AngloGold Ashanti driving social-economic development in Geita, Tanzania

The residents of Geita region in Tanzania were until 2000 not seeing much benefits from the mining sector, despite that their region is one of the most endowed regions in terms of minerals in Tanzania. The industry was not contributing much in social sectors such as healthcare, education, road infrastructure and entrepreneurship.

Enter Geita Gold Mining Limited (GGML) sustainable social investment pillar which amplifies the Africa Mining Vision (AMV) to support local communities and the fortunes of Geita changed for the better.

AMV, Africa’s own response to tackling the paradox of great mineral wealth existing side by side with pervasive poverty, was coined by Heads of State at the February 2009 African Union (AU) summit. This means GGML started implementing the AMV long before it was accepted by the AU.

Since its inception in 2000, Geita Gold Mining Limited adopted an approach of ensuring that the communities around the operation are better off for the Company being there. The AMV’s strategic goal of thinking outside the “mining box” by integrating mining into development policies at local, national and regional levels, which came later was a timely catalyst. This has seen the company leverage on strategic partnerships with local government authorities and other stakeholders to drive inclusive socio-economic development in Geita.

Strategic investments to fight Covid-19

However, it is the ensuing Covid-19 pandemic that has actually exposed how GGML is championing AMV goal to eradicate poverty through strategic investments.

As a unique and responsible business entity, Geita Gold Mining Limited (GGML) has rolled out a series of interventions to stop the spread of Covid-19 within and beyond its area of operation. The interventions are aimed at minimising the impact on public health and to limit disruptions to economies and lives of Tanzanians.

“GGML has already donated Tsh1.1 billion to national level interventions through the Covid-19 Emergency Fund set up under the Prime Minister’s Office,” confirms Simon Shayo, Vice President - Sustainability at GGML. “The remaining Tsh500 million will be used to support regional and community interventions in Geita, including the provision of key medical supplies and equipment such as PPE, ventilators and oxygen masks,” Mr. Shayo added.

GGML has donated 37 hand washing facilities with the capacity of 1000 liters each for public hand washing in various parts of Geita town, and chlorine which has replaced liquid soap at the facilities. These facilities are designed to serve everyone, including those with special needs, such as children and people with disabilities. While receiving the donations, Geita Town Public Health Officer, Mr. Japheth Masesa thanked GGML for the support.

“I encourage everyone to not take this opportunity for granted. We must demonstrate that we appreciate the efforts our partners in development are putting in ensuring that we all remain safe during, and even after this pandemic. Let us all make good use of this service,” said Mr. Masesa.

Recognition by Government

GGML’s strategic economic investment and support to local communities in Geita has not been without notice of the government. While on a short tour in Geita town, Minister for Minerals, Dorio Biteko commended Geita Gold Mining Limited (GGML) for the various projects being implemented in collaboration with the local authorities. The Minister highlighted that the government’s intention is to see areas with mineral resources, including Geita transforming lives and the economy of the surrounding communities.

“I have been impressed. We have already achieved our target of Tsh400 billion of revenue collection from the mining sector. Most of Geita region’s contribution in the revenue comes from Geita Gold Mining Limited. It is very encouraging now that the sector contributes more than five percent in the GDP of our economy,” said Mr. Biteko.

Some of the projects that GGML is partnering with the government is the Special Economic Investment zone which will be managed by the Export Processing Zone Authority (EPZA) and the Geita Town Council. Other strategic projects include the educational and health facilities construction, Geita Central and Katundu Market Frames, and the Agro-processing project that aims at improving the quality and quantity of agricultural output for famers in Geita district, focusing on rice and sunflower.

As a responsible corporate citizen, GGML spends about Tsh9.2 billion annually on community projects in Geita region. GGML Vice President for Sustainability, Simon Shayo said that the execution of these projects is part of the company’s Corporate Social Responsibility program which has been practiced since the GGML started its business in Tanzania.

“One of our Company’s core values is to ensure that the communities receive tangible benefits for hosting our business. That is why we have been investing in social and economic development since 2000 when the operation started. The Company has achieved a significant milestone in terms of Corporate social responsibility initiatives thanks to support and guidance provided by the government. The execution of the CSR projects and similar other initiatives is a clear testimony that partnership formed by the company, the government, and the host communities can work together to improve livelihoods through investing in priority socio-economic infrastructure and services,” said Mr. Shayo.

Targeted development projects in Geita

In 2018, GGML supported the installation of solar-powered street lights along the main roads in Geita town, construction of the state-of-the-art tower at the Geita Town roundabout, and a sunflower processing factory. The company also funded the construction of a modern market facility for Geita town, and the completion and roofing of more than 600 health and education infrastructures.

“In 2018, GGML was the first mining company in Tanzania to develop and implement a credible CSR plan in line with section 105 of Written Laws (Miscellaneous Amendments) No. 7 of 2017 which amends the Mining Act No. 14 of 2010,” said Mr. Shayo.

In 2018, the company invested Tsh9.2 billion to fund socio-economic development projects, and a similar amount is being invested annually for the purpose since then. We intend to create a legacy and support the government’s initiatives to create a sustainable economy which can outlive the mining activities in Geita. While supporting the economic development GGML will also continue working with various stakeholders to improve education and health infrastructures and all other areas that are deemed a priority by the government.

Areas that have so far benefitted from the CSR funding include the purchase of medical and surgical equipment for Bukoli and Katoro healthcenters, funding for cleft lip operations for children and adults, construction of 34 out-patient centers and five housing units for healthcare workers, fully-equipping of the outpatient department of a health center, equipping Kasuta health center and purchase of malaria diagnostic equipment. Other projects also include the construction of a healthcare facilities in prisons and to streamline healthcare services delivery for prisoners in Geita.

The Geita water supply project provides potable water to Geita Town residents by way of domestic connections and public access. When the project was initiated in 2012, only 3% of residents had access to clean and safe water but, as a result of the project, by January 2016, that figure had risen to 36%.

The Geita Town residents by way of domestic connections and public access. When the project was initiated in 2012, only 3% of residents had access to clean and safe water but, as a result of the project, by January 2016, that figure had risen to 36%.

A nurse attending to a motheratina clinic built by GGML in partnership with Geita District Council.