



From poverty to empowered employer of 20

Born and raised in a family of eight in the **Gakenke** district in Rwanda, Noel Nshimiyimana’s family could barely make ends meet. After finishing school at the age of 17, Noel was admitted to a vocational training school, but was unable to afford the school’s fees. Noel left his hometown in search of a better life and found his first job in the town of Ruli, where he earned less than \$3 a month for four years.

Tired of earning so little, Noel looked for a better opportunity and joined a mining cooperative in the local area to work as a digger. The Cooperative Miniere Kababara-Gikingo (COMIKAGI) operates at mines within the **iTSCI programme** and was able to follow the 3T mineral traceability and due diligence system in order to produce and trade their minerals according to international expectations and laws.



Noel Nshimiyimana surveying work in one of his pits [Photo: Pact]

Being part of iTSCI meant that Noel and others in his cooperative could continue to benefit from the natural resources of their area and access the international mineral markets. The programme helped to create jobs and opportunities for artisanal miners like Noel who began to earn around US\$60 per month from his work. During this time, Noel got married and was able to start saving a large part of his income.

Noel couldn't afford vocational school fees and was earning less than US\$3 per month before joining the mining sector

Noel started to earn around US\$60 per month, invested in his own pit and purchased a house

Noel can pay his children's school fees, supports 20 workers, and hopes to invest more for the future. "I am now living my dream"

After five years, Noel had enough savings to invest in opening up his own mine pit, and after six months of work, minerals were finally found. Managing his own pit allowed him to become a sub-contractor of COMIKAGI and with the help of a loan from the cooperative, he hired washers and transporters to help produce the minerals. COMIKAGI cooperative is able to provide financial support to subcontractors who can't cover operational costs through no-interest loans, so, after selling the minerals from his new pit Noel was able to pay back the loan and start to save more.



Noel Nshimiyimana at his new family home [Photo: Pact]

Noel earned enough to maintain the business and buy a house and until the end of the life of the mine pit. Empowered by his investment, Noel rented another pit and bought two plots for planting crops. Noel, now aged 33, has estimated his earnings from his investments at US\$22,400. "I'm very happy to be able to pay my children's school fees and be responsible for the lives of more than 20 workers who depend on me. I am now living my dream".

He is grateful to iTSCI for believing in the value of artisanal mining and the promise it offers to people with scarce opportunities in life. Noel plans to open two more pits, although at the moment he is scared to invest due to the current low price of commodities like tin and tantalum on the international market.

iTSCI Programme

Supporting responsible mineral production



c/o iTSCI Secretariat at ITRI Ltd
3 Curo Park
St Albans
UK, AL2 2DD
Phone: +44 1727 875 544
E-mail: itsci@itri.co.uk

iTSCI was developed and is managed by the global not-for-profit tin and tantalum industry associations ITRI and T.I.C. as an inclusive, sustainable, multi-stakeholder programme. We assist all actors in implementing OECD recommended due diligence to create responsible 3T mineral supply chains and benefit from trade, even from high risk areas. iTSCI has a track record of global co-operation and achievement contributing to capacity building, better governance, human rights and stability through monitoring more than 1,500 mine sites in Burundi, DRC, Rwanda and Uganda, and protecting the livelihood of tens of thousands of miners plus their communities.

See more news and information on <http://itsci.org>

The field activities of iTSCI are implemented through Pact Inc. The programme is funded by the 3T mineral business with support from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.