

## **Beyond Voluntary Corporate Social Responsibility: Examining the Impact of the New Mandatory Community Development Agreement in the Mining Sector of Sierra Leone**

**Authors :** Wusu Conteh

**Abstract :** Since the 1990s, neo-liberalization has become a global agenda. The free market ushered in an unprecedented drive by Multinational Corporations (MNCs) to secure mineral rights in resource-rich countries. Several governments in the Global South implemented a liberalized mining policy with support from the International Financial Institutions (IFIs). MNCs have maintained that voluntary Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has engendered socio-economic development in mining-affected communities. However, most resource-rich countries are struggling to transform the resources into sustainable socio-economic development. They are trapped in what has been widely described as the 'resource curse.' In an attempt to address this resource conundrum, the African Mining Vision (AMV) of 2009 developed a model on resource governance. The advent of the AMV has engendered the introduction of mandatory community development agreement (CDA) into the legal framework of many countries in Africa. In 2009, Sierra Leone enacted the Mines and Minerals Act that obligates mining companies to invest in Primary Host Communities. The study employs interviews and field observation techniques to explicate the dynamics of the CDA program. A total of 25 respondents -government officials, NGOs/CSOs and community stakeholders were interviewed. The study focuses on a case study of the Sierra Rutile CDA program in Sierra Leone. Extant scholarly works have extensively explored the resource curse and voluntary CSR. There are limited studies to uncover the mandatory CDA and its impact on socio-economic development in mining-affected communities. Thus, the purpose of this study is to explicate the impact of the CDA in Sierra Leone. Using the theory of change helps to understand how the availability of mandatory funds can empower communities to take an active part in decision making related to the development of the communities. The results show that the CDA has engendered a predictable fund for community development. It has also empowered ordinary members of the community to determine the development program. However, the CDA has created a new ground for contestations between the pre-existing local governance structure (traditional authority) and the newly created community development committee (CDC) that is headed by an ordinary member of the community.

**Keywords :** community development agreement, impact, mandatory, participation

**Conference Title :** ICNRMBC 2020 : International Conference on Natural Resources Management and Biodiversity Conservation

**Conference Location :** New York, United States

**Conference Dates :** December 10-11, 2020