



COVID AND ARTISANAL MINING SHORT FORM SURVEY

REPORT (1) – JUNE 14, 2020

Mandalay and Sagaing Regions, Myanmar

Consultant – Saw Benjamin Thulayphaw

(this report contains brief background of Mandalay and Sagaing Regions, Narrative analysis for 6 communities and 2 Key informants, and workplan with respondents list)

Brief gold mining background of Mandalay and Sagaing Regions

These two regions are two geographical locations in which this assessment is planned to take place. Geologically, these two places are where both hard rock and alluvial gold can be mined. In fact, these are two areas where Myanmar main gold production is carried out. In Sagaing, Kyauk Pahto gold mine is very first and it has gold processing plant in a large scale. There are small and artisanal gold miners along Uru creek, Chindwin and Irrawaddy River, but starting from 2018, Gold ASM are put under law and rules, in the administrative management of the regional government. However, it is still in the process of implementing it. Thus, puts a stop on the licensing process and some operation on the ground. For Sagaing region in particular, regional government plans to rewrite the ASM mines rules which seem a repeat to the Mines Rules 2018 and it is taking time to encourage legal operation.

There is a big different between gold mines in Sagaing and Mandalay. Most Gold ASM in Sagaing are alluvial based surface mining and they have different method such as water jetting, sluicing, panning and amalgamation process by using mercury, whereas Mandalay gold mines are sulfide based hard rock so they use, jaw crusher, cyanidation or leaching method. Therefore, it is the size of the mines and investment that is different. Many mines in Mandalay are concentrated mostly in Thabeinkyin, Kwinthonesel and Singu townships, in Pyin Oo Lwin district. As nature of investment is different, small scale mines which was allowed 20 acres before is now reduced to 1 to 4 acres according to 2018 Mines Rules. Therefore, many small scales plan to upgrade to medium scale mining permit. As they shift from small to medium, there is more technical requirement such as exact definition of resources and geological report is needed. Latest requirement for this is, mine planning and method of processing. In addition, there is requirement for environmental duties as well. Despite this change, even if medium scale is upgraded from small scale, sub-contractors who are artisanal miners and pay one third of the gold production to the license holder. Nowadays, most mines have expired their licenses and they can't continue as the government is moving quite slowly. As a result, informal mining is going on.

To specify equal and reasonable geographical spread of this study, size, function and accessibility to the primary respondents are considered. For Mandalay, mines, vendors and gold buyers are sourced from Latpanhla, Wat Thay, Pat Shay, War Po Chet, Kwin ThonSel villages in Thabeikkyin and Singu townships.

As for Sagaing region, major mining sites are in Homalin township heavily small and artisanal mining. And addition, Kaw Lin, Wuntho, Pinle Bu and Kyaukpahto are more sulfide mining similar to Mandalay region hard rock mining and they are slightly bigger operation. These are the continuation of resource deposit from Mandalay region along Sagaing fault. Homalin gold mining in nature is basically alluvial surface mining and there are about 50,000 thousand people mining there, it will be one place for this assessment. Homalin is cut off from other state because of its less road access, only river and airlines are used to reach that area.

Based on type of mining, Homalin township will be surface mining and it is representative to Sagaing Region and Thabeikkyin and Singu townships are hard rock mining and representative for this type of mining and Mandalay region.

Covid 19 Control in Myanmar

Myanmar has 54 million people living across Myanmar and Government has set specific Covid 19 rules to prevent from spreading it. Myanmar started to have first case of Covid 19 on March 23 and most cases were imported from United States and United Kingdom initially. As Myanmar citizens do not travel that much as compared to other developed countries, the people mobility is largely internal. However, the authorities' foresaw the potential spread of this infectious disease from Chinese and Thai borders and they issued notification to shut down the international airports and borders gates. They let people in with a control manner and facility quarantine centres were set up very quickly in Buddhist meditation centres, schools and hotels. A doctor is assigned in every quarantine centre which was closely monitored for the infection by taking temperature every day. Although, testing capacity maybe small as compared to neighboring country, but there seems to less community transmission. That is what the government is afraid of. So far, the returnees from borders and relief flights were straightly sent to quarantine centres. The latest cases were identified they are mostly from India and Malaysia.

However, the lockdown instruction around the country has impacted the business either no operation or temporary shutdown. Gold market in particular was aware of price distortion, so Mandalay gold market was open in a controlled manner because Mandalay gold market is largely supply based not like Yangon gold market which is demand based.

Myanmar currently has 261 confirmed cases, 165 people recovered and 6 deaths. There have been series of rules and restrictions relaxed around the country and the economy starts to function.



NARRATIVE ANALYSIS – 1ST REPORT

Description: Reporting summary that provides analysis of qualitative and quantitative data captured during the collection period. Data collection partners are expected to provide summary of key points and if applicable: quotes, photos and research limitations for biweekly reporting period.

Reporting Frequency: Biweekly (June 14)

Reporting Method: A reporting survey will be created in Kobo toolbox to be completed by research partners.

Date of Reporting:	June 14, 2020
Data Collection Partner (Organization):	Saw Benjamin Thulayphaw
Individual Completing Report (Full Name, Title):	Respondents from Sagaing Region
Geographic Context (Country, Subnational)	Homalin Township, Khamti District, Sagaing Region
How many key informants are you synthesizing information from? [Integer]	1
What were their roles? Select all that apply <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Owner of tunnel/pit/hill (license holder) - State agent (government-affiliate) - Buyer (purchaser of mineral) - Exporter (sale of goods out of country) - Customary authority - Civil Society - Non-governmental organization - Private Business - Other, specify 	Gold Smith and Gold Shop, Mines owner (sub contractor, Pump Man /mine site sub contractor (digger), Transportation Service provider, Sellers of goods (in the mine), Shopkeeper and Gold dealer
Relevant minerals in key informant interviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Colored Gemstone (if yes, specify) - Diamond - Gold - Sand - Stone Aggregate (Gravel) - Tin (Cassiterite) - Tantalum (Coltan) - Tungsten (Wolframite) - Other, specify 	Gold

Synthesis of Key Informant Response

Of all key informants interviewed during this period, provide a summary of key insights for each research category based on key informant questions.

Health & Safety	
<p><i>Note any prevalence of COVID-19 in mining communities</i></p> <p><i>ASM operators compliance with government restrictions & practices to limit spread.</i></p> <p><i>Any key gaps, needs and risks in COVID health response</i></p>	<p>There is Covid cases in the study area. The study area is located in Sagaing Region, Homalin Township, small scale gold mines are spread all across the township.</p> <p>Most people follow washing hand, wearing masks and staying at home. However, at worksite, the nature of work makes it difficult to abide the instruction. Miners think that it is not necessary as they don't go out very much.</p>
Gender	
<p><i>Note any changes to men & women's roles in ASM sector and any emerging vulnerabilities</i></p>	<p>Most men do pumping and carrying ore and women do panning. During April, the workers go back to their native place for water festival. It happened that COVID 19 outbreak began during that period, due to travel restriction people can't come back up to the mines, thus stop the operation. Some sites with workers who were trapped in the lockdown continued to operate. It was a temporary effect on the livelihood of both men and women. Low income is a common scenario for both sex during the lockdown period.</p>
Human Security	
<p><i>Note any changes and emerging risks in ASM mining communities related to human security</i></p>	<p>Study area is not very secure, because there are some ethnic armed forces around. People do not have full security. Only a minimum police force is assigned there and clashes are prone regardless of Covid 19 impact. But there is none currently.</p>
Food Security	
<p><i>Note any changes and emerging risks in ASM mining communities related to food security</i></p>	<p>Only slight shortage of mobile sellers on the road due to mobility restriction, however food was remarkably available. Most people would save food good for one week. For those with less financial capacity, the local shops were available. Food is not an issue and it does not come up as critical impact. Even to the poorest, the mines owners and other rich people in the area provide food out of their generosity.</p>
Service Delivery & Government Engagement	
<p><i>Note any government & non-government responses to COVID and existing gaps and needs</i></p>	<p>Government is main body to disseminate information and services. On the ground, local</p>

<i>related to services</i>	charity groups such as youth and welfare groups play good role as well especially distributing food services or anybody who is in need of help. One common thing is that everyone knows about Covid through community leaders who were instructed to announce through checkpoints and loud speaker.
Markets & Supply Chains	
<i>Note any changes in mine site activity and supply chains and how COVID is directly or indirectly linked</i>	Gold market is distorted for a while. Cash did not flow from Mandalay market and mainly it can't be sent to the gold buyers on the ground and with the concern that cash scarcity in that area might be triggering less buying of gold even though people have gold. People can't sell their gold and started feeling that gold becomes quite useless. Market stops for a while, but it is back to normal now as some transportation is open again. Operation stops and production drops and as there is no worker and logistic, operation of the mine is difficult. Some gold dealers thought there was temporary stop on flow of cash to Homalin gold market. This is back to normal now.

Summary

Note three key insights that stood out or were important from this data collection period.

1. The interviews began after some relaxation of Covid rules and people started feeling relax a little bit. However, their livelihood is not back to normal yet and people are still feeling the impact of it.
2. The mines start to operate and labor shock is apparent. Labors can't come back yet as inter-regional travel restrictions are not lifted yet.
3. Gold market is slight distorted but Mandalay market is able to control it by not stop buying the Gold. It makes the situation stable. There is no distortion among gold miners.

Quotes

Note any key quotes from any of the interviews conducted. Quotes help to bring the date to life and help the participant's voice and story be captured and heard in their own words.

1. "Every year, people go back for water festival which is in April and it is normal. But for this year people can't come back up, that is the problem. Without the workers, we can't operate the mine." said one mine owner.
2. "We help each other during the crisis. Richer people distribute food to the poor people. That is

quite normal in Myanmar. Food is not a problem.” said one Gold shop owner.

3. “In the mine, I pump up the mud water that contains gold and sometimes, I dive into the water. Wearing mask is not practical for me.” Said one pump site worker.

Photos & Other Media

Not any photos or other media that you would like to be included in the reporting update. Include photo caption and credit below and attached photo when sharing report. Photos will be reviewed and published to Delve with permission.

Photo File Name	Caption	Photo Credit

Research Limitations

Note any issues encountered in gathering information and recommendations for filling any additional information gaps.

As the interview was designed for conducting through phone call, it was hard to get to the people and hard to connect with the people on the ground. As they don't see the interviewer, there is a hesitation. The interview times is also a challenge as they go to work and come back in the evening, they are tired and can't focus to answer the interview. Therefore, remote interviews have limitation and recruitment is also an issue. On top of that, people are not in the good mood as their works are not in normal operation.



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Gender	
<p><i>Note any changes to men & women's roles in ASM sector and any emerging vulnerabilities</i></p>	<p>There is no change of roles for both men and women. Although Covid stops mobility, ASM miners in this community work in their houses where they have small pit in the compound. Workers are nearby their neighbors, there is no need to worry about. The only concern is that they can't work freely as the government does not issue license to the company. Most of them are sub-contractor from the company. Sometimes, the company can be people who gather together as a group. With the new law, the government has suspended the issuance of the license.</p> <p>Women role in the society is not impacted by Covid, but they function as household manager and panning and cleaning.</p>
Human Security	
<p><i>Note any changes and emerging risks in ASM mining communities related to human security</i></p>	<p>This community is quite close to Mandalay city and security is not an issue. But in the mountain area, there can be concerns of security as there is very few police post deployed. So far there is no event of insecurity.</p>
Food Security	
<p><i>Note any changes and emerging risks in ASM mining communities related to food security</i></p>	<p>Food is not an issue. Only sellers can't come. Basic food is available. Meat and other vegetables were a little scarce during the lock down. Since the relaxation of lock down, people move around quite normally.</p>
Service Delivery & Government Engagement	
<p><i>Note any government & non-government responses to COVID and existing gaps and needs related to services</i></p>	<p>Government is main body to disseminate information and services. Community leader and committee to investigate or check new comer or stranger to the area is closely monitored. As government takes charge of everything, there is no gap or needs between non-government and government. There is a level of natural</p>

	initiativeness in terms of preventing Covid by setting up check point and take turns to guard new comers.
Markets & Supply Chains	
<i>Note any changes in mine site activity and supply chains and how COVID is directly or indirectly linked</i>	Market remains the same. Although there was only a slight stop due to lockdown. Mandalay market continues to operate as per normal because Mandalay holds the main gold market for the whole country and it is hard currency. Illegal market can't be allowed and can't let the market distortion happen. Covid does not impact the market directly. As the license is the main source of permit giving people to work more and produce more. One site will employ 10 or 11 people, when the license is stopped; this impacted the livelihood of people. Some people both male and female look for job in other places. Now most are back due to Covid and there is no work.

Summary

Note three key insights that stood out or were important from this data collection period.

1. The interviews began after some relaxation of Covid 19 rules and people started feeling relax a little bit. However, their livelihood is not back to normal yet and people are still feeling the impact of it.
2. Employment rate is less due to less site operation because of no license. They can't invest money without having assurance with license from government. Most sites are informally operating without license.
3. Gold has become scarce and miners need to go deeper. They need more investment and technology to do that. Gold market remains the same and big gold buyers continue to buy as per normal price. Price is referred to world market. As the world market drops, they have slight low price. Now it is back to normal price and fluctuation.

Quotes

Note any key quotes from any of the interviews conducted. Quotes help to bring the date to life and help the participant's voice and story be captured and heard in their own words.

1. "Gold is a bit scarce nowadays. People need to go deeper to get the gold." said one gold dealer.
2. "We only work inside together. There is no contact." one crusher said.

3. "There was a bit less buyer due to lock down and less income last month." Said seller of goods.

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