

An Analysis of Civil Society Organisations Advocating for Adequate Bauxite Mining in Boke Region (Western Guinea)

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Abstract: This research paper investigates Civil Society Organisations engagement in responding to Bauxite Mining Activity's Environment and Social problems at the grassroots in the Boké region and proffer feasible recommendations to improve engagements in address community problems. In another Word, it evaluates the extent of few Civil Society Organisations actions and limits in advocating for adequate bauxite mining in the Boké region. Boké is Guinea's bauxite mining region. Since 1974, mining activity is ongoing in the region. Interestingly, the activity has extremely increased in the past decade with numerous bauxite mining companies. That phenomenal bauxite production in the Boké mining zone has called the attention of some Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). Notably, Protection and Management of Environment (PEG), Human Rights Watch (HRW), some Journalists like Moussa Moise SYLLA (Espace FM) Akoumba DIALLO and Mining specialists like Julien BRYGO, S. souare (EnviroAfrica). In response to this society problem, few CSOs are developing few responses to help local communities impacted by mining. Unfortunately, those action are not more enough considering the Environmental and Social Management needs in the Boké region. Though there are few formal and informal Management attempt actions. But, those management attempt actions must be exclusively formal, with synergy actions of Guinean government, Boké Mining Companies, Civil Society Organisations and especially Boké's local community who is enduring the direct and the indirect impacts of Mining.

Keywords: Bauxite Mining in Boké Region, Civil Society Organisations, Adequate Mining, Environmental and Social Management Needs

1. Introduction

The World Aluminum source is bauxite and Bauxite is the primary ore of Aluminium and Aluminum is the finished product extracted from bauxite mineral. The West African country of Guinea holds the World 2/3 bauxite reserve.

Boké is Guinea's bauxite mining region. It is located in western Guinea, bordered by the countries of Sénégal and Guinée-Bissau and the Guinean regions of Kindia and Labé. Its capital is the city of Boké. Boké Region is the home to a great part of Guinea's aluminium (or bauxite) reserves.

Since 1974, mining activity is ongoing in the region. Interestingly, the activity has extremely increased in the past decade with numerous bauxite mining companies. Approximately 10 of them are in the Boké region. Among them, the Société Minière de Boké/Boké Mining Company (SMB), Compagnie des bauxites de Guinée/Guinea bauxite

company (CBG), Guinea Alumina Corporation (GAC) and Compagnie des bauxites de Kindia/Kindia bauxite company (RUSAL). These above majors Mining Companies are hugely exploiting bauxite in Boké, which made Guinea on 24 November 2020, the second-largest bauxite producer in the world [13].

Guinea holds substantial world-class reserves of bauxite, both in terms of quality and quantity, and was the world's second highest Producer of the ore in 2020 [10]. With the recent entry of a number of new industrial players into production and an increase in the production capacity of its current operators, the country has the capacity to reach an annual production level of 60 up to 80 million tons, with the ultimate goal of producing 100 million tons per year.

That bauxite mining boom in Boké is increasing Boké's local population exponentially. People rush towards the region for seeking a decent and sustainable job. In 2010,

Boké's population was 61,449 people. In 2014, the population of the region increased to 1,559,185 people [12]. The situation is beyond that today. Boké bauxite mining impacts the physical environment. Among the impacts in Boké, water pollution, depletion of water bodies, environment degradation, air pollution, sonorous pollution due to (blasting Mining, heavy machines), oil pollution (Used Machines) [9].

Despite the growth in economic activity however, Guinea's bauxite mining heartland has been racked by unrest in recent years, fueled by the frustrations of the local population. Guinea's fast-growing bauxite mining industry is threatening the livelihoods of several Guineans. Mining has destroyed ancestral farmlands, damaged water sources and coated homes and trees in dust [4]. In addition, Bauxite Mining boom has also another Social negative impacts as food price higher (rice, fruit, mangoes, orange, bananas etc.). Quick and easy spread of some contagious diseases in the region (Covid-19, HIV, Gonococcus).

1.1. Research Objective

The overall objective of this research is to investigate CSOs engagement in responding to social and environmental problems at the grassroots and proffer feasible recommendations to improve engagements in address community problems.

Specific objectives include:

- Evaluates the influence of CSOs activities on the operation of mining companies,

- To articulate lessons from the work of CSOs in Boke in address the impact of Bauxite mining in the region.

- To make recommendations to other CSOs on how to respond effectively in addressing the social and environmental impacts in communities.

1.2. Research Questions

- How are CSOs and local communities responding to address the impact of mining activities in Boké?

- In what ways have the activities of CSOs influenced the operations of the Mining Companies in Boké

- What lessons can we take from the work on CSOs in Boké and

- What recommandations can we propose to CSOs to improve their response measures in addressing social and environmental problems in communities?

2. Short General Overview of Mining Activity Impacts

Mining activities produce acidic water, which increases heavy metals solubility and causes harm to the marine ecosystem, particularly at pH5 and below. Heavy metals from blasting mining affect groundwater, drinking and irrigation water can also easily be polluted by blasting mining. The mining related environmental issues include air, water and soil pollution. It is leaching into water sources, reduces soil

fertility and affects agricultural food produce and aquatic life. Mined minerals treatment process exposure affects the Heath of miners. It easily affects community Heath such as frequent respiratory symptoms and contamination of drinking water.

2.1. Environment Impact

The environmental impacts of bauxite mining are evident in the air, water and soil. As air pollutant bauxite dust interferes with the visibility [8], it settles on plants, food, and airways. It causes chronic cardio-respiratory problems [3]. Bauxite and heavy metals in river sediments can be taken up by aquatic animals or plants, affecting different food chain levels [7]. Cause soil pollution by affecting the fertile topsoil, and even the restoration methods could not reverse barren soil to its original fertile status [2]. The plants absorb heavy metals from the soil, triggering consumer food safety issues [4]. The destruction of habitat affects the diversity of flora and fauna, which is a distinct feature of tropical forest countries [5].

2.2. Social Impact

The short term effects of bauxite mining are associated with dust exposure and vector-borne diseases, whereas chronic effects are due to dust particles which contaminate food and water and result in lung infections or ailments [6]. The other hazard is leaching of heavy metals and bauxite products into water, exerting chronic effects on adults and children, such as nerve and renal toxicity, cardiovascular conditions and delayed nerve development with high risk of cancer and death [1]. Noise affects the Heath of populations living close to bauxite mines, with lowered hearing sensitivity and increased noise induced hearing loss [5]. All these impacts cause mental stress among neighbouring communities.

2.3. Bauxite Mining Activities

Bauxite is generally extracts by open cast mining, being almost always found near the surface, with processes that vary slightly depending on the location. Before mining can commence the land needs to be cleared of timber and vegetation.

2.4. Bauxite Mining in Guinea

Guinea has an abundance of natural resources, including the world's largest bauxite reserves. The demand for Guinean bauxite in global markets has increased in recent years as other countries, notably Indonesia and Malaysia, banned exports, in the latter case partly due to the industry's environmental impact. Guinea is already the biggest exporter of bauxite to China, the world's largest aluminium producer. And with several new mining projects ongoing, Guinea's bauxite boom shows no sign of slowing down.

Guinea has the largest bauxite deposit in the world. Unfortunately, the successful governments of the country are not yet cable to transform that natural resources to develop the country. Bauxite is refined into Aluminum which in turn

is used for high grade manufacturing. The total discovered bauxite reserves in Guinea stand at 7.4 tons [11]. Total estimated reserves stand at 40 million tons (GMM, 2016). Bauxite reserves are located in central and Western Guinea in the Boké region, precisely in Sangarédi, Katougouma, Télémélé and Tinguilita. The tenor of Aluminum oxide (Al_2O_3) contents in Guinea's bauxite is estimated to be 60 to 70% (GMM).

Mining is Guinea's leading economic force with the large-scale extraction of bauxite and gold responsible for around 13% of its GDP in May 2020. However, according to the Human Development Index, Guinea is ranked 175th of 189 countries and Africa's poorest. Guinea has been experiencing extractive activities for more than a decade. Since 1974, bauxite mining is ongoing in the country. But, ironically, the country's mining governance policy is still weak. Some talk about its inexistence due to its weakness. In Guinea, the media and the parliament are traditional and formal institutes responsible for advocating adequate mining, especially for compliance of mining companies with national legislation and international standards.

2.5. Impact of Bauxite Mining

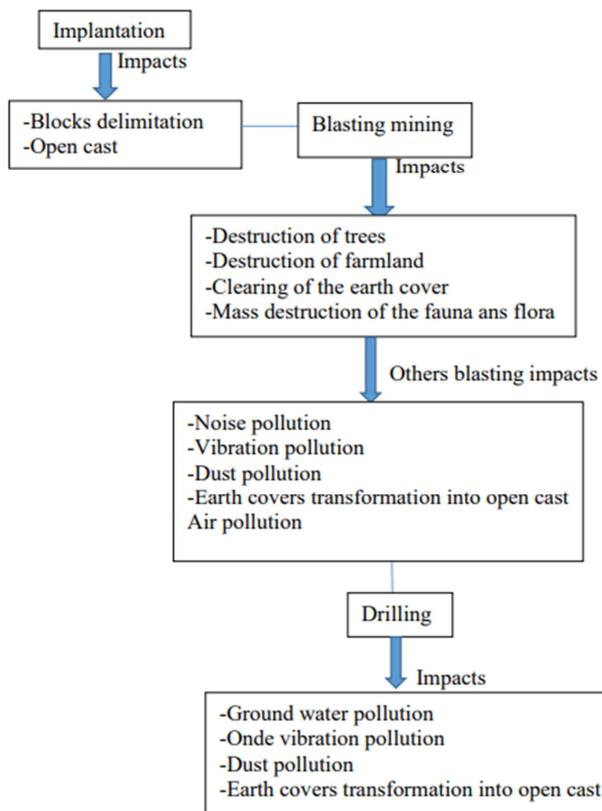


Figure 1. Adapted from Author's previous' publication 2021.

Bauxite mining process impact on physical environment at each stage of Mining.

2.6. Role of Civil Society Organisation in Bauxite Mining

Since May 2013, after wide consultations in Resource Rich countries participation in Extractive Industry

Transparency Initiative (EITI), the International NGO is working in Guinea on Extractive Sector for revenue transparency and include contextual information about fiscal regimes, relevant laws and regulations. But, It work seems to be more technical, buraucratic not accessible to common local community. It doesn't take in account Environmental and Social impacts dimension of Mining. It is more or less focus on government its and revenu received from Mining Companies.

La coalition Guinéenne publiez ce que vous payez (PCQVP), Guinea Coalition of Publish What You Pay (GCPWYP), in partnership with OSIWA (Open Society Institute in West Africa), working in Guinea Extractive Sector in order to compliance with the legal obligations of the mining operators on the payment of surface royalties, on mining permits renewable conditions, on the contribution of projects to local development and environmental issues. Especially as far as rehabilitation of sites at the end exploitation operations is concerned. But, again, these actions are more or less technical and bureaucratic in the sense that when one goes to Boké mining region, one cannot see neither grassroots result of this.

CNOSCG: Conseil National des Organisations de la Société Civile Guinéenne (National council for Civil Society Organisations in Guinea) recently regrouped under new umbrella organisations called CONASOC: Coalition Nationale des Organisations de la Société Civile Guinéenne (National Coalition of Civil Society Organisations in Guinea), often denounce mining companies Environmental and Social bad practices on private medias but rarely takes concrete action on the ground.

This research paper investigates Civil Society Organisations engagement in responding to social and environmental problems in the recent story of Guinea's bauxite mining. CSOs addressing and advocating for adequate bauxite mining. CSOs like CONASOC: Coalition Nationale des Organisations de la Société Civile Guinéenne (National Coalition of Civil Society Organisations in Guinea) Guinea Ecology, Carbon Guinea, Development for all, NGO PEG, OGDH (Guinean Organisation for Human and Citizen Right Protection), HRW, International Federation for Human Right (IFH). This research paper identifies and focuses on actions done by these CSOs and the positive impacts on Boké physical environment and Local Community.

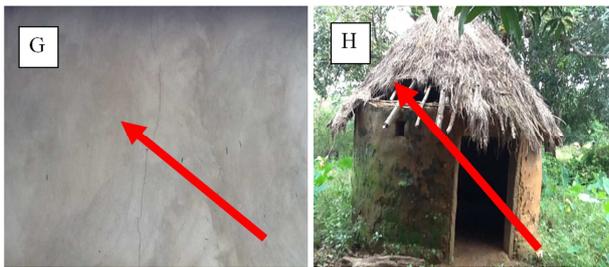
3. Research Methodology

Key informant interview was the method of this research. The qualitative in-depth data collection was collected, Interviews and focus group discussions were the tools used. 5 CSOs presupposed advocating for adequate bauxite mining were selected (PEG, Guinea-Carbon, CONASOC: Coalition Nationale des Organisations de la Société Civile Guinéenne (National Coalition of Civil Society Organisations in Guinea) Informal local association at the national level and Human Right Watch). 150 people (Adults men and women), were randomly selected in 15 villages within the Boké's LC and

scarcity in the area. 80% also believe that blasting mining is contributing to respiratory illnesses and worry about longer-term health impacts.

4.2. Physical Blasting Mining Impact in Boké in Sangaredi Household

In Sangaredi its and surrounding villages, 50% of respondents mentioned that blasting bauxite mining physically impacts on their Huts and houses. According to them, this blasting bauxite mining method provokes crack on their building and even destroys some. That statement made is also illustrated by captured images in the Sangaredi chef town.



Source: Author's field work 2021

Figure 5. Crack and hut destruction due to blasting mining in Sangaredi chef town.

In response to «Are any CSOs involved in the management of the Social and environmental impacts or Advocating for impacts management?» 80% of respondents from Malapouyah, Mankountan, Tougoufili, Kolia, Tanènè, Sangarédi town, Missira, Hamdallayi and Tinguilita villages mentioned that, there are not aware of any Civil Society Organisations management actions whereas in the large chef town of Boké sous-prefecture and Kamsar, 20% were able to mention NGO PEG (Protection et Gestion de l'Environnement), Guinea-Ecology management actions, Human Right Watch and Guinean Organisation for Human and Citizen Right Protection management actions.

«What recommendation(s) will you give to Civil Society Organisations trying to respond to social and environmental impact of development activities like mining in the more affected communities?» In response to this above question, the frequent response from respondents was “we appeal to Civil Society Organisations to come help us become our land owner again. Almost 75% mentioned this. Whereas 20% mentioned the need of help to have clean water in their wells like before within the neighbourhood. The need of building more schools, hospitals, as social damages compensation. Majority of this was women. And an handful group of men which means 5% of men mentioned the need of restoration of exploited bauxite mining sites for farmlands”

5. Civil Society Concrete Actions for Adequate Mining in Boko

Ironically, civil society organisations are not numerous

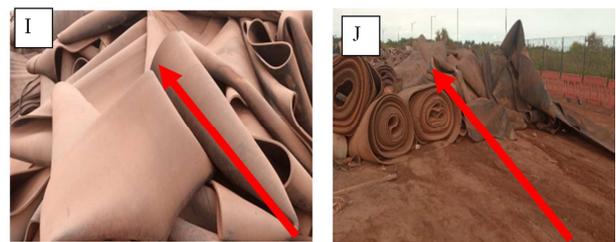
who intervened or intervening in mining domain in Guinea. In 2021, over 101 CSOs exist and operating within the country. Rare among them who are specifically operating or constantly advocating for adequate bauxite mining. Despite the fact that Guinea is a mining country and this mining activity has been going on within the country more than 4 decades. And likely, mining activities will be ongoing in the country for next 4 decades based on the fact, that the resources are available and the market demand. In addition to ITIE (Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative), who is constantly watching and working for transparency in the management of revenue generated by mining sector but its more focus work is transparency in management of revenue generated by mining not its social and environmental management or local community protection. The few CSOs found by this research who are attempting to minimise the negative Environmental and Social impacts of Bauxite Mining in Boké are: NGO PEG, Guinea-Ecology, and some Informal local association at the national level and Human Right Watch who is recently advocating at the International level.

5.1. Environmental Impacts Management of Bauxite Mining by CSOs in Boké

Case of NGO PEG, a non-profit organisation

PEG is a non-profit organisation who recently specialised in recycling Rubber Residue abandoned by Mining companies. Bauxite mining companies use rubber in the pre-processing of mineral. The used rubbers are often thrown or incinerated by the companies later. The NGO PEG has specialised in recycling those rubbers into different items for sustainable development goal achievement and for the well-being of local community.

This is an abandoned deposit of used rubbers, use GAC as conveyor of bauxite in pre-processing bauxite from exploitation site to exportation port.



Source: Author's field work 2021

Figure 6. Used and abandoned rubber of GAC (Guinea Alumina Company).

PEG is a national NGO who is involved in environmental protection and management actions for well-being local community living around the mining zones. In this year 2021, PEG has cleared and recycled 94 tons of used rubber transported from the GAC Company site to its regional siege of Kamsar. Here is some recycling and management actions in GAC Company site in Kamsar che town.



Source: Author’s field work 2021

Figure 7. PEG member processing abandoned rubber of GAC (Guinea Alumina Company).



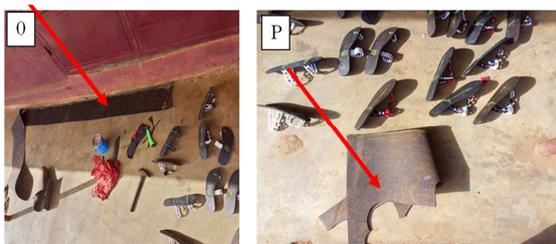
Source: Author’s field work 2021

Figure 8. PEG member processing abandoned rubber of GAC (Guinea Alumina Company).

The NGO PEG requests from Bauxite Mining Companies huge used rubbers which are deposit in large volume on environment, taking an important space and damaging physical environment.

With its motto: The Protection of the Environment must be a concern of all, the PEG has specialised in the recycling of used rubbers/conveyors that are (non-biodegradable), coming from mining companies during the bauxite production. Mainly, rubbers/conveyors from CBG, RUSAL and most recently GAC.

The abandoned rubbers recycled in shoes and other items for well-being of local community and environmental and social protection.



Source: Author’s field work 2021

Figure 9. Used and abandoned rubber recycled in local and traditional shoes for LC.



Source: Author’s field work 2021

Figure 10. Used and abandoned rubber recycled in local and traditional shoes for LC.

5.2. Environmental Impacts Management of Bauxite Mining by CSOs in Boké

Case of Informal local organisation

The Youths of 100 persons from different villages in Boffa, Bintimodiya, Sansalé, Kolaboui, Dabiss, Kanfarandé, and Kamkar town, came together and launched a campaign for the rehabilitation of the sites exploited. Assisted in their action by community in reforestation of the Bel Air Mining zone. That is making progressive rehabilitation in the zone. Their activity consisted of rehabilitating post-mining sites. By that rehabilitation and management actions in the year 2021, an area of 24 hectares was rehabilitated with 58,000 plants exclusively local species. And that, not only on the exploited sites but, also on some potential degraded habitats of chimpanzees and other protected wildlife species. Most of plants species used is cashew plant which has restoration and commercial benefits. Here is cashew plant nursery for reforestation in the Bel-Air Mining zone in Boffa.

5.3. Social Impacts Management of Bauxite Mining by CSOs in Boké

Case of Guinea-Carbon, a non-profit organisation

The focus areas of their activities are Environmental Education, Natural Resource Management and Habitat, Climate change, Capacity Building of Community Based Organisations, Local Authorities and Access to Water, Hygiene and Sanitation, Health and Education. But, with these marvellous above focus area Guinea-Carbon, there are very few if no none action on the ground of this ambitious CSO. A part from some sensitisation of LC community on the danger of abusive mangrove cut. We found this as Social positive impact Management of bauxite Mining.

5.4. Social Impacts Management of Bauxite Mining by CSOs in Boké

Case of Human Right Watch, a non-profit International Civil Society Organisation Advocating for Adequate Bauxite Mining in Boké (Western Guinea).

Human Right Watch is an International civil society organisation committed for compliance of Voluntary Principles in Bauxite Mining in Guinea. In November 2012, Human Rights Watch became a member of the Voluntary Principles Association when it transitioned into a new governance structure.

For the past two years, Human Rights Watch has repeatedly called upon the government of Guinea to adopt and implement the Voluntary Principles. The Human Rights Watch still continues to engage in Guinea’s bauxite sector. It examined in detail in an October 2018 report entitled “What Do We Get out of It?” The Human Rights Watch conducted additional field research in March 2019 in the Boké region, where much of Guinea’s bauxite boom is located, and continues to scrutinise the efforts of Guinea’s largest mining companies to improve their environmental and social practices. It also engages in research and advocacy in the country for application of voluntary principles in Mining sector.

The HRW submitted on January 2020, to the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on Guinea, a report in which it recommended the Committee to call upon the government of Guinea to adopt and fully implement the standards of the Voluntary Principles in bauxite mining sector.

6. Recommendation

6.1. To the Guinean Government

Guinean government should constantly be involved and monitored the bauxite Mining Activity in the region.

The government should start by adopting regulations which have been too late since the arrival of the 2011 mining code with a uniform compensation system and standards for land acquisitions in the mining sector.

The government should also, with the support of international donors, strengthen government institutions at the national and local levels so that they can ensure effective and more regular control over mining companies.

6.2. To CSO

Guinean CSOs might give special attention to this phenomenal bauxite mining boom in Boké and call nation and international opinion on its impacts.

As the bauxite boom in Guinea continues and will continue for the next years, it is imperative that CSOs continue to strengthening their capacity to oversee the mining sector and protect the rights of the communities.

CSOs should do a periodic and corporate monitoring reports and make it available to public.

CSOs and Independent Researcher should multiply Research in Boké Mining zone in order to determine the extends of bauxite mining negative impacts on water, air, health qualities, on physical environment... That will surely call national and international public attention.

6.3. To LC

Local communities might organise themselves in formal organisation in order to raise found from Mining Companies and face the Mining negative impacts within their communities.

The LC control the 15% of mining taxes intended for local

authorities, and local economic development fund-FODEL for the localities bordering the mines, the (0.5% or 1% of the turnover of the companies), must be wisely well used and free from local chef's embezzlement.

Local Communities might choose youths as community leaders to raise their cases in front of government and Mining Companies.

7. Conclusion

The literature review of this paper has discussed the Environmental and Social negative impacts of bauxite mining that occur by ecosystem destruction, impacting air and water resources quality, food and soil quality, health quality along with flora and fauna living around Boké mining sites. In Boké, Bauxite Mining Activities has Environmental and Social negative impacts. CSOs are not numerous who actively working, advocating for adequate mining. Though there are few formal and informal organisations who periodically intervened. Many much more must be done by CSOs and Independent Researchers in order to bring positive change in the domain.

List of Acronyms

CBG: Compagnie des bauxites de Guinée (Guinea Bauxite Mining Company).

CNOSCG: Conseil National des Organisations de la Société Civile Guinéenne (National council for Civil Society Organisations in Guinea).

CONASOC: Coalition Nationale des Organisations de la Société Civile Guinéenne (National Coalition of Civil Society Organisations in Guinea).

GAC: Guinea Alumina Company

HRW: Human Right Watch

LC: Local Community

MMG: Ministère des Mines et la Géologie (Ministry of Mines and Geology).

NGO PEG: Protection et Gestion de l'Environnement (Protection and Management of Environment).

OSC: Organisation de la Société Civile (Civil Society Organisations).

SMB: Société Minière de Boké (Boké Mining Company).

Appendix: Questionnaires Scheduled for Csos

Name of the CSO

Does bauxite mining in Boké region have any Social and Environmental impact?

If yes, what is/are the major impact?

Social:

.....

Environmental:

.....

Are you or any other organization involved in the response of the Social and environmental impacts? If your organisation is

responding, how are you involved in the management of each impact?

Social:

.....

Environmental:

.....

Name of other organisation you are aware are responding to the impact?

Please explain how they are responding if known.

How successful are these attempts? What was the result of the response action of your organisation?

Please provide for each impact.

Social:

.....

Environmental:

.....

What factors contributed to the attained results?

.....

Was/were there any obstacle you face in implementing the activity? Accomplishment of this success story? What was/were major one and how do you overcome them?

.....

What are some of the lessons you have learned from this?

.....

If you are to implement this project again, what will you do better to receive positive results?

.....

What other recommendation (s) will you give to other civil society organisations responding to social and environmental impact in their country?

.....

.....

QUESTIONNAIRES SCHEDULED FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES LIVING AROUND THE MINING SITES.

Has the bauxite mining industry invested in your community?

If yes, what types of Investment?

.....

.....

Does bauxite mining in your locality have any Social and Environmental impact?

If yes, what is/are the major impacts?

Social:

.....

Environmental:

.....

Are any CSOs involved in the management of the Social and environmental impacts or Advocating for impacts management?

If yes, how are they involved or influencing on impact?

.....

.....

4. Do you think the work of the CSOs has been successful or failed to mitigate the impact of the Bauxite Mining Activities?

Please give at least one example?

.....

Example 1:

.....

.....

...

Example 2:

.....

.....

.....

5. What recommendation (s) will you give to Civil Society Organisations trying to respond to social and environmental impact of development activities like Mining in affected communities?

.....

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