

Newsletter

GOOD GOVERNANCE AFRICA (GGA) - WEST AFRICAN REGIONAL OFFICE



NATURAL RESOURCE FOCAL AREA

July 2021



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NATURAL RESOURCE FOCAL AREA

The West African Office of the Good Governance Africa (GGA-WARO) in the month of July 2021, embarked on advocacy and sensitization sessions under its Natural Resource Conservation, Protection and Utilization thematic area. These sessions saw the use of the outcome of one of the Centre's research works titled "Community Involvement Plan for Natural Resource Development", a research led by Dr. Aiman Sadik. The focus of engagement was on the subject of Social License to Operate (SLO), a critical component in the natural resource exploration pathway to ensure harmony between proponents (mining companies) and their host communities (mine-take communities). The timing of these stakeholder engagements in the Western Region of Ghana couldn't have come at any better period given the tense atmosphere surrounding years of Government's clamp down on illegal mining across Ghana. Whilst the debate goes on unabated about the negative impact of the activities of illegal miners in the country, there are concerns too about the actual benefits Ghana has derived over the years from the activities of well registered mining firms. Many observers have punched holes in the processes surrounding mining activities in the country with the under-development of mine-take communities as one of the visible draw backs to the quest to developing the nation with resources from the extractive sector.

The Western Region of Ghana is one of the wealthiest regions in the country in terms of natural resource endowment. The Region is well endowed with minerals such as gold, bauxite, manganese, diamonds, and in recent times





oil. The area is also known for its enormous contribution of cocoa beans to Ghana's cocoa export earnings. Strategically situated in the Region's capital city of Takoradi, is Ghana's second largest sea port, the Takoradi Port where most of the mined minerals of the country are exported from. However, after years and even over a century of the exportation of some of these rich mineral resources, the Region's development situation is nothing to write home about. The under-development of the mine-take communities in the region is of grave concern to governance institutions and activists. Years of weak resource governance regimes have led to deteriorating infrastructural facilities, worsening social and economic indicators and wide spread of poverty among residents.

The GGA-WARO under its natural resource conservation, protection and utilization thematic area, has initiated a number of processes including research and advocacy to help highlight the urgent need to address gaps in the extractive sector. The following research works have so far been initiated by the Centre to help set the stage for comprehensive public discourses and push for policy reforms:



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Dr. Aimann Sadik

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Community Involvement Plan for Mineral Resource Development – led by **Dr. Aimann Sadik** (Senior Environmental Assessment Administrator with Ministry of Environment of Saskatchewan in Canada)

ii

Resource Extraction and Sustainable Development of Mine Take Communities in Ghana – led by **Dr. David Anafo** (A senior lecturer at the Department of Planning and Sustainability, University of Energy and Natural Resources, Ghana)

iii

Qualitative Assessment of Poverty Levels of Mine-Take Communities: Lessons and Pointers to Pro-poor Policy from Gold Mine in Obuasi – led by **Dr. Ronald Adamtey** (A senior lecturer at the Planning Department of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi – Ghana)

The focus of the research assignment on “community involvement plan for mineral resource development” which is the Social License to Operate (SLO) is being used by the GGA-WARO to advocate for a relook at processes and activities that lead to mining development in communities. From minerals prospecting through to the acquisition of mining licenses to the actual extraction of minerals and payment of royalties and taxes, there is the need to peruse engagements to ensure that the communities which are directly affected



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by the activities are not short-changed. Actions and in-actions by key stakeholders such as the government, mining firms, traditional authorities and regulatory institutions all affect the relationship that exist between the proponents (mining firms) and the mine-take communities. Strained relationships in some cases between mining firms and the communities where their mining concessions are taken, are leading to the redraw of social licenses. The Team encountered a live case where at Bogoso, a day before the GGA-WARO session, some agitated youth group clashed with one mining firm in the area leading to the burning a plant belong to the mining firm over some misunderstanding.

In the month of July 2021, GGA-WARO using its participatory and inclusive social engagement processes, had interactions with stakeholders in the extractive industries in the Western Region of Ghana. Two notable towns, Bogoso and Tarkwa were where the consultative sessions were held. Dr. Joehida Quaye, a seasoned geoscientist with several years of active civil service at Ghana’s Geological Department and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), was the main facilitator for the sessions. Even as a retired civil servant, Dr. Quaye has consulted extensively for several mining firms in Ghana where he brings his years of experience in the extractive sector to bear in helping to solve developmental challenges. In all the engagements in the two mine-take communities brought together average, 15 institutions which have stake in the extractive sector to deliberate on the issue of social license to operate and how its processes could be used effectively to ensure sustainable development for all. Participants were taken through what SLO stands for, what processes it entails and how to sustain communities’ acceptance of the operations of mining firms. Further deliberations centered on how the extractives could contribute meaningfully to the development of mine-take communities which could be seen and appreciated by all as a measure to safeguard their social licenses.





SUMMARY OF ISSUES FROM THE SESSIONS

- i.** There appears to be breakdown in the trust between mining firms and their host communities due to past failed developmental promises. Some of these failed promises are generational in nature; as such they have become legacy issues that are affecting new and prospecting firms.
- ii.** Suspicion of attempts by some mining firms to escape agreed clauses in their agreements by selling off their stakes in concessions to new firms just when they are due to fulfil such clauses.
- iii.** Unmanaged expectations of community stakeholders which is putting undue pressure on the mining firms. Beyond the payment of royalties and taxes, mining firms commit to corporate social responsibility as a measure to help their host communities and the general public. It is emerging however, that the mine-take communities have become very dependent on these extras from the firms due to sometimes government's failed developmental agenda for their communities.
- iv.** Seeming lack of transparency in the award of concessions to mining firms at the blind side of community actors like traditional authorities who often hold lands in trust for their people. There are calls for the adoption of bottom up approach to mining concessional discussions and licenses awards by the Ministry of Energy



in Ghana for instance. This will ensure community stakeholders are well informed at the beginning rather than the current practice where they only get to know of such awards at the community entry stage by the firms.

v. Continuous lack of development in the mining communities is creating tensions between local authorities (district assemblies and traditional authorities) and residents.

vi. Created mistrust between local authorities and residents is resulting in non-adherence to laid down conflict resolution processes in seeking redress by the sections of community actors mostly youth groups.

vii. Stakeholders in the extractive sector particularly the mine-take communities want to see a regime where some of the corporate responsibility commitments of the firms become legally binding to aid the communities' ability to take the firms on when they fail to execute such plans.





GGA

Good Governance Africa



www.gga.org

Telephone: +233(0) 302 77762

Email: info.westafrica@gga.org

Physical address: The Paragon, 3rd Floor Master Bannor Street / 9th Lane, Osu behind the Trust Hospital, Osu-Accra

Facebook: [ggawestafrica](https://www.facebook.com/ggawestafrica)