

**Corporate Social Responsibility and Company-Community Relations:
Evidence from Newmont Ghana Gold Limited in Asutifi North District, Ghana****Dominic Degraft Arthur**

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of NGGL's corporate social responsibility activities on a peaceful relation with communities in their operational areas. Data were collected using the in-depth interview, focus group discussion and observation. The purposive sampling technique was used to select fifty (50) community respondents and twenty (20) key informants for the study. In sum, there were seventy (70) respondents selected for the study. An analysis of the data collected showed that the NGGL's CSR has significantly contributed to the growth and development of the Asutifi North District, thereby compelling the inhabitants to respond positively, each time the company calls on them. Following these findings, it was recommended that stakeholders and government agencies should work together to design a policy on CSR, such that every sector of the economy contributes to providing total socio-economic responsibilities to improve development of Ghana.

Key Words: Corporate Social Responsibility, Mining Industry, Newmont Ghana Gold Limited.

Introduction

The classical theories treated organizations as if they were self-supporting, self-contained and self-operating (Ofori, 2007). But in practice, every organization interacts with the external environment for its growth and survival; they depend on the environment for resources, they dispose of their output to consumers in the environment, and they rely on the

environment for feedback (Opoku, 2011, p. 30). Society, on the other hand, depends on the organization for employment and for the goods and services they consume (Ofori, 2007). In this regard, it is said that all businesses are open systems whose operations affect and, are in turn, affected by the external conditions which are usually beyond the control of management (Pearce & Robinson, 2013). Thus, in order to survive and grow, management is required to protect, enhance and promote the welfare and interest of the society in which it operates. This can be manifested in various ways, including the production of safe and quality products for consumers, the creation of equal employment opportunities for all employees, the conservation and preservation of the ecology, and the support of charitable causes (Daft & Marcic, 2011). Research has also shown that the socially responsible company, when compared with less responsible competitors, tends to be more profitable and has a more loyal customers, committed work force, and better reputation from society (Aguilera, Rupp, Williams, & Ganapathi, 2007).

The extent to which a business organization must be responsible for non-economic concerns has been hotly debated in recent times. To most people, a company's willingness to incur costs that do not relate directly to the company's production of goods and services is an indication of management's realization that their activities have some negative impacts on society (Heslin & Ochoa, 2008). Other recent scholarships including Aguilera, Rupp, Williams, & Ganapathi (2007) have documented that the social concern of a business, otherwise called corporate social responsibility, is only a signal of the firm's interest in nurturing, protecting, enhancing and promoting the welfare and well-being of stakeholders, and society as a whole. The debate may continue but the reality is that social responsibility describes the firm's responsibility to its community and to the environment in which it operates. Van de Velde, Vermeir & Corten (2005), conceptualizes CSR as the commitment of a business to contribute to sustainable economic development, working with employees, their families, the local community and society at large to improve their quality of life. As a consequence, in order for a corporation to be socially responsible, it requires the commitment of management who must feel obligated to perform CSR activities to the society.

Globally, there are a substantial number of studies on the nexus that exists between a company's corporate social responsibility and peaceful community relation (Loayza, Franco, Quezada & Alvarado, 2001). This is due to the tremendous contributions the multinational corporations such as Newmont Gold Mining Corporation's provided to the local economy of countries including Peru, Bolivia, United States, Australia, Indonesia, New Zealand and Mexico (Whellams, 2007). However, in Africa, at large, and Ghana, in particular, scholars rarely looked at corporate social responsibility and community relations. Instead, much of the available studies focused on the trends of corporate social responsibility in the mining industry (Amponsah-Tawiah & Dartey-Baah, 2012), corporate social responsibility and community livelihood improvement (Hope & Kwarteng, 2014) as well as perceptions of the communities about corporate social responsibility (Brew, Junwu & Addae-Boateng, 2015). Of specific interest to this study, therefore, is to examine the influence of CSR of the Mining industry, particularly Newmont Ghana Gold Limited on company-community relation in the Asutifi North District of Ghana. In light of the above, the paper is structured as follows. First, the paper deals with the introduction, followed with

the overview of CSR activities of Gold Mining Corporation. The third section focuses on the conceptual and theoretical issues of the study. The next section examines the research methodology. This focuses on the study design and data collection procedure of the study. This is followed by the results and discussion of the study. The last section ends with a conclusion and the policy implications.

Overview of CSR Activities of Gold Mining Corporations

Globally, Gold Mining Corporations have initiated a number of CSR activities in their areas of operation. According to Acheampong (2004), Gold Mining Corporations continue to play a leading role in economic growth and development in North America. Citing an example to back his view, Acheampong (2004) reveals that, in 1993, the extractive industry's contribution to the Peruvian economy was represented by US\$240 million paid in taxes to the government; US\$400 million spent on the purchases of local materials and services; US\$280 million in imported goods, and accounted for over 11 percent of Gross Domestic Product. For example, in 2006, Newmont Gold Mining Corporation was cited as the only company among the ten largest corporations worldwide that had an overarching corporate social responsibility policy towards a peaceful company-community relation in their operational areas (Gutierrez & Jones, 2005).

In Africa, the mining industry, as part of her social responsibility activities has initiated a number of projects for promoting economic growth and development. For instance, in South Africa, gold mining companies alone, contributed 27.4 percent of mineral revenues to the government, and was also responsible for 56 percent of the country's mine labour force (Mbendi Profile, 2005). The basis of CSR remains the same everywhere, but with varying levels of emphasis in different parts of the globe (Atuguba & Dowuona, 2006). The compelling argument is that, each company responds in its own unique way to CSR issues and the extent of their response is influenced by factors such as the specific company's size, the particular industry, the firm's business culture, stakeholder demands and how historically progressive the company is, in engaging in CSR activities (Ofori, 2007).

In Ghana, gold mining contributes immensely towards the country's economic growth and development (Hilson, 2012). For example, the recent economic and financial data released by the Central Bank of Ghana revealed that gold mining companies single-handedly earned the Ghanaian government a revenue of US\$3.5 billion in 2015 (Myjoyonline, 2016). Although the Government of Ghana stands to benefit from the economic contributions of these mining companies, the activities of the mining companies often times lead to land alienation, poor compensation negotiations for land alienation and forest destruction which constantly disrupt the livelihoods of the host communities (Hilson, 2012). In addition, the mining activities also lead to the destruction of water bodies, environmental degradation, land pollution, physical dislocation of local populations and the disruption of age-old socio-cultural settings (Agbesinyale & Inkoom, 2014). Consequently, the National Coalition of Civil Society Groups Against Mining has documented that Ghana's growing foreign investment and production by the mining companies has had a devastating effect on host communities' livelihoods, environment, and human rights, which sometimes cause rampant public worries and displeasures against the companies, and thus, tend to create a room for violence, and non-violent conflicts in the form of demonstrations, written

threats to companies and withdrawal from the company's engagements (Agbesinyale & Inkoom, 2014; Newmont Ghana Gold Limited, 2016). Arguably, many scholars and stakeholders in the mining sector have debated on the validity of these assertions. The argument over the years made by the scholars and stakeholders has been that despite the economic benefits, many of their host communities are in a deplorable state (Ghana Chamber of Mines, 2012; Opoku-Antwi, Amofah & Nyamaah-Koffuor, 2012). In view of this, Dashwood & Pupilampu (2010) also alleged that notwithstanding the fact that mining companies in Ghana have operated over 100 years in Ghana, many mining communities have enjoyed little or no progress in respect of socio-economic developments, which has led to the improvement in infrastructural services in ensuring the reduction of poverty in the host communities. Therefore, in recent times, corporate social responsibility has been used by many companies in Ghana, especially the Newmont Ghana Gold Limited, which aims at responding to some of the negative effects associated with their mining activities on the host communities (Amponsah-Tawiah & Dartey-Baah, 2012).

Conceptual and Theoretical Issues

Arguments for and against corporate social responsibility

Corporate social responsibility has become a tropical concept in the corporate management parlance in recent times (Baumgartner, 2014). Advocates of corporate social responsibility argued that every business's long-term self-interest is enlightened if the company is socially responsible because corporate social responsibility is the company's payment for the negative externalities resulting from their operations (Baumgartner, 2014). According to Moon (2007), corporate social responsibility focuses on the provision of self-regulation activities to contribute to social and environmental welfare of the employees and the host communities. Such activities include volunteering work in the host communities, promoting environmental awareness and supporting local community activities. The new thinking is that corporate social responsibility serves as a way of managing risks and protects the reputation of their corporations in the host communities. Consistent with the above, Wolf & Schwindenhammer (2011) also documents that corporate social responsibility must be obligatory rather than voluntary for the corporations. The point is that, corporate social responsibility is considered in social circles as the medium for promoting company-community peaceful coexistence in the society. It is also seen as a dominant social tool for promoting local economic empowerment, and corporate reputation in the host communities.

Arko (2013) reiterates that social development activities are critical aspects of corporate social responsibility to the employees and communities in and around the corporation's operational areas. According to the author, close relationship between a corporation and the host communities is in part, gingered by corporate social responsibility. Explaining his viewpoint, Arko (2013) posits that, in South Africa, Shell Foundation's engagements in social development activities in the Flower Valley Projects led to a sustainable community development in the host communities. In his view, corporate social responsibility activities have provided much progress, and consequently have helped to build a peaceful and cordial relationship between the corporation and their surrounding communities. Freeman & Hasnaoui (2011) also argue that corporations which strategically invest in corporate social development activities are likely to achieve their corporate goals

than those that fail to be socially responsible. As noted by Freeman & Hasnaoui (2011), these social activities represent the corporation's continuing commitments to improve the quality of life of its workforce, family members, the local community and the society as a whole.

In contrast, the discussions on the rationalization of the corporate social responsibility to the host communities have been vigorously contested, even in the developed world. A study by Friedman (1993) has emphasized that corporations are not obliged to provide social responsibility activities to the communities in which the corporations operate. According to Friedman, the only responsibility of every corporation is to maximize profits for its owners or shareholders. As a result, these social problems should be handled by the central government and the unfettered workings of the free market system. Going forward, Friedman (1993) adds that in the event that the central government and the free market system cannot solve the social problems, the corporation can provide corporate social responsibility; a voluntary management decision to give back philanthropic gestures to the society to support them for what they have denied by the central government and the free market system.

In addition, Berger, Cunningham & Drumwright (2007) assert that corporations are not equipped to handle social activities of the host communities. The authors claim that managers are oriented towards finance and operations of the corporations to make profits, therefore, they do not have the necessary expertise (social skills) to make socially oriented decisions, including the provision of corporate social responsibility initiative to the host communities. For this reason, Berger, Cunningham & Drumwright (2007) warn that if corporations begin to undertake corporate social responsibility activities to their host communities, they would be likely to dilute the businesses' core strategic responsibility, and consequently could put the business into situations unrelated to the maximization of profits.

In addition, Barnett (2007) indicates that the arguments that corporations social responsibility is compulsory by many scholars are overstated. As explained by Barnett (2007), corporations are likely to be less competitive in the free market system if they focus on pursuing corporate social responsibility programmes coupled with their core corporate goal of maximizing profits. The overarching argument is that by allowing the corporation to pursue corporate social responsibility programmes, the corporation's attention is diverted to other social issues, which are not part of the primary goals of the business, hence they tend to distort corporate goals and profit maximization objectives. Corresponding to the above, Opoku (2011, p. 30), concludes that multinational mining companies must as a matter of corporate policy expected to 'remodel' themselves as good corporate citizens to the host communities, rather than seeing CSR as the responsibilities of the central government.

Integrative Theory

The theory that informs this study is the integrative theory of corporate social responsibility. The discussion of the integrative theory of corporate social responsibility has been centered on the work of Garriga & Mele (2004). The central argument of the theory is that the activities of some corporations, often-times, have a considerable amount of physical damage to the natural environment in which the people live (Garriga & Mele, 2004). It is a commonly used theory for explaining the effect of the mining activities on the social lives of the host communities. The theory is premised on the assumption that the socio-economic,

cultural and political needs of these affected communities must be integrated into the corporations' development policies. According to the theory, corporations depend on society for its existence, continuity and growth. Therefore, the corporations must respond to the needs of the host communities. This, according to the theory, is likely to help strengthen the legitimacy and prestige of the corporations in the host communities (Truscott, Bartlett & Trwaniak, 2009). It is also likely to create an enabling environment to help improve and sustain a peaceful community-corporate relationship, which is relevant for corporate growth and community development (Truscott, Bartlett & Trwaniak, 2009).

A critical analysis of the integrative theory of Frynas (2005) reveals that corporate social responsibility provides two key benefits to the corporations. The first concern is that corporations that provide corporate social responsibility activities to the host communities help in improving business profits and project sustainability. Second, corporations that engage in providing social responsibility activities to the host communities enjoy violence free working environment, which is a crucial element that tends to help the corporations to achieve greater social acceptance to improve company-community relation (Frynas, 2005).

Methodology

Study design and data collection procedure of the study

The study was conducted in the Asutifi North District of the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana. Three communities namely Kenyasi No. 1, Kenyasi No. 2 and Ntotroso were selected for the study. Fifteen (15) respondents were purposively selected from Kenyasi No.1, twenty-five (21) from Kenyasi No.2 and ten (10) from Ntotroso. In addition, there were nine (5) respondents selected from the Newmont Ahafo Development Foundation (NADeF) and Newmont Ghana Gold Limited, seven (7) from the Police service and private security, four (4) respondents from Asutifi North District Assembly, and eight (8) chiefs, elders and sub-chiefs in the selected communities were sampled for the study. Altogether, there were seventy (70) respondents. The respondents were purposively selected because they had an in-depth knowledge of the nature and effects of the **Newmont Ghana Gold Limited Social Responsibility on the host communities in the Asutifi North District of Ghana.**

Data for the study were collected from both primary and secondary sources between December 2014 and April 2016. The study adopted a qualitative case study design. The case study focused on the corporate social responsibility activities of NGGL and their effects on community relations in the Asutifi North District of Ghana, West Africa. The qualitative approach was used in both the data gathering process and data analysis, where in-depth interviews, a focus group discussion (FGD) and field observations were applied. The data obtained in the interviews were transcribed, and interpreted using discourse analysis. The case study design ensured a detailed and in-depth study of the corporate social responsibility of Newmont Ghana Gold Limited, and how that promoted company-community relations in the Asutifi North District. The FGD allowed the researchers to obtain further information from the respondents. In addition, the study also relied on some secondary literature. These included annual report of the Newmont Ahafo Development Foundation (NADeF), Newmont Ghana Gold Limited, Asutifi North District Assembly, and the Ghana Statistical Service. These secondary documents were generated from the Office of the Asutifi North

District Assembly. Other secondary literature sources included scholarly articles, books, journals, and both published and unpublished theses. These documentary analyses were obtained through the web search, as well as the Balme Library of the University of Ghana, Legon.

Results and Discussion

This section of the paper deals with the results and discussion of the study. In this section, the emerging issues and factors were grouped into themes and discussed thoroughly, using the step-by-step guide to qualitative data analysis instruction manual by O' Connor and Gibson (2003). The results and discussion section was grouped into four thematic areas as follows.

Establishment of Community Foundation Fund

One of the key corporate social responsibilities of the Newmont Ghana Gold Limited is the setting up of a community foundation fund. This fund was set up by the corporation to support various community development activities. The fund covers programmes such as the Women's Consultative Committee (WCC), Newmont Ahafo Development Foundation (NADeF), Resettlement Negotiation Committee (RNC), Agricultural Improvement and Land Access Programme (AILAP). One of the key intents of the community foundation fund is to improve economic self-sufficiency of the host communities. An interview with the Chief Executive Officer of the NGGL revealed that NGGL's Women Consultative Committee programme had helped women's group in the host communities to access loans with lower interests rates for supporting economic self-sufficiency activities. It was also observed that the NADeF, which is the offshoot of the fund, also provided financial support to local sustainable community development projects in the host communities. These beneficiary communities included Kenyasi No. 1, Kenyasi No.2 and Ntotroso.

The study further revealed that the corporation through its **Resettlement Negotiation Committee**, worked closely with host communities, government agencies and non-profit organizations to restore the livelihoods of those communities affected by their operations, while improving the quality of life of the host communities through resettlement and relocation. In addition, it was found that the **Agricultural Improvement Land Access Programme had been initiated by NGGL** to assist farmers in the host communities to improve their livelihoods. Through this programme, Newmont Ghana Gold Limited assisted the farmers to acquire new lands. They also provided free farm inputs and professional agricultural extension services to farmers (Newmont Mining Corporation, 2016). Furthermore, it was established that the project had so far spent US\$10, 000,000 on the farmers. For instance, under the projects, plantain production alone had increased from 216,713 metric tons in 2006 to 363,928 metric tons in 2010 while maize production had increased from 12,165 metric tons in 2006 to 13,103 metric tons in 2010 (Mensah, 2009).

Provision of Alternative and Sustainable Livelihood Programmes

The NGGL also provided alternative and sustainable livelihood programmes such as Vulnerable People's Programme (VPP), Skill Development for Income Improvement Program (SDIIP) and the Ahafo Linkages Programme (ALP) to the host communities. The

focus of these programmes is to reduce the communities' economic dependence on the mine, and to develop alternative and sustainable employment opportunities for the natives of the host communities. Under this programme, the NGGL engaged the services of alternative livelihood specialists and skill development projects for income improvement of the host communities. The programme further focused on the provision of vocational and animal husbandry training to community members. It also helped to train people on income generating activities such as soap making, bread and mushroom production. The programme had economically empowered many of the people in the host communities.

In addition, the Newmont's Ahafo Linkages Programme also supported the communities to improve their capacity building on local micro, small and medium scale enterprises in ensuring that the local people were well equipped to secure contracts on a competitive basis from NGGL. It was observed from the study that, the establishment of Newmont's Ahafo Linkages Programme alone had helped about 400 local businesses to gain contracts to supply materials to the NGGL in the Asutifi North District (Newmont Mining Corporation, 2016). Confirming the report, the financial controller of NADeF stated:

NGGL ensures that all the host communities benefit from its corporate social responsibility activities. In view of this, *a formal monitoring and evaluation programmes have been set up to direct the future progress of the programme towards achieving self-sufficiency and enhanced economic security of the host communities* (Fieldwork, 2015).

A sub-chief in Kenyasi No. 1 also remarked:

Currently there is peace because those whose lands were affected are compensated. Besides, many of the rural people in the host communities enjoy decent livelihood due to the NGGL alternative and sustainable livelihood programme provided to them (Fieldwork, 2015).

The results from the interview indicated that CSR activities of the NGGL had helped to improve the socio-economic well-being of the households in the host communities. This, according to the findings, had helped to promote a peaceful relationship between NGGL and the host communities in the District. The findings from the fieldwork validate Whellams' (2007) argument that Newmont's CSR initiative; Original Landowners Programme (OLP) launched in 2001 has provided the households in the host communities with employment at the mines, supported the host community children's higher education, and provided basic health and sanitary services. Besides, the Original Landowners Programme had improved housing conditions, and provided social support to families in the event of an emergency, such as death or a natural disaster, which have all helped to improve the quality of life of the original landowners and their families in the communities.

Provision of Sponsorship Programmes in the Communities and the State

The study revealed that the people in the host communities and the Government of Ghana had benefited from the NGGL's *sponsorship* programmes. For example, it was revealed that, since July 2006 to the end of June 2008, NGGL had paid a total of US\$ 19,396,729 in royalties to the Government of Ghana. The study also documented that NGGL

provided cash donations to institutions such as police administration, paid advertising, publicity programmes, promotional sponsorships, and organize other social programmes and activities in the host communities in particular, and the Asutifi North District at large. In a further interview with an opinion leader in Ntotroso, one of the host communities of the NGGL in the Asutifi North District. He remarked:

Violent and nonviolent conflicts, including a series of organised demonstrations, roadblocks, and staff attacks, which, in the past was a common phenomenon in the NGGL operation areas have stopped due to the effective delivery of the NGGL social responsibilities to the host communities and the country at large (Fieldwork, 2015).

Corresponding to the findings, it is argued that the social development packages provided by the NGGL had contributed to the peaceful relationship between the communities and NGGL in the Asutifi North District. The findings support Frynas' (2005)'s study in explaining the peaceful relationship between NGGL and the host communities in particular, and the Asutifi North District at large. According to Frynas' (2005), corporations that engage in social responsibility activities tend to enhance their business profits. It also helps the corporations to enjoy violence free working environment, which is crucial for the achievement of greater social acceptance to improve company-community relations.

Provision of community development programmes

A discussion with the youth of Kenyasi No. 2 revealed that, the NGGL had provided community development programmes to the communities. These community development programmes had positively contributed to resolve the developmental needs of the host communities, and other communities in and around the district. Findings from the interview also revealed that Newmont had constructed a building project for a chief's palace at Kenyasi No. 2, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Chief palace at Kenyasi No. 2



Source: Field Survey, 2016.

Apart from the chief's palace in Kenyasi No.2, the company had provided other developmental programmes to the host communities in the district. These development projects included the construction of school blocks to the host communities and other communities in the district. This is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Osei Kofi Abri Basic School at Kenyasi No. 1.



Source: Field Survey, 2016

A further discussions with the community respondents confirmed that the communities had benefitted from a number of other developmental projects from the NGGL in the district. According to the respondents, in Ntrotoso, NGGL had constructed classroom blocks for the nursing training college in Ntrotoso in the district. This is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Classroom block for nursing training college in Ntrotoso



Source: Field Survey, 2016.

Corresponding to the findings, it was also observed that NGGL had constructed market sheds, road network systems to the communities. The NGGL had also extended electrification projects to the rural communities in the district, provided small town water systems and the construction of borehole systems to many communities in the district. In addition, the company had constructed a number of durbar grounds, teachers' bungalows, football pitches, and community centers. It has also provided hospital suppliers to the Hwidiem Hospital.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The findings revealed that the NGGL's corporate social responsibility activities had helped to promote peace and effective company-community relation in the district. Nonetheless, in Ghana, there is no legal framework on corporate social responsibility. Following from this, it is recommended that corporate social responsibility activities need to be permanently supported by law. This is likely to help the corporations to comply with corporate social responsibility activities towards the host communities. Again, involvement of the beneficiaries in the operation and management of the NGGL corporate social responsibility activities will also help to ensure success of the programme. Finally, the Government of the Republic of Ghana must provide a well-defined method to serve as the benchmark for measuring the effectiveness of corporate social responsibility activities towards the host communities in particular, and the state at large.

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