

Impacts of ‘Galamsey’ on Drainage and Sanitation in the Mining Communities of Tarkwa, Ghana

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SUMMARY

The effects of ‘galamsey’ on the environment has been a cause for concern for government, environmentalist, health workers, socialists, engineers and other stakeholders in the mining industry of Ghana for sometime now, and investigations have been underway to access the impacts on various aspects of the physical and socioeconomic environment. This paper gives an overview of galamsey operations in Ghana and examines its impacts on drainage and sanitation in Tarkwa and its surrounding mining communities. The methods used include literature review on the subject, direct field visits, observations and interview at galamsey sites in the study area and measurements of the geographic locations of the sites. Things observed include the locations of the site relative to water courses, nature of topography, structures like residential buildings, roads, rail lines and refuse dumps in the area and evidence of impacts of galamsey operations on these. The observations were analyzed and discussed against conditions that existed prior to the intensive operations by galamsey. The Study reports that galamsey activities have dire consequences on drainage and sanitation problems in the communities where they are prevalent, such as the Tarkwa areas. There is the need for galamsey and its negative impacts on the environment to be monitored regularly in order to apply mitigation measures at appropriate periods.