Project: The Informal Gold Mining Sub-Sector in Mongolia: A comprehensive sector-based project to prevent and eliminate child labour and improve the situation of informal gold miners (IGM project)

Donors: ILO: International Programme for Elimination of Child Labour (ILO-IPEC), ILO ACT/EMP, ILO Sub-regional Project on Informal Economy, Poverty and Employment, and ILO Beijing (ILO Sub-regional Office-Bangkok)

Project Description: The overall objectives of this intervention are:
   a) to address issues of the informal gold mining sub-sector leading to an improved situation for the people working in informal gold mining;
   b) to increase employers’ role in eliminating and preventing hazardous child labour in informal gold mining; and
   c) to improve and regulate the relations between formal gold mining companies and informal gold miners.

The overall project strategy consists of the following components and main interventions:
   a) **Social dialogue**: Promotion of (a) the fundamental principles and rights at work for the IGM; (b) promotion of adequate regulation of the informal gold mining sub-sector, including supporting the organization of artisanal miners; (c) building trust and partnership between mining companies and informal gold miners.
   b) **Elimination and prevention of child labour in the sector**: The main strategy is to remove children from work and enable them to go to regular or non-formal school or to attend skills or vocational training.
   c) **Promotion of safe and productive small-scale mining**: Interventions to improve safety and health of the informal gold miners will focus on knowledge on risks, and how to eliminate and reduce hazardous elements in artisanal gold mining. It also aims at improving the capacity of national institutions within the areas of rescue and occupational safety and health (OSH) improvements in small-scale gold mining.

Some of the initial results of this initiative are as follows:

1. Children formerly working in gold mining, under hazardous conditions, are withdrawn and now obtaining education – younger children in non-formal education, older children at mining technical college.
   i. 37 children aged 6-15 in Zaamar soum started non-formal education. It is hoped that they will be integrated into formal school in September 2005.
   ii. 40 adolescents (aged 16-19) enrolled at mining technical college in Erdenet, in order to bridge them from labour-intensive hazardous work into decent and more-productive work.
   iii. Special modules developed for children coming from informal gold mining covering issues such as: child labour; health and safety at work; personal development; working arrangements (e.g. employment contract, rights and responsibilities at work, how to count your wage); and time management.
2. International OSH materials on mining very well received by informal miners. New materials being developed specific to the sub-sector in Mongolia. Safe mercury use and first aid training for informal miners are being introduced.

3. Relations between mining companies and informal miners in a target district, Zaamar soum, have improved whereas they were tense one year ago.

4. Groups of informal gold miners in Zaamar soum identified “informal” leaders to represent them in negotiations whereas there was absolutely no representation a year ago.

5. Formal mining companies in target district committed to employing a number of the young people weaned from informal mining and now enrolled at a nearby mining college.

6. One formal mining company has provisionally offered to support rebuilding of a dormitory in Zaamar soum so that the children in NFE education can start formal school in September 2005.

**Gender and Ethnic Components:**
The baseline survey conducted under the IE project provides information on informal gold mining in the two project soums. Families, women, men and children share responsibilities in the mining process. Conditions are very difficult for each, in particular women and children.

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