

ANNEX H-3

**AKYEM AMANIE
(COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER)**

BASIC HINTS ON HIV/AIDS WITH MISS TONY



In the eighth edition of the Akyem Amanie newsletter, readers will recall that we started featuring this column of "Basic Hints on HIV/AIDS with Miss Tony" aimed at educating readers on HIV/AIDS and how together we can help to reduce its spread.

In this edition, we continue our education on how HIV/AIDS is transmitted and ways in which it is not transmitted.

Blood Transfusion and Other Infected Sharps: The injection or transfusion of contaminated blood or blood products, skin grafts or organ transplants taken from someone who is infected is a mode of HIV transmission. It is worth noting that, the risk of HIV transfusion through infected blood products exceeds that of any other risk exposure. It is therefore advisable to receive blood at recognized health facility with appropriate equipment for screening to ensure blood safety. Used needles and syringes are sometimes soiled with minute amount of blood causing infected blood to be transferred directly into the blood stream. Using instruments which have been used on someone with HIV for ear piercing, tattoos or circumcision and have not been properly sterilized also pose a risk to us.

Ways in Which HIV is not Transmitted;

1. Physically Close
 - Living in the same room with an infected person.
 - Breathing the same air; coughs and sneezes
 - Working at the same place with an infected person
 - Playing together with an infected person
 - Touching
 - Shaking hands with an infected person
 - Hugging an infected person
 - Kissing on the cheeks, hands or forehead of an infected person
 - Sharing
 - Toilet seats
 - Towels
 - Washing together in the same basin
 - Swimming pools
 - Eating and drinking utensils
 - Communion cups
 - Working tools
 - Being bitten by:
 - Mosquito
 - Bed bugs
 - Other insects
 - Any other animal

So my dear reader, you now know the modes of HIV transmission and ways in which the virus is not transmitted. Please do not keep the message to yourself but educate others as well so that together we can reduce the menace of the disease.

In the next edition, Miss Tony will educate you on what AIDS is and the difference between HIV and AIDS so don't miss your copy.

HIV is transmitted mainly through;

1. **Sexual Intercourse:** Most people get HIV by having unprotected sexual intercourse (having sex without a condom) with an infected person.
 - **Oral Sex:** Oral sex which consists of all sexual activities that involve the use of the mouth, tongue to stimulate genitals has been found to spread the virus since sperms containing HIV could get into the blood stream of the recipient if there is a gum sore or ulcer. Oral sex is therefore not a safe practice.
 - **Anal Sex:** Anal sex is the insertion of the penis into the rectum and is either between two men or a man and a woman. This is one way through which the virus is spread. The risk of contracting the virus is very high due to the septic nature of the rectum and the vulnerability of its tissues. Anal sex causes the skin to break leading to sores and ulcers which facilitate easy entry of the virus.
 - **Heterosexual Sex:** It is a sexual behavior involving the insertion of the erect penis into the vagina and is the commonest mode of transfer of HIV/AIDS in Ghana. Heterosexual sex accounts for the highest percentage of the modes of transfer due to the fact that, the virus is found in seminal and vaginal fluids.
 - **Masturbation:** If a man inserts his finger into the vagina of a woman who is HIV positive, he could acquire the virus if there is a broken skin or sore on the finger. And if a woman rubs the penis of an infected person until he ejaculates, she could be infected if there is a broken skin or sore on the finger.

Mother to Child Transmission: A mother with HIV can pass the virus on to the baby during pregnancy, birth or through breast milk. The infection usually occurs during actual birth. Antiretroviral drugs and special medical treatment have been used successfully worldwide to prevent women from infecting their unborn children.

STOP AIDS, LOVE LIFE!!!

QUOTABLE QUOTE

Listening is a magnetic and strange thing, a creative force...When we are listened to, it creates us, makes us unfold and expand. Ideas actually begin to grow within us and come to life...When we listen to people there is an alternating current, and this recharges us so that we never get tired of each other...and it is this little creative fountain inside us that begins to spring and cast up new thoughts and unexpected laughter and wisdom. ...Well, it is when people really listen to us, with quiet fascinated attention, which the little fountain begins to work again, to accelerate in the most surprising way – Brenda Ueland

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IMPROVING AGRICULTURE TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE FOOD SECURITY



Some of the Demonstration Farms used by OICI for the Community Development Programmes in Akyem

Pilot LRP Implemented in Akyem



Kwasi A. Boateng, Social Investment Manager, Akyem Project, Presenting a cheque to one of the LRP beneficiaries

As part of efforts aimed at enhancing the livelihood of people in the Akyem project area, Newmont has been carrying out sustainable community development programmes which are being implemented through Opportunities Industrialization Centers International (OICI).

Food Security initiative is a component of the Community Development Programme (CDP) which is meant to improve agricultural activities of people in communities who may be affected by Newmont's activities should the project take off.

During the past one year, over 289 people have been trained in various agricultural improvement areas. The training covered areas in vegetable production, grasscutter rearing, snail farming, small ruminant production, fish farming and crop nursery.

The objectives of the programme are to demonstrate right spacing of the major food crops, compare the farmers' traditional way of planting plantain suckers and the improved paring method, demonstrate plantain paring and the benefits, demonstrate right application of fertilizer, demonstrate row planting and recommended plant spacing, introduce improved maize variety and also introduce and demonstrate modern methods

of animal husbandry and fish farming to participants.

Demonstrations farms have been set up to facilitate training to enhance the adoption of modern and efficient farming practices. The type of demonstrations farms established within communities in the Akyem project area include maize and plantain intercrop, maize and pared plantain sucker intercrop, plantain split corn multiplication nursery, row planting of tomato and okro, pared versus non pared plantain sucker field, row planting of pared plantain etc.

In all there are 13 demonstration farms plots with collaborating farmers. In addition demonstrations farms are being run by OICI on a plot near the western side of the Newmont camp on grasscutter, sheep and goat rearing and vegetable production.

Here are some comments made by two beneficiaries in an interview with **Akyem Amanie: Kwame Agyiri - Yaw Tano.** "We have wasted time and energy on our farm in the past since we were ignorant about improved farming methods. In applying the knowledge gained at these trainings, it is evident that I will get more maize from my small piece of land that I am farming on.

Akyem has been discussing an initiative in the mining industry to make farmers better off even after taking the lump sum of their cash compensation. In this vein, a proposal on the livelihood restoration programme (LRP) was introduced but for the deferral of the project, this programme might have been implemented on full scale by now.

However, Akyem management also realized the need to show commitment to the project and demonstrate confidence in the process, a pilot phase of the programme is being implemented with a few selected farmers who have already taken their crop compensation money.

At a short but impressive ceremony to roll out the programme, an amount of GH¢25,000.00 was presented to twenty seven (25) farmers to go into any of the four choices listed under the programme. Farmers and or their landlords have the option to continue to farm, channel the money into small scale business, animal husbandry or to do save investment with their money.

The amount is an additional fund provided under the Livelihood Restoration Programme to the compensation money farmers have already received for the use of their lands by the company for its operations. The money is meant among other benefits to support these farmers to enable them to either continue with farming or enter into another business.

The year is marching past quickly and another Akyem Amanie is on the streets. A lot has happened over the last few months, some – such as the recent inauguration of the renovated school at Hweakwae and the new police station in New Abirem have been very public whilst others – such as the retirement of our CEO Wayne Murdy has been less publicized.



On the project side, we continue to make slow but steady progress towards answering the technical questions that will allow us to determine whether we can build a better project that will meet the needs of our many stakeholders – our shareholders, the government and our communities.

We have spoken before that one way to make the Project more attractive is to find more gold in the area and earlier this year we completed drilling, trenching, soil sampling and geological mapping exercises in some of the areas within our prospecting concessions. We have received mixed results from these activities with some areas, including Hweakwae, Adausena, Abohema and Nyafoman not showing viable signs of gold and we are not planning any more investigation at this time. Other work in the wider district has given reason for encouragement and will be investigated further. We thank all our community members for allowing access for these programmes to come off and for your patience while we have been analyzing the results.

The crop compensation review process is continuing, with agreement reached on food and minor tree crops and efforts currently focused on the four remaining tree crops. Since the inauguration of the Crop Rate Review Committee (CRRC) last year, many beneficial committee meetings and workshops have been held collectively with community members and other MDAs, we have been making steady progress in understanding the basis for crop valuation and negotiation for a fair and adequate compensation. I am sure the committee will continue to work diligently to come to a conclusion that we can all be proud of.

We have continued to build on our extensive community engagement activities with new innovations, including moving our regular youth and farmers briefings out to the Community Information Offices and moving the farmers briefings to community taboo days both making it easier for our key stakeholders to meet with us and discuss issues of concern. We have also started organised tours to Ahafo for groups of community members to see for themselves how Newmont operates and what changes the Akyem project will bring to our area. The feedback so far is that these have helped a great deal in building understanding. As a result of this new initiative, we have also seen the chiefs from Ahafo pay a return visit and take part in a grand durbar where they gave their own views on how the project has benefited their area and gave some words of advise to all of us as to how to make the most of the opportunities the project will bring.

We have also been honoured to be part of the community celebrations of the appointment of our local MP, Honourable Esther Obeng Dapaah as Minister of Lands, Forestry and Mines and again take the opportunity to wish her all the best. OICI have continued with their good work, focussing on strengthening youth, business and community leadership and promoting modern farm practices. 20 demonstration plots have been established and cover everything from vegetables to plantain to fish to goats, sheep, grass cutters and snails.

Another area that OICI have been busy with is the pilot Livelihood Restoration Program (LRP) with a number of people choosing to go back to farming and many others choosing to take the option of making secured investments. Finally, OICI have been busy with their many trainees organising an Exhibition programme which is planned for November for the trainees to showcase their stories which should be a great opportunity for us all to see the benefits that putting the training into practice can bring to the quality of life for our communities.

I would like to thank everyone for their patience through this period of continuing uncertainty and your continuing support and willingness to use the time available to us to strengthen our relationship and to build trust through ongoing open and transparent engagement.

Newmont holds HIV/AIDS Summit



Newmont Peer Educators pose for the Camera after the Summit

The first ever Newmont HIV/AIDS Peer Educators summit has been held in Sunyani under the theme, **“Peer Educators, We Share because we care”**.

The three-day programme which brought 35 Newmont Peer Educators drawn from the Accra, Akyem and Ahafo offices, was aimed at offering an opportunity for Peer Educators to exchange ideas, expertise, share experiences and encourage them to with their work on HIV/AIDS prevention.

In an address, the company's Health Programmes Coordinator Maud Ofori-Nyaney reemphasized the devastating effects HIV/AIDS could have on companies and urged the Peer Educators not to relent in their education.

According to her, HIV/AIDS affects productivity through absenteeism of workers as a result of AIDS related illness, loss of skilled labour, increasing training cost all off which have a negative impact on the business efficiency and profitability.

Mrs. Ofori-Nyaney therefore commended the efforts of management and Peer Educators for the strong foundation that has been laid by their commitment to the bring the workplace HIV/AIDS programme into Newmont operations to protect the workforce and local communities from HIV/AIDS.

She enumerated some of the successes achieved since the implementation of the programme as the signing of a memorandum of understanding with International Labour Organization (ILO) and International Finance Cooperation (IFC), Newmont Ghana as a member of the Global Business Coalition on AIDS, Ahafo project as a member of the District Response Initiative Team and over 70 Peer Educators trained across the three sites to implement the programme.

IMPROVING AGRICULTURE TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE FOOD SECURITY

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My request is that, OICI training programmes should be regular since it has enlightened us on our farming activities and also helped us in improving our livelihoods through the use of new technologies”.

Mr. Evans Darko – New Abirem a fish farming training beneficiary and a care taker of the fishpond demonstration “I have been rearing fish for the past one year but have not harvested an appreciable quantity to be sold, until I requested for training from OICI. I was wasting my time and money without getting returns. But the current stock which were given to me by OICI three months ago, my brother, you will be surprised how big the fishes have grown and I am sure by Christmas they will be ready for the market. I have started making contacts with some of the local restaurants for their patronage thanks to OICI”. OICI is planning to organize field days for these farmers in the various communities for on-hand demonstrations to enhance adoption of the technologies being demonstrated.

Pilot LRP Implemented in Akyem

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Kwasi Boateng, Social Investment Manager, Akyem Project presented the cheques on behalf of management to the beneficiaries. He said that although the company's core business is mining, Newmont is very much concerned about the development of the communities and the individuals in our area.

The beneficiaries have expressed happiness for the programme and have promised to make judicious use of the opportunity.

Philomena Acheampomaa, a beneficiary, said that initially she was not convinced that Newmont will implement the Livelihood Restoration Programme, but the payment she has received bears testimony that Newmont has lived up to its promise.

The highest beneficiary received GH¢7,000.00 and the lowest beneficiary received GH¢1,050.00.

The break down of the payment will enable a farmer who received GH¢1,050.00 to use GH¢402.00 to get a land for farming and use the GH¢603.00 to procure agricultural inputs to restore his farm. The land input of GH¢402.00 goes to the landlord and the agricultural input is for both the landlord and his farmer depending on the share cropping arrangement between them. If the individual is a landlord and the farmer himself, he takes every benefit under the programme.

To ensure that beneficiaries use their payments wisely, a committee has been set up made up of a representative from the Birim North Chiefs Association (Chairman), two representatives from the group of beneficiaries, one each from Newmont Akyem and OICI. The committee discusses with a beneficiary what he/she wants to do with the money before they proceed on the venture.

Also a working committee comprising of OICI Agric officers and MOFA extension officers is on the ground to monitor the activities of the beneficiaries to ensure that they are on track in restoring their livelihoods.

NEWMONT HOLDS SUMMIT FOR PEER EDUCATORS

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Mrs. Nyaney also commended key personalities Mr Dave Lovely, Human Resource Manager- Accra, Mr. Rick Dressler, Human Resource Director and Ms. Akua Asumadu, ILO HIV/AIDS Workplace Coordinator- Ghana and Ms. Noleen Dube of IFC for being instrumental in the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Newmont's HIV/AIDS Policy. She also acknowledged the good work done by the Peer Educators so far and encouraged them to go an extra mile in sharing the information on HIV/AIDS as the theme for the summit stipulates.

For his part, Mr. Dave Lovely, chairman for the occasion and the chairman of

Newmont HIV/AIDS Steering Committee, acknowledged the importance of the workplace HIV/AIDS programme and pledged management's support for the programme.

In an address. Peer Educator Winifred Ofori Sarkodee, stressed the need for people to fight the virus than stigmatizing people living with the disease.

As part of the programme, the Peer Educators were trained in Basic First Aid by Mr. Darren Mulhearn, a Paramedic of SOS International.

There was presentation of certificates by Mrs. Joyce Kusi of ILO to Peer Educators for participating in HIV/AIDS Peer Education Workshop for mining sectors.

Special awards were also presented to deserving Peer Educators for handiwork, demonstrating commitment to the programme and for timely and regular submission of monthly reports. Those who received the awards were Shirley Tony and Sally Ofori-Yeboah of the Akyem Project, Justice Jeija, Francis Kordah and Edith Anang of Ahafo Project and Felix Larley of Head Office in Accra.

ASUOPRA RURAL BANK INAUGURATES HEAD OFFICE

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Ahmed Osman said the bank is pursuing an education drive to inculcate the habit of saving and prudent investment among the people to promote wealth creation, economic growth and improve living standards through the provision of credit to customers and the communities in the catchment area. He noted that it is also the bank's desire to make the bank one of the best rural banks in the Eastern Region and the country as a whole.

The Bank Manager revealed that the bank has performed its social responsibilities in diverse ways. The bank has instituted a scholarship Scheme to benefit the wards of customers who qualify to enter Senior Secondary Schools and Junior Secondary Schools. It has also provided funds to help purchase electrical poles for Abodom and Praso Kuma communities' electrification projects, and funds for the Afosu Water Project.

As part of the day's inauguration programme, Newmont Akyem Project hosted a reception and an exhibition for the dignitaries who were invited by the bank to grace the occasion. The exhibition provided the Akyem project the opportunity to interact with government representatives, business people, traditional authorities and the clergy and to showcase the consistent efforts being made to strengthen relationships and trust with stakeholders especially the communities.

The Newmont Akyem team present included Robin Budden, General Manager Environment and Social Responsibility, Kwasi Boateng, Social Investment Manager, Felix Apoh, Community Relations Superintendent and Oduro-Kwarteng Marfo, Principal Communication Officer.

Also in attendance were Dr. Chris Anderson, Regional Director of External Affairs, Newmont Ghana Gold Ltd and Ms Adiki Ofeibe Ayitevie Regional Communication Manager, Newmont Ghana Gold Ltd.

The exhibition materials included posters showing the mining process and environmental control measures, background information about Akyem project including fact sheets on Newmont, the 2005 Public Hearing document; past and present copies of Akyem Amanie, Photo Albums of stakeholder and Social Investment programmes, and documentaries and slide show of pictures of some of the recent stakeholder engagement programmes, OICI programmes and other social investment programmes.

NYEP PROGRESSING STEADILY IN THE BIRIM NORTH DISTRICT

The National Youth Employment Programme (NYEP) started fourteen months ago and is growing steadily in the Birim North District of the Eastern Region.

For the first year of the programme's implementation in the Birim North District, four out of ten modules have been rolled out. These are the: Youth in agri-business, Youth in Community Education Teaching Assistance, Youth in Health Extension Working and Youth in Waste and Sanitation Management.

The broad objective of the programme is to explore, recommend and provide additional employment opportunities for the youth in all Districts throughout the country to empower them to be able to contribute more meaningfully towards the socio-economic and sustainable development of the nation.

According to Mr. George A. Danso, programme coordinator of the National Youth Employment programme, statistics in the Birim North District indicate that forty six organized and registered agri-youth associations from forty communities in the District have been offered both financial and material (inputs) assistance to encourage them take up agriculture as an occupation or to improve and expand their existing farms. One hundred and twenty vacancies were declared

by the District Education Directorate as at the beginning of the 2006/2007 academic year and accordingly 120 youths holding a minimum qualification of Senior Secondary School certificate have been offered placement to fill the vacancies in teaching.

Other figures indicate that fifty nine youth were engaged out of sixty applicants who enlisted under Health Extension Workers. The trainees will be graduating by the end of September after six months of intensive clinical and theoretical sessions.

Seven communities are currently benefiting under the sanitation and waste management module and an additional three are in the offing to receive assistance. Twenty six persons (24 riders, 1 mechanic and a supervisor) have been engaged to see to the management of waste in these communities. Logistics such as Tricycles fitted with waste containers, uniforms, hand gloves, brooms etc. have been supplied by Zoomlion Ghana Limited to facilitate waste management in the selected communities.

Under the NYEP, the Birim North District has been zoned into ten sanitation zones and accordingly, ten youths have been appointed and will assigned to each zone as Sanitation Guards.

Lastly fifty out of seventy applicants have been selected by the District Head Office of the Ghana Police Service at Ofoase as potential Community Protection Assistants after going through a screening exercise. They are waiting to commence training at the Police Depot in Koforidua.

Again, the Coordinator lamented that the Youth Employment Programme in the District has not been totally smooth sailing. The programme has confronted several challenges such as human, logistical and financial resources to manage the programme.

"Some of these challenges are hampering the smooth administration and implementation of the programme in the District", Mr. Danso lamented.



Beneficiaries of the NYEP, Birim North District, on a site tour at Newmont Akyem Camp in Akyem Yayaaso.

CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP HELD FOR NEWLY ELECTED ASSEMBLY MEMBERS

Akyem in collaboration with the Opportunities Industrialization Centre International, (OICI) has organized a three-day capacity building workshop for 58 newly elected Assembly members and some selected heads of departments in the Birim North District.

The training workshop was organized in recognition of the role local government groups and bodies play in the rapid socio-economic advancement of local communities.

The workshop was meant to equip the participants with the necessary skills to be able to perform their constitutionally mandated roles and responsibilities effectively and efficiently. It was also meant to prepare them to initiate and lead their people in undertaking beneficial developmental projects in their communities.

The 58 newly elected assembly members and the heads of departments were taken through various topics such as Team Building, Decision Making Process, Communication and Information Dissemination. The rest of the topics included Lobbying and Networking Skills, Conflict Management Skills, Community Mobilization and Proposal Writing Skills. With the support of the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), participants were also taken through the role they play in the

decentralization governance model.

In an interview with **Akyem Amanie**, the District Coordinating Director of the District, Vincent Ackam said that the topics treated during the workshop are appropriate and very relevant to the capacity requirements of the Heads of Department and Assembly members.

He noted that with the training, Assembly members should be able to exhibit good and effective leadership qualities and build a team in their respective communities/electoral areas among the various leaders, chiefs, unit committees, opinion leaders, churches etc to champion the development of their communities, lead and mobilize their communities to identify and discuss problems affecting their socio-economic development and plan their own programmes/projects using the appropriate participatory tools to reach consensus on the issues raised, create effective interactive relationship among the various leaderships and units in their communities as well as manage or resolve and try to prevent conflicts, mobilize resources, material and human for sustainable community initiated projects and development and create a harmonious relationship and communication links between their communities and the District Assembly as well as other development

partners.

He was also of the opinion that the 3-days allotted for the training programme is not enough to enable the beneficiaries acquire all the requirements in the programme as such it should be extended to 5-days.

Meanwhile, a similar training workshop is also being organized for all the 14 Unit Committees within the Newmont project area. At the end of the training, it is expected that members of the Unit Committees would be equipped to assist their Assembly Members in developing their respective communities.

This collaborative initiative between Newmont Akyem Project and OICI is in tandem with the National Development Agenda which Newmont as a socially responsible Company is working hand in hand with the Birim North District Assembly to achieve sustainable development in project area.



Participants listening attentively during the capacity building Workshop at the District Assembly Hall, New Abirem

A new Police Station inaugurated in New Abirem

Newmont in collaboration with the Birim North District Assembly has inaugurated a New Police Station in New Abirem. The collaboration to build the police station is a clear testimony of how conscious effort toward company and local government partnership can work in the creation of wealth in the District.

The building of the Police Station itself started with the people and completed with them. They initiated the thought on the security of the area which was affirmed by the District Assembly. The decision to build a police station therefore came into reality as a result of widely shared concern for the security of the area which came up strongly in several of our various public participation efforts.

Inaugurating the project, the Eastern Regional Minister, Mr. Kwadwo Afram Asiedu commended Newmont for responding to its social responsibility by assisting the Birim North District with the Police Station. He expressed the hope that the company in the near future will provide residential facilities for the policemen who will man the Station.

Acknowledging the presence of Newmont as having boosted the economy of the area, the Regional Minister asked the people to always resort to dialogue to iron out any differences with the company.

The Deputy Eastern Regional Police Commander, ACP David Ampah Benning who

represented the Inspector General of Police, praised Newmont and the District Assembly for building the Police Station and appealed to the people to cooperate with the Police to curb crime in the area.



The Eastern Reg. Minister, Kwadwo A. Assiedu, Robin Budden, Gen Manager, ESR Akyem, and Nana A. Tweretwie II, Abiremehene, cutting the tape to formally open the New Police Station building



Front View of the ultra modern Police Station

The General Manager, Environment and Social Responsibility, Newmont Akyem, Robin Budden said that Newmont is committed to work as partners and collaborators with the government and the communities to bring about rapid socio-economic advancement of the area emphasizing that Newmont will continue to strive to be the gold company of choice through to all stakeholders.

He noted that the process is always not easy and takes time, effort and understanding to move ahead together. Robin asked the communities to take a step back and to imagine how we can work to make the area better through long term strategizing.

"It seems to me that now is a good time for us as partners (the Communities, the District Assembly, and Newmont) to sit together and develop a road map for the future, to look at where we want to be in 5,10, 20 years from

now, agree our priorities, find the resources we need and then start our journey together. I truly believe that the best way forward, the one that brings the most benefit to every one, is when we understand each other's interests, capabilities and commitments and share common goals. I am convinced that this is an approach that will help ensure a systematic and efficient development effort that will be sustainable and beneficial to our communities in the long term", Robin emphasized.

The District Chief Executive for Birim North, Nana Acquah Frempong, said the Assembly had already made available a fully furnished three-bedroom bungalow for the prospective Commander of the station. The Assembly has also initiated plans to get a court house, adding that the area only needed a police barracks to complete the process.

The building of the Police Station also offered the opportunity for twelve local youth through the collaborative initiative of Newmont, OICI and the contractor Mr. Anderson of "Build-us Company Limited" to acquire some basic building skills, providing a foundation on which they can continue to build.



Some traditional authorities that graced the inauguration

ASUOPRA RURAL BANK INAUGURATES HEAD OFFICE

Asuopra Rural Bank Limited has formally inaugurated its Head Office at Afosu in the Birim North District of the Eastern Region. The occasion also marked the celebration of the bank's rejuvenation and thirty years of rural banking.

In attendance were representatives of the Minister of Finance, Bank of Ghana, Akyem Kotoku Paramountcy, Newmont Akyem project, Birim North District Chief Executive, Catholic Bishop of Koforidua, Managing Director of ARB Apex Bank, Chairman of the Rural Banks Association, District Directors of various institutions in the Birim North District, Assembly members in the bank's catchment area and representatives of the various religious groups in their catchment area.

Asuopra Rural Bank Limited, the third rural bank to be established in Ghana and the first in the Eastern Region commenced business on April 24, 1977, its head office is situated in Akyem Afosu



The Head Office at Akyem Afosu The newly built New Abirem branch

and has branches in New Abirem and Nkwarteng. The bank is hoping to open new branches in Nkawkaw, Kade and Koforidua.

The bank offers many savings products which include Current, Savings and Fixed Deposit accounts and can purchase treasury bills on behalf of customers. Loan facilities include Fresh Fruits Bunches loans, Short and Long term loans, Salary Advances and Funeral loans. The bank also participates in government development loans, such as MOWAC, Agric Producers Council (APC) and Farmers Assistance loan (FAL).

The bank also provides money transfer services, both internal and external such as Apex link, "Efie ne fie" and Western Union.

To provide quality, quick and efficient services to its customers, the bank has computerized operations at the Head Office in Afosu and the New Abirem branch.

In an interview with **Akyem Amanie**, Mohammed Ahmed Osman, Manager of the bank said that it is the collective desire of the Board of Directors, management and staff of the bank to pursue good corporate goals to provide excellent banking services to its cherished customers and the communities within



Dr. Ntiful-Slaw, Board Chairman addressing stakeholders of the Bank at the annual general meeting during the inauguration.

What the Communities are saying about Newmont



MRS. HILDA KESSE (SEAMSTRESS) NEW ABIREM: I like the presence of Newmont in the community. Before Newmont came, both economic activities and development projects were at a slow pace but now things have improved.

After the construction of the communication tower by Newmont, we in the community now have the opportunity to speak on the phone from any angle to any where in the world. I personally have had the opportunity to sew clothes for Newmont contractor staffs from OICI and ATS which helped to increase my earnings. I therefore pray that the project takes off early so that the youth can get jobs to do.

KOFI DENKYIRA (FARMER) NEW ABIREM:

A few years ago I did not want to hear the name of Newmont because of how "bad" some people painted it. I have now known that about ninety percent of the said stories are not true, hence I agree that Newmont should operate in the community. Newmont has committed itself to helping the communities with development projects like renovation of schools, construction of public place of convenience, provision of water, construction of a Police Station and the protection of human health and the environment.

It is my wish that the Akyem project takes off early so that we can enjoy such facilities in the long term and also provide more job opportunities to the youth. I however advise that Newmont should pay fair and adequate crop

compensation rates to the project-affected farmers so that no one feels cheated.

ERNESTINA OSEI (FARMER) NTRONANG:

I am very happy that Newmont has come to this area. It is my hope that when the company starts operations in Akyem, some of the youth in the area will get jobs and also bring development to the area. I also think the project will bring opportunities to trading activities. Also community members will have money and send their children to school for a better future life.

JOSEPH TWENEBOAH (FARMER) NTRONANG:

I am happy that this Company has not yet started the project but have been able to organize meetings for farmers, youth groups and the communities as a whole to brief them about how their work is going on.

Also they ask us to share our ideas and problems about the project with them for solutions and this has brought mutual understanding between farmers and the company.

With this, I am pleading with the appropriate bodies to grant approvals for the company to continue with the good work in this area.

KWABENA APPAU (FARMER) HWEAKWAE: Some of the benefits of Newmont's presence in Akyem for Hweakwae especially is that the company has renovated our School and

established in my community an information office for community members to have easy access to the company. Personally I have benefited from Newmont because the compensation they paid to me when they did line cutting in my farm enabled me to buy roofing sheets to roof my building. I am hoping that Newmont will get the permit very soon so that the youth will get employment, trading activities will also increase and the communities will develop.

I am suggesting to Newmont to help some of our youth who have no employable skills to learn some trade so they will be employable when the project starts.

SAMUEL MARFO (TRADER) MAMANSO:

Newmont's presence has brought some changes in the Community. They have renovated our school which is a positive step as far as Education is concerned.

Newmont's presence has brought some life into Mamanso community; some youth in the various communities have gained employment due to the Company. Stealing has gone down drastically. Again, traders are happy because their products are patronized regularly.

My plea to Newmont is that they should help the District Assembly to provide a good hospital and a place of convenience for the communities.

Also the company should pay adequate compensation to the farmers who will be affected by the project. I advise Newmont to employ people in the District rather than outsiders.

What the school kids are saying about Newmont



OPPONG ASANTE - NEW ABIREM/AFOSU SHS: Newmont is a mining company and it has been here since 1995. The company is situated in Ahafo and Akyem. Their method of mining in Akyem is surface mining and the construction will last for about two and a half years.

There are so many numerous things by which the communities will gain especially in economic factors and improvement of social amenities. Newmont is offering employment to the communities affected by the project and the employees will be about 250 people. There are so many people who have been employed by Newmont to enable them to earn a living.

Newmont in collaboration with the District Assembly has built a police station for the New Abirem community. They are helping some communities like New Abirem, Mamanso, Hweakwae, and Ntronang where they have inaugurated some of their old school buildings.

Newmont have been organizing men and women soccer activities for the communities each year and also providing school bags, books and pencils for some schools. They also organize party for their workers every year.

My advise to Newmont is that they have to increase the compensation money for the farmers since they are going to loose their properties permanently. Their presence in Akyem has helped us a lot but they should motivate their workers and also undertake re-forestation at the mine area.

ESTHER DANKWAH, GIRLS PREFECT - NEW ABIREM/AFOSU SHS: Newmont is one of the largest mining companies in the world. They came to Ghana in August 2002 and are located in Akyem and Ahafo. Newmont mission is purposely to mine and their vision is to help schools and create job opportunities.

There are numerous things which the company has done in the Akyem area. It has introduced environmental science programme for students. They encourage students to see mining as a career of choice. They also thought it wise that water, health and sanitation are key priorities on its developmental agenda. They donated hand washing facilities to some schools in the project area. Newmont has also renovated schools in New Abirem, Mamanso and Hweakwae. They also organize friendly football matches and drama thus creating peace and unity among the communities.

Notwithstanding all these socializing encounters and benefits the project brings, there are other negative sides which need to be worked on. The company's activities can affect fauna and flora species. Again, there could be shortage of foodstuff since farmlands

will be affected. Also, the compensation money to be paid to farmers may not be enough for them to sustain any meaningful livelihood. The company's activities can also attract all sorts of people into this area which goes with its own attendant social vices and difficulties.

In fact, Newmont has done a lot which is too enormous to be stated. I am of the opinion that the government should expedite action to enable the company acquire the permit to mine so that some of the unemployed youth could be employed.

Newmont should replant trees to replace those that will be lost. I also learnt the company will reclaim the land which will be degraded since the mining to be done is open cast mining.

I am of the view that Newmont should be given the permit since the mineral in the land cannot be there forever but will be very beneficial when mined.



FRANCIS ESSUMAN, BOYS PREFECT - NEW ABIREM/AFOSU SHS: Newmont is one of the magnificent mining companies in the world. It established its presence in the country in August 1995. Their operation areas cover Akyem and Ahafo.

The company has helped the communities a lot. The company has undertaken countless developmental activities in the project communities.

It has promoted the communities in areas such as education, economic and amelioration in social conditions. This move has forged an inextricable relationship between the company and the inhabitants.

In education, it has supported some schools in the community by renovating old and fragile structures thereby creating an amiable atmosphere for schooling.

For the economic sector, it has engineered the springing out of job opportunities for the youth in the project area. The youth in particular hold the company in high esteem for making life bearable for them. This satisfies the saying that goes, "a good dog deserves a good bone".

On the other hand, some citizens are suffering indirectly from the existence of the company because most land lords are charging huge sums of money for rent advance. Some of the people are also of the view that the company will be a threat to the virgin forest as their operations engages the felling of trees.

To draw the curtain down, the company will serve as a stepping stone for development if it is given the sole right to operate. However, I would like the company to extend their wings to the New Abirem/Afosu Secondary School to help equip the science laboratories with the requisite equipment to enhance teaching and learning.



DORCAS KUMI GYAMPO, OLD ABIREM ANGLICAN JHS: I am very proud that Newmont has come to this area because of their good vision and support for the community especially the youth.

The theatre troupe they have helped to set up will go a long way to help nurture the talents of these young ones.

However, I think they can do more by organizing inter-school quizzes, debates and talks to help better the results of the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) results in this area.



SAMPSON BOAFO, OLD ABIREM ANGLICAN JHS: Newmont has done a lot for the community especially the schools in the Akyem area. It is good that we have such a company in the Akyem area because the company has employees who go to schools to teach us all we need to know about the project and mining in general.

The company also cares for the health of the people but my question is, what is the project going to do to help us in the schools when the project acquires the farmlands from the farmers? And the most important thing we need in our community is a new school building.

My advice to Newmont is that they should continue their good work and it will help us in the communities.



PATIENCE ALIMU, OLD ABIREM ANGLICAN JHS: Newmont as a company is doing well in the areas of job creation for the people in the Akyem area; the establishment of theatre troupes for the youth to bring out the good talents in them as well as helping in the rehabilitation of school buildings.

I would like to make a passionate appeal to them to support the peasant farmers and small scale business operators financially so that they can expand their farms and businesses.

MINING WORDS AND THEIR MEANING WITH Aunty Afia

BLASTING: The act of using explosives to loosen rock or other closely packed materials.

CRUSHER: A machine used to break the hard rocks into smaller size and into fine materials. It comes in many sizes and types, examples are jaw crusher and gyratory crusher

GOLD: Precious yellow metal which is used for jewelry, electronic products and equipment including computers, telephones, shielding for spacecraft.

LODE: A tabular or vein like deposit of valuable minerals between well-defined walls

LEACHING: Dissolving the desired minerals out of ore generally by a mixture of chemicals and water from which the mineral is later solidified

MILL: Equipment used in reducing the size of a blasted and crushed gold bearing rock

REEF: A layered ore vein or horizon within other rock units

SMELTING: The process of extracting metal from the ore or concentrates through melting

SLAG: Waste material obtained from the smelting process

TAILINGS: The material that is left over from processing of ore and which has no commercial value at that time but may be reprocessed depending on high gold price and improved technology

Children's Corner on Poems

ALL DAYS NOT EQUAL

All days are not equal
Everyday and its call
By the day and by the night
For the left and for the right!
That's how we run our day
For which we have no say
Ours is to brace all turns
Be they vacant or tense!
We see and know nothing
Where nothing is certain
Our fortunes come and go
As the times come and go!
While we live we hope
While we hope we cope
With changes that come
And help us to overcome!
When the days call for calm
Remain calm as the balm
When the days call for action
Reach forward for action!