

Taking the Shine Off



Blood Diamond, last year's film starring Leonardo Di Caprio, focused attention on conflict diamonds, how these small precious commodities were easily smuggled and fuelled regional wars. The Kimberley Process, a voluntary regulation scheme was undertaken by the diamond industry, and has been quite successful in halting the trade. But many of the factors that made conflict diamonds feasible still exist in other areas of the gem trade: lack of infrastructure, regulation and enforcement, combined with extreme poverty, child labour, smuggling, and corruption. While these stones do not fuel wars, the challenges they present are no less difficult, or urgent.