

Newsroom article

A Decade of Commitment: Safeguarding Children in the Democratic Republic of the Congo's Mining Communities

Rümlang, 29 October 2025 – In June 2024, dormakaba entered into a partnership with Save the Children Switzerland, part of the world's largest independent children's rights organization. The collaboration includes financial support for a pioneering project to overcome child labor in cobalt mining in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). This partnership has connected dormakaba to the Child Rights Action Hub DRC, developed by The Centre for Child Rights and Business. Beginning in 2024 and continuing over a ten-year period, dormakaba will invest around one million Swiss francs to support the project's objectives.

Just more than a year into the project, two contributors report on the impact and progress already achieved by the project on the ground: Pam Nguz, coordinator at the Child Rights Action Hub DRC, and Nathalie Kabongo, case manager.

A community-based approach led by Pam Nguz.

From the very start of our discussion, Pam shows a genuine desire to take the project's goal further. According to him, the goal is not only to provide individual remediation — as is currently done with the most vulnerable children — but also to adopt a collective approach.

"By educating a large number of children and engaging case managers who come from civil society, we're working to make these communities more self-sufficient by the end of the project," Pam explains.

This strategy also ensures additional support for those in greater need while maximizing the impact across entire communities. One of the foundational pillars of this approach is the trust established between case managers, children, and families. Home visits and monthly follow-ups are key tools in building lasting relationships. In some cases, children choose to maintain contact with their case manager independently — evidence of the deep bonds established.

"Parents are aware of the risks but often have no alternative. We tackle the root causes of poverty by supporting family income as well," Pam adds.

To help close the income gap, the program extends beyond education to include economic support for families, offsetting the loss of income resulting from the end of child labor. Since the program's inception, the team has demonstrated great adaptability, introducing extracurricular activities and remediation for young workers. In just one year, the progress on the ground has been remarkable.

Daily support from Nathalie

This progress would not be possible without the tireless work of case managers such as Nathalie — a role she describes as demanding yet deeply human. Thanks to extensive training, Nathalie is well-equipped to educate children in the community. She relies on care and compassion to help children

rebuild themselves and takes the time to establish a sense of safety. She emphasizes patience, recognizing that every child progresses at their own pace.

When faced with hesitant families, Nathalie adopts a respectful and educational approach. She explains the benefits of the program and reassures parents of the serious and reliable support offered. She is also careful to respect cultural norms, engaging with families and honoring their values. She recalls a case in which a child had been separated from his family. Thanks to her dedication and familiarity with the local culture, she was able to locate his relatives and facilitate reintegration.

She also acknowledges that despite their efforts, some children may return to the mines. In such cases, dialogue with the community is essential to encourage their return to school. Since dormakaba's commitment, 27 children have already received personalized support, financial aid, and access to education.

This ten-year partnership embodies a long-term vision — one in which every child can grow safely, freely, and with future prospects. dormakaba is not the only company stepping up for children's rights. Thanks to additional partnerships, more than 70 children have been enrolled in the program. Together, they are working toward a more just and equitable future.

Biographies

Pam Nguz, Case Manager Coordinator

Pam is in charge of the program's case managers. By providing appropriate training, he ensures that fieldwork practices align with best practices, government strategies, and other relevant initiatives.

Nathalie Kabongo, Case Manager

Nathalie became a case manager for The Hub in 2022. She currently supports several children as part of their remediation plans. Previously, she volunteered at a local shelter for children, which led The Hub team to connect with her.

Further information for:

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dormakaba is listed on the SIX Swiss Exchange and is headquartered in Rümlang near Zurich (Switzerland). It generated a turnover of CHF 2.9 billion in financial year 2024/25.

SIX Swiss Exchange: DOKA

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