

Peer Review

# Review of: "A Congolese Mining Giant's Corporate Social Responsibility Stuck Between False Pretense and Bricolage: Going Beyond a Logic of Do No Harm to Materialize Sustainable Development Still at Issue"

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The paper evaluates the impact of Tenke Fungurume Mining's (TFM) CSR initiatives on the local socioeconomic dynamics of the community. Using a mixed method that combines household budget and group discussion analyses provides evidence of the impacts of the company's CSR policies and practices on the community's socioeconomic lives. The findings highlight socioeconomic challenges faced by local communities in response to the CSR development initiatives implemented by the company. The paper could contribute to CSR literature, particularly in the context of developing countries and the experiences of indigenous people around the mining vicinity.

While the submission is of broad potential interest, it requires significant work to be publishable. First, the authors should clearly articulate the objective of the paper. Currently, it is unclear what the purpose of the paper is. While the authors state that the paper aims to evaluate TFM's CSR initiatives on the local socioeconomic aspects of the community, they also suggest that the objective is to critically analyse the policies and their consistencies. These are distinct aims; thus, it is unclear whether the four sub-research questions proposed by the authors have been adequately answered throughout the paper.

Second, the authors' literature is built upon a greater public expectation of CSR, leading to the concept of Social License to Operate in the mining industry and the inability of multinational companies to

achieve it, showing double standards and short-term solutions to address socioeconomic issues at the grassroots level. Little research on the socioeconomic impact and a lack of independent audit is the point made by the authors, further highlighting that the present CSR literature is fragmented and lacks replication findings. While the present literature is still inadequate to frame the paper, increased engagement with CSR literature in developing country contexts, particularly within perspectives of Indigenous communities, will benefit this paper significantly and further benefit the contexts of these types of countries the research focuses on. Presently, the literature does not distinguish between these types of countries nor highlight CSR literature in the context of the Indigenous communities. The work of Jamali and Karan (2018) on CSR in developing countries as an emerging field of study might align with the authors' interest, as they aim to illuminate CSR literature in developing countries that are mostly different from their developed counterparts.

The paper presents local voices of the community within the mining vicinity from focus group discussions; therefore, greater engagement with the CSR literature in the context of the Indigenous communities is highly essential here. While most CSR literature on CSR comes from the so-called developed countries where Indigenous communities live as colonial subjects, highlighting the lack of Indigenous participation in CSR, CSR literature in developing countries presents complex relationships between mining companies, governments, and non-government actors which present challenges to pursuing more sustainable community-led CSR activities that meet the desires of local people near mining operations. The work of Jamali & Karam (2018) and Maconachie and Hilson (2013) highlight many of the pertinent issues that probably interest the authors.

While the authors did quote Hilson's (2012) work on CSR in developing countries, and Gilberthorpe and Banks' (2012) work on CSR practices in Papua New Guinea, a stronger emphasis on CSR issues in these contexts is vital to addressing socioeconomic issues faced by Indigenous people. Expanding literature covering these issues would greatly enhance the depth of this paper.

Methodology: The household budget analysis captures all sources of income (including those not issued by the project); however, it is unclear whether the analysis effectively addresses its objective. First, the analysis loses its meaning because it does not have demographic details of the population near the mining zone. Table 3 (P6) on the household budget study is very confusing, mainly when readers attempt to discern the location of the sub-sample used. Providing a map to show both the location of the mining and where the community lives could probably alleviate this issue. Figure 1 (P7) displays household yearly average income by source and subsample, which is also challenging to

interpret. The authors should provide a clear operational definition of the source of the income. While the idea that income from mining jobs is essential and valuable for financial health, too much information with unclear main paragraphs prevents the readers from grasping the key message conveyed.

Local perception of well-being that relies on focus group discussion presents valuable insights; however, it requires substantial work. First, more information on FGD is necessary to reveal the characteristics of participants based on sex, education, and probably tribal affiliations within the community. Currently, the analysis combined all well-being dimensions, making it challenging to comprehend. As this is a significant finding that answers the objective of the paper, authors can compile its analysis based on well-being categories along with its tackled subjects. Quotations should also be followed alongside the participants' characteristics while maintaining the participants' anonymity and confidentiality.

Discussion: The discussion then follows the categories of the analysis developed in the finding sections. Currently, the authors' discussion of their findings with existing literature is somewhat disorganized, making it challenging for the reader to assess the paper's objective and its contribution to the CSR discourse and practices. While the authors do indicate how their analysis and discussion contribute to the CSR literature, a more systematic discussion would aid readers in better understanding whether the paper fulfils its objectives and contributes meaningfully to the relevant literature.

## References

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## **Declarations**

**Potential competing interests:** No potential competing interests to declare.