Analyzing the Long Term Legacy of Corporate Social Responsibility on Community Development

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In an attempt to soften public opinion, many mining companies have engaged in community based programmes to offset the negative externalities that arise due to mining operations in the global south. These social programmes and community based initiatives are often referred to as corporate social responsibility (CSR). This may relate to the social roles that are traditionally conducted by the private sector, such as employment safety standards and skill enhancement training for employees, or it may refer to programmes that are traditionally facilitated by the public sector, such as health, education and local infrastructure projects. Naturally, there is a temporal limitation to this form of corporate implemented social welfare. Following the closure of mining operations, CSR programmes are also phased out, leaving a void in social programming if the government and/or the third sector (the non-profit sector) are unable to replace these corporate sponsored projects.

This research will examine the positive and negative legacies left by CSR programmes, as well as the host community’s ability to sustain and build upon the benefits of past CSR programmes. Additionally, it will examine how mining companies help communities transition their social, political and economic institutions following the closure of a mine. In order to do so, the author will work with governmental, non-governmental, private and grassroots organizations, in a number of different communities within a given region, to analyze the change in quality of community based services. There will also be an in depth analysis of these local economies in order to determine if corporate social policies have helped develop community led economic drivers, and the potential for long term growth.