

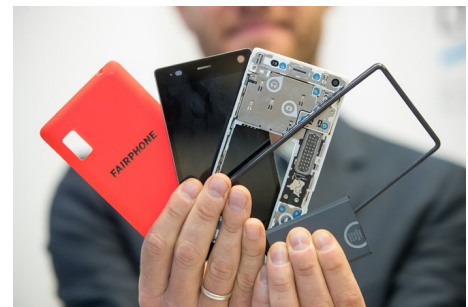
Mystery:

Your smartphone and the war in Congo



The Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Angola, and Chad are countries with large resources. At the same time, they are far from overcoming poverty and hunger in their own country. The wealth of oil, copper or precious stones could be a source of development. Instead of prosperity, however, war and violence are rampant in these countries - in the Democratic Republic of the Congo since 1995 with over five million deaths.

M1



M2 the Fairphone

For **Bas van Abel**, one of the co-initiators of the Fairphone project from the Netherlands, the following points were important, as he expressed in various interviews: First of all, new structures for production, sales and marketing as well as recycling should be created for the first fairly produced and traded smartphone. The initiators hoped to inspire and change the entire industry. People should notice what went wrong in the electronics sector. So the Fairphone with its positive history should become a real alternative.

Guiding questions:

How is your smart phone connected to the war in Congo?

Why does Bas van Abel think he can help to end the war in Congo with his smartphone?

Tasks:

- 1 Come up with an assumption in regard to these questions.
- 2 Sort the mystery cards according in groups according to sections and companies.
- 3 Establish connections between the mystery cards using arrows. Use where possible these types of arrows in order to show the different connections:
 - strengthening the impact →
 - weakening the impact —o
 - uncertain connection —?

Note: Arrows or pages can be labelled in order to make the display clearer/ easier to understand.

Remember that you have to explain your version to the others later on. How can you help them to understand the different connections you have come up with?

1 **Mystery: Your Smartphone and the war in Congo**

In **electronic devices such as smartphones and tablet PCs, the batteries are usually permanently installed** so that they cannot be replaced by the customer. This means that the most wear-prone component cannot be replaced. Modern batteries have a lifespan of one and a half to two years before their performance deteriorates significantly.

2 **Mystery: Your Smartphone and the war in Congo**

Worldwide, more and more non-renewable raw materials are being used. It is becoming apparent that many resources will become scarce and unaffordable if the industrialized countries do not reduce their consumption. This could also **threaten prosperity in resource-poor Germany.**

3 **Mystery: Your Smartphone and the war in Congo**

In **industrialized countries, used electrical devices are often declared as reusable in order to avoid the obligation to recycle.** Then these devices are exported to developing countries. This is done under the guise of "digital development aid" - but often also includes devices that are no longer functional.

4 **Mystery: Your Smartphone and the war in Congo**

The **metal tantalum**, which is extracted **from the ore coltan**, is one of the indispensable raw materials worldwide. **Tantalum is used in capacitors** that are required for devices that store electrical charges, e.g. B. in mobile phones and laptops, playstations and gameboys.

5 **Mystery: Your Smartphone and the war in Congo**

Moore's law goes back to Gordon Moore, a co-founder of Intel. In 1975 he predicted that the **microprocessor performance of a chip** would **double approximately every two years.** Today it is assumed that the period of **doubling is 18 months**, then industry and consumers exchange processors or devices.

6 **Mystery: Your Smartphone and the war in Congo**

In order to continuously increase the microprocessor performance, a lot of money has to be invested in research and production. So companies have to sell larger quantities of products to cover these costs.

7 Mystery: Your Smartphone and the war in Congo

Chinese companies in particular **secure mining rights in African countries with government support** and in return finance the construction of roads, railway lines and schools. Often exclusively Chinese workers are used to build infrastructure. In addition, equipment, materials or services often come from China.

8 Mystery: Your Smartphone and the war in Congo

Most **European companies buy the raw material from China**, which in turn imports the ores from African countries. Companies working in the Coltan trade reject allegations that they are selling conflict Coltan.

9 Mystery: Your Smartphone and the war in Congo

Solutions for Hope is a **company initiative for the conflict free tantalum production** of Motorola Solutions Inc. (communications electronics) and AVX Corporation (tantalum electrolytic capacitors). As part of the project, controlled coltan was shipped for the first time in 2011 and smelted to tantalum. The main aim of the project is to help **small-scale workers** continue to sell their ore to US companies on the global market.

10 Mystery: Your Smartphone and the war in Congo

Tantalum - a highly sought-after raw material
Tantalum is an indispensable raw material in the construction of devices for chemical devices and medical instruments, in the space and electronics industry and for corrosion-resistant coatings for steel. Around **twelve highly specialized German companies** play a leading role in the **extraction of coltan and processing into tantalum**.

11 Mystery: Your Smartphone and the war in Congo

Despite its wealth of raw materials, the Democratic **Republic of the Congo** is now one of the **poorest countries in the world**. In 2017, the country ranked 176th out of 189 in the Human Development Index. The causes are: decades of exploitation by the Belgian colonial power, mismanagement, corruption and years of war.

12 Mystery: Your Smartphone and the war in Congo

Mainly large companies enrich themselves on the Coltan. Of course, the **international corporations are not solely responsible for this war**. It is the **local military**, the **government** and the **local warlords** that keep igniting this conflict. In this war there are forced child soldiers, mass killings, systematic rape as a weapon, executions and illegal arrests.

<p>13 Mystery: Your Smartphone and the war in Congo</p> <p>For years, the German government and business associations were against any obligation to disclose the social and environmental impact of doing business. They opted for voluntary action and feared that the bureaucracy would put too much strain on companies. The new EU regulation of 2017 continues to rely on voluntary control of conflict raw materials.</p>	<p>14 Mystery: Your Smartphone and the war in Congo</p> <p>US federal law made a major change in U.S. financial markets law in response to the 2007 financial crisis. In Title Fifteen (Sec. 1502), the Dodd-Frank Act (Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, 2007) prohibits companies operating in the USA from using raw materials from whose sale weapons for the war in the Congo are financed.</p>
<p>15 Mystery: Your Smartphone and the war in Congo</p> <p>In many European countries there are currently no household return options for small electrical appliances which are no longer in use. Since hardly anyone drives to the recycling center because of a broken keyboard, many of these devices continue to end up in household waste.</p>	<p>16 Mystery: Your Smartphone and the war in Congo</p> <p>The main front of the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo runs along the large mines, especially in the rebel area in eastern Congo. Since August 1998, militias, bandits, rival ethnic groups and armies of the major warring parties have been fighting against each other to protect companies that mine the ore or have it extracted.</p>
<p>17 Mystery: Your Smartphone and the war in Congo</p> <p>A common question from users: Is the fair smartphone actually state of the art?</p> <p>The answer to this: Technologically speaking, a Fairphone offers nothing new. It also cannot keep up with the very latest technology. The innovation is that the developers try to make the manufacturing process fair in itself.</p>	<p>18 Mystery: Your Smartphone and the war in Congo</p> <p>If a country lives mainly from its resources, the risk of conflict increases from 0.5 to 23 percent.</p> <p>Armed conflicts are far more likely to occur than in resource-poor countries. Natural resources have become a more important risk factor than historical, ethnic or geographical motives. Income made from mineral resources turns into militias and warlords with primitive weapons, armies with heavy artillery and a political program.</p>