



Artisanal Gold Mining in Zimbabwe: Prospects and Challenges for the Low Income Groups in the Chegutu Mining District

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ABSTRACT The colonial policies and regulations have continued to shape the substructure of the mining industry, which saw an inclination of the state towards large and medium-scale mining where foreign ownership is dominant at the expense of the majority blacks in the artisanal mining sector. This paper focused on evaluating the challenges and prospects of artisanal gold mining in the Chegutu mining district, Zimbabwe. Despite the growing erudition of the economic crises as well as the livelihood struggles and politicized agricultural reforms and forced displacements by the state in Zimbabwe, little attention has been paid so far to the challenges and prospects of artisanal mining. In spite of the growing significance of artisanal gold mining as a source of livelihood and employment for low-income groups, the government has failed to take broad-based measures to support artisanal gold mining and this has cast the future of low-income artisanal gold miners into a quandary. Since the recentralization of artisanal and small-scale mining governance in 2006, the government policy towards artisanal miners has been in reactive mode where state sponsored violence and arbitrary arrests are the order of the day. Therefore, this study contributes to the debates on the effects of the recent recentralization of artisanal mining governance, formalization of the sector as well as its challenges and prospects. This study employed a qualitative method as a foundation for the collection and analysis of data. 60 artisanal mining community members and 15 government officials were sampled in the Chegutu mining district. Six mining sites were visited. The study established that there are high prospects for the low-income groups in terms of employment creation, economies and networks of affinity and income multiplier effect in the sector. This is despite the formidable challenges faced by the artisanal miners such as the government's contradictory position, lack of a formal policy and assistance, as well as marginalization and harassments by law enforcement agencies and abuse of women. Amongst the key recommendations made; all key stakeholders should work together to ensure that there is formalisation and investment in the sector.