forgotten while all the riches from mines have been taken away from them to benefit only foreigners. One village leader at Kewanja Village said:

“Children intrude the mine because they think they are going to steal gold from white people. The hatred of the white investors propels the youth and children to intrude the mine thinking that they are salvaging wealth which rightly belongs to the whole community”.

The existence of North Mara Mine has led to the influx of people from various parts of Tanzania and neighboring Kenya. The participants informed the researcher that, North Mara has many street children due to breach of families. When people come to look for gold and are successful, they normally go back to their home areas. This practice has highly contributed to the increases of street children who have to intrude the mine as their way of survival.

This study has been informed that children are frequently used as human shield in mine intrusion. The available laws do not allow police officers to arrest them, especially when they are below eighteen years of age. Further, it was noted that, even if children are arrested, there are no strict legal procedures that can be taken by the police in order to discourage this behavior. Lack of strict measures has attracted more children to intrude the mine continuously due to the same fact that, even when arrested, they are very sure of being freed. The Nyangoto Officer Commanding District (OCD) said:

“Many children continue to intrude the mine because they know that before the law, they cannot be arrested. When we arrest intruders most of them claim to be below the age of eighteen. Thus we release and set them free” (FGD with stakeholders at Kewanja village, February 2015).

The participants mentioned that children involved in small scale mining activities experience a lot of dangers while intruding the mine including torture, injuries, death and negative social effects such as lack of education and significant health and psychological effects.

Both key stakeholders and children involved in small scale mining said that frequently children sustain severe injuries when climbing concrete walls and huge piles of rocks. Besides, they face different kinds of torture from adults especially when the adults become aware of any of them to have gold. The kinds of torture they experience include beatings, carrying huge sacks of rocks and even pushing them down the hill. Death incidences are commonly witnessed when the adults become aware of any child to have found a very rich gold bearing stone. In this case, such a child is usually killed during scramble for the stone.

It was acknowledged by respondents that most children intruders lack of education a lot of children drop out of school or do not go to school at all in order to enjoy the riches of gold in North Mara. Among ten children intruders who participated in the FGD only four of them were enrolled in primary and secondary schools. The remaining had never been enrolled in school at all. One child involved in artisanal and small scale mining activities said,

“I don’t know how to read and write but when I get enough money from this work, I shall enrol in any school of my choice and pay the fees” (FGD with children involved in artisanal and small scale mining activities at Matongo village, March 2015).

There are a lot of health related complications that affect children intruders especially when they fall into water that contains the cyanide (cyanide is a chemical used to wash and separate gold from stone). Most children who fall into cyanide solution waste water tend to lose their skin due to corrosion or get permanent damage on their bodies. Psychologically, the children are affected in the sense that, they often want to show that they are as brave as the rest intruders and in doing so they take alcohol and smoke marijuana. The continuous use of these substances leads to consumption of huge doses and addiction. As a consequence a lot of children have lost morals and no longer respect the elders and the norms in their society.

Apart from the above observed negative effects, the participants acknowledged that, children benefit a lot from intruding the mines. As such child intrusion cannot be stopped very easily; on the contrary, the practices keep on attracting many of them to intrude the mine each day. One child involved in small scale mining had the following to say:

“Intruding the mine has been of benefit to me since I have two motorcycles (Boda Boda) which ferry passengers and I am currently building a house at my family compound” (FGD with children involved in small scale mining at Matongo village, March 2015).

DISCUSSIONS OF THE FINDINGS

The first objective of this study sought to identify the reasons for children's involvement in mine intrusions in North Mara. This objective was achieved by collecting data through Focus Group Discussions from both children intruders and other stakeholders identified for this study. This section discusses the findings of the study.

The findings of this study as presented above show the relevance with conflict theory as discussed in this study. The conflict theory explains the base (economy) of the society determines the behavior and attitude of the community (Sears, 2008). The study reveals that, most community members in North Mara are poor because they depend entirely on gold for survival; other economic activities such as agriculture are left unattended. This means that, families that cannot access gold and do not have other economic alternatives find it hard to care for their children. Therefore, the study revealed many children are forced to be involved in Artisanal Small Scale Mining so as to support their families.

On the other hand, ILO (2002) in its rapid assessment study on the worst form of child labour conducted in the districts of Chunya, Tunduru and Geita revealed similar findings to this study. The study noted that, poverty has been explained as the main reason for children engaging themselves in child labour. In interviews and focus group discussions at all the three sites, parents and children mentioned poverty of the families as the major contributing factor pushing children to work in the mines. The district officials in Chunya explained that, parents faced hardships to provide for their families; thus children were expected to work to help parents provide for their families. From all the three mining sites it was noted that, 69.9% of the children working in the mines were forced to do so despite the fact that they were still in primary school. This was explained to be the only way children could raise money for educational expenses. Poverty was also explained as the main reason for primary school dropouts. Data from the three mining locations show that 15.7% of the children were forced to drop out of school due to lack of funds and the inability of their families to cater for their educational needs. For instance, in Ngapa children had to work to provide for their school needs and also had to drop out of school because the families could not support them in their education.

Bryceson and Jønsson (2010) in their study revealed peer influence contributes greatly to child labour in mining areas. The study explains that, some children decided to work at the mining site because they were attracted by the better life they saw from their fellow children compared to what they have at home. At the mine sites they were assured a meal, and had the possibility of making money which allowed them to consider the prospects for becoming rich one day. Parents' value of a child's contribution at home was also explored as a possible factor that encouraged children to work in the mines. Parents of the working children did little to prevent their children from working in the mines, as that would mean doing without the extra income.

Human ecology theory also proves to be relevant to this study with reference to the findings attained. Human ecology theory emphasizes, human's behavior is affected by the natural and human created environments (Bubolz and Sontag, 1993). The children sexual behavior as revealed by this study shows children are encouraged to enter the mine sites so as to get

money that will enable them satisfy their sexual pleasure. Amongst, many other reasons that push children into small scale mining activities, learning from their environment encourages children to be involved more into small scale mining activities.

The above findings from this study have been substantiated by rapid assessment conducted by ILO (2002) on the worst form of child labour. ILO (2002) describes, Thirteen percent of the children working at all the three mining sites had completed primary education, but were not selected to join government secondary schools. Discussions with the children in the field revealed that they were forced into working in the mines because they lacked an alternative in terms of opportunity for further training. From all the three sites and their surrounding areas, there was a lack of other training opportunities aside from the primary schools. The nature of primary education does not equip pupils with skills that are useful to them immediately after completing their primary education.

This study found out that, the failure of the social institutions to care for their children made children work in the mining areas. This finding was further supported by ILO (2002) study which explains, traditionally in African families the extended family was a very good social security institution, taking care of orphans, the elderly and widows. However, changes in the relations of productions have led to significant changes in family ties. The role and the functions of the extended family have diminished in that the security provided to orphans, the elderly and widows is no longer seen as being of great importance. In the study, orphans clearly linked the situation of having nobody to take care of them with their involvement in child labour. It is evident from these findings that important social institutions in the communities in Tanzania have left their responsibilities to care for their children leading to continuous problems that face children as seen in this study.

Conflict theory further proves relevance in this study, the theory focuses on the social stratification benefits the rich and powerful at the expense of the poor (Sears, 2008). The findings of this study show that, community members around North Mara do not discourage the act of children intruding the mines because they believe their gold is being taken. It's the community belief that they are being oppressed at the expense of the investor hence, when children intrude the mine it's considered a brave act and children are applauded for that.

Further to this finding, Mulikuza (2015) highlights that, the communities in North Mara hold negative perceptions towards the investor which lead to frequent clashes and conflicts with the investor. The communities around North Mara believe gold belongs to the gods of the lands and therefore they have the right to own it and not anyone else. It is this perception that forces the communities to act illegally to the investor and do such things as throwing stones, burning of mining vehicles, stealing and intruding the mine sites every now and then. The study conducted by Bryceson and Jønsson (2010) shows evidently the existence of street children in mining areas of Tanzania forces them to offer their labour in the mines. Bryceson and Jønsson (2010) explain divorces contributed in one way or another to pushing children out of school and to the streets. The children who are pushed out to the street eventually find working in the mines as the way to sustain their lives. Although the link cannot be firmly established, one would argue based on responses from the working children that no matter how insignificant the comparisons seem in relation to the non-

working children, the destabilization of the family is an aspect to be taken into consideration. The findings of this study have been evident in other mining sites of Tanzania. HRW (2013) reveals that, in the mining sites of Chunya, Geita and Kahama districts children are used as human shield by adults whenever they penetrate illegally to the large scale mining sites. Using children in mining sites exposes them to numerous risks including diseases, lack of education, improper growth, inability to grow into proper and responsible adults among others.

In this study participants agreed that mine intrusion for children is a problem and measures have to be introduced to deal with the situation. The following recommendations were provided: creating awareness on the effects of mine intrusion, legal actions must be taken to irresponsible parents through village by laws, and the establishment of child protection team around North Mara.

The participants suggested that efforts and measures should be developed and implemented by both NGOs and the government in creating awareness on the effects of illegal mining. Public seminars to sensitize people on the rights and responsibilities of the children should be organized. Parents should assume their roles of caring and bringing up children; and stop depending on their children as a source of income. Community members and leaders should be actively involved in protecting their children and stop being unconcerned passive observers towards these harmful activities perpetrated by local children. Children are a great resourced which must be nurtured by the whole community.

Village leaders have been asked to be involved fully once children are arrested in the mining areas. This will enable the leaders to identify the parents whose children were involved and punish the parents accordingly. Further, leaders have been urged to make village by laws that would be made aware to all the community members so that in case any child has been arrested then it's the parent who will be punished. This will enable parents to control their children better and stop them from intruding the mine.

Unlike other places in Tanzania, North Mara lacks a child protection team. It has been suggested that with the existence of the child protection team in North Mara, families and children will be easily educated and controlled. The child protection team will be able to document the total number of all children present in the villages and hence make close follow ups when child intrusion cases happen by identifying the irresponsible parents. This team will be accessible to police and ACACIA mine whenever children are arrested in the mines, this will enable to indentify appropriate parents since when children are arrested some of them deny and claim that, they are not from North Mara area.

CONCLUSION

It is evident from this study that child intrusion in North Mara Mine is a serious problem which most probably affects several other children in Tanzania. Children below the age of 18 years intrude the mine due to poverty, peer influence, irresponsibility of communities organs, to mention but a few. Children also face devastating effects including lack of education, injuries, death and health problems. Surprisingly, several children said they benefit a lot from intruding the mine. It was suggested that children intrusion can be reduced

through establishing child protection team, creating community awareness and punishment to irresponsible parents.

The government, local NGOs and civil societies should join hands and work together to ensure that, children are protected and have the right to education, and that they are given the necessary opportunities to develop their physical and mental capabilities in a safe, healthy and caring environment.

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