

Addressing Child Labour in mica mining

India and Madagascar



What is the problem?

Mica is a mineral used extensively in the production of electronic items, cosmetics and automobiles. It comes from the Latin word *micare*, which means to shine, flash or glitter. Unfortunately, behind this shimmer, there is poverty, exploitation and worst forms of child labour.

Mica mining, specifically sheet mining, is a labour-intensive process carried out by economically vulnerable communities in low-wage countries living in remote, climate affected and conflict-prone areas. Globally, India and Madagascar are leading exporters of sheet mica which is labour-intensive, and studies document a significant number of child labour cases¹

In the two countries, Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining or ASM activity (subsistence mining by individuals working independently) is unregulated and power imbalances in the supply chain push buying prices far below living income/wages. This forces families to engage their children in mica mining and collection activities as a negative coping mechanism. Children as artisanal miners travel deep into mining shafts and extract mica by hand or by hammers and pry bars. In addition, the lack of proper due diligence processes among mica sourcing companies and limited institutional frameworks to protect mica-dependent communities keep families trapped in poverty. Fueled further by constrained access to quality education, children are out of school and their rights to education, development, rest, play and take part in cultural activities, among others, are denied.²



¹Global Mica Mining and the Impact on Children's Rights, Terre des Hommes Netherlands and SOMO (2019)

²United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)



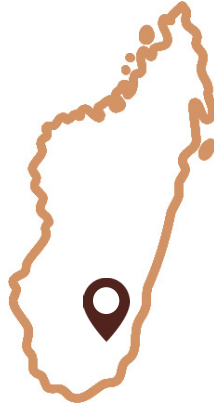
Where do we work?

We work in mica-dependent areas of India and Madagascar.



106 villages in Koderma and Giridih districts of Jharkhand state, **India**

22,000 children are estimated to be engaged in mica mining in states of Jharkhand and Bihar.³



11 villages in 3 Fokontany (Communes) (Benato Center, Ankaroka and Tatabe) of Betroka district, **Madagascar**

Around 11,000 children are estimated to be working in the mica sector in southern Madagascar.⁴



A children's club meeting in Jharkhand, India where children learn about child rights and how to advocate for change

How do we work?

Our Approach

Children and community-led empowerment

We identify children vulnerable to and exploited by child labour and nurture them as agents of change in our children's clubs. As a result, children monitor, report and denounce violations of child rights in their communities. Children also advocate with the government for stronger child protection systems and essential investments in education in vulnerable communities. We ensure that children at risk access quality education. We build the socio-economic resilience of parents by initiating community-led livelihood activities, and through increasing their access to social protection schemes.

Private sector engagement

We engage with the private sector and advocate for the implementation of responsible business practices, and the application of due diligence in sourcing practices. We build their capacities to effectively identify risks and respond to child labour. We encourage this sector to work with Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining (ASM) communities to implement child labour protective policies and sustainable extraction practices.

Lobby and advocacy

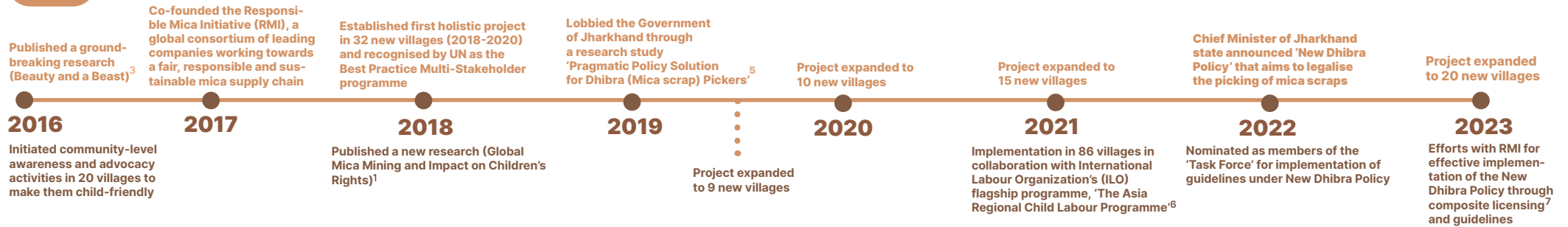
We actively lobby the government and duty bearers for policy changes and the effective implementation of existing laws and national plans to protect children and communities dependent on mica mining. We advocate with the government for the regulation of small and artisanal mica mining activities.

³Beauty and a Beast - Child Labour in India for Sparkling Cars and Cosmetics, Terre des Hommes Netherlands and SOMO (2016)

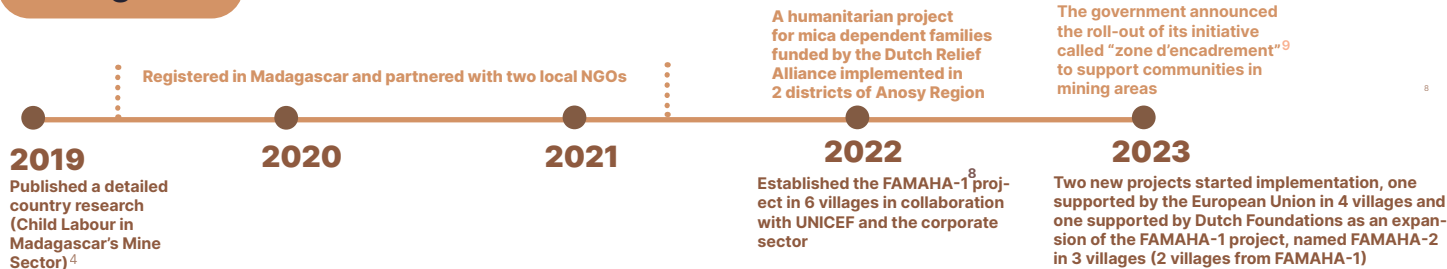
⁴Child labour in Madagascar's Mica Sector- Impact of the Mica Supply Chain on Children's Rights from the Malagasy Mines to the International Product Line, Terre des Hommes Netherlands and SOMO (2019)

What have we achieved? Towards systemic change (from inception to 2023)

India



Madagascar



	India	Madagascar	Total
Reach (Children)	24745	2816	27561
Children out of child labour	4703	1139	5842
Families increase their income	5396	232	5628
Capacity Building staff from government & law enforcement agencies	3041	29	3070
Capacity Building staff from the private sector	120	10	130

Children & community-led empowerment

In India, **collective advocacy efforts by children** have contributed to enhancing educational facilities in government schools. Families have reported a 35-40% **increase in income**.

In Madagascar, **communities were supported to create associations/cooperatives under the government initiative** announced as 'Zone d'Encadrement' where they can get licence/permit to own, extract, and export mica from their lands giving them more ownership of the resources and subsequently, the prices.

Private Sector Engagement

In India and Madagascar, the established **Responsible Mica Initiative (RMI)** network has been extremely active in bringing together stakeholders from the private sector, civil society organisations and governments to work towards collectively addressing child labour in mica mines by **establishing industry standard guidelines and supporting the implementation of due diligence**.

The RMI network has over 90 members - organisations that produce/use mica, industry associations, civil society organisations and non-governmental organisations.

Lobby and Advocacy

In India, the State Government of Jharkhand announced a **New Dhibra Policy** to protect adult mica miners and to legalise mica mining.

In Madagascar, the Regional Representative of the Ministry of National Education committed to **turning our project-built schools into public schools so they become sustainable**.

⁵ Finding a Pragmatic Policy Solution for Dhibra (Mica Scrap) Pickers of Jharkhand, Terre des Hommes Netherlands and Bharatiya Kisan Sangh (2019)

⁶ The Asia Regional Child Labour Programme (ARC) aims to reduce vulnerability to child labour and enhance protection of children from exploitation in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Myanmar and Pakistan to contribute to the eradication of child labour, particularly its worst forms.

¹⁰ Includes children supported to access online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic ⁸ 'Fampiasana Ankizy amin'ny Mica, Andao Hatsahatra' (Malagasy meaning 'Child Labour in Mica mines, Let's End it!')

⁷ A formal permission for mica mining from all kinds of mica dumps situated in different categories of lands. Depending upon the nature of land, the permission is granted from the Ministry of Land and Revenue, Ministry of Forest and Environment and other specific departments in India owning the land.

⁹ A term for a government process where adult can mica miners get licence/permit to own, extract, and export mica from their lands

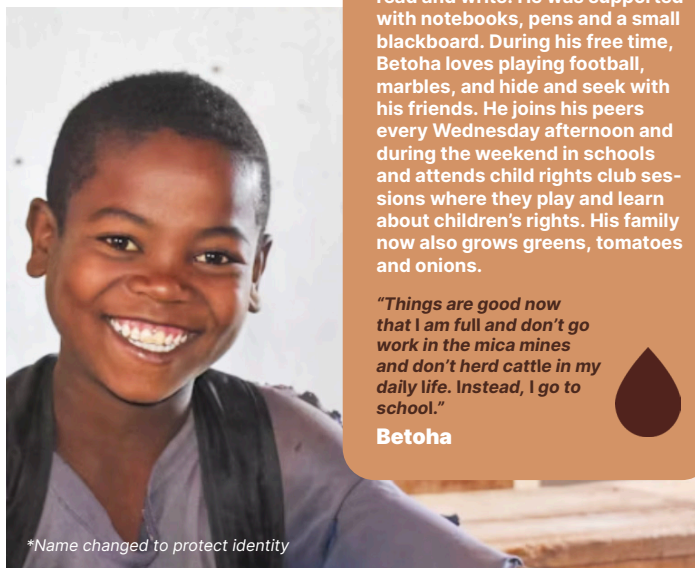
What do our stakeholders say?

"We go and talk to parents who take their children to mica, and have stopped many families from doing so!"

Child in India

"When (FAMAHA) project came and raised awareness on the importance of education and the consequences of child labour in the mica mines, the number of children going to school skyrocketed from over 300 to over 700."

Local Representative of the Ministry of National Education of Benato, Madagascar



**Name changed to protect identity*

"I was overwhelmed by the collective efforts of the children from the Balmanch¹² to address issues in the villages. I give my assurance to put their concerns on a priority basis."

*Mr. Ramdhan Yadav,
President, Zilla Parishad (block level government), Koderma,
India*

Betoha*, 14 years old, lives with his parents and six siblings in Tatabe, Madagascar. Betoha worked in the mica mines and was also herding cattle. He never attended school and he did not have time to play. Farming was the main source of livelihood for the family but persistent drought pushed the them to mica mining.

Today Betoha is an active member of the child rights club in his school. He has learnt to read and write. He was supported with notebooks, pens and a small blackboard. During his free time, Betoha loves playing football, marbles, and hide and seek with his friends. He joins his peers every Wednesday afternoon and during the weekend in schools and attends child rights club sessions where they play and learn about children's rights. His family now also grows greens, tomatoes and onions.

"Things are good now that I am full and don't go work in the mica mines and don't herd cattle in my daily life. Instead, I go to school."

Betoha

Stop child labour with us!

We are committed to stopping child labour, but we cannot do it alone. We need complementary partnerships with individuals, corporations, governments, international organisations, foundations and other institutions to support our cause.

Our Plans for 2024 and beyond:

- Upscale our reach and success in India and Madagascar.
- Partner with knowledge and policy research institutions to study the prevalence of child labour in emerging extractive industries and formulate most effective policy responses.
- Launch evidence-based interventions to address child labour in other extractive industries in mineral rich countries.
- Work with governments on accelerating pathways to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goal 8.7.¹³
- Consolidate a worldwide network of children raising their voices against child labour.

Connect with us to know more!

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Terre des Hommes Netherlands is an international child protection organisation that works to prevent and stop child exploitation. Fighting for children's rights since 1965, we envision a world where children can flourish free of all forms of exploitation. We're an influential expert organisation that's passionate and inclusive. We always put children at the centre. We tackle the underlying causes of child exploitation and catalyse long-term systemic change. Terre des Hommes Netherlands works across Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Europe having reached 281,176 people globally in 2023.

¹² A term in the meaning 'children's club' (Hindi language)

¹³ Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms