

# HOW IT BEGAN

OICI was contracted by Newmont Ghana Ltd to facilitate livelihoods restoration of Project Affected Persons (PAPs) in five host communities in Asutifi North district of Brong Ahafo region in Ghana. Among the various corporate social responsibility instruments associated with Newmont Ahafo Mining Development was the Skills Development for Income Improvement Program (SDIIP) for Tailing Storage Facility ECD4 Area. The SDIIP resources were targeted at 360 PAPs from Ntotroso, Kenyasi 1, Kenyasi 2, Gyedu and Wamahinso.

Faustina Opoku from Kenyasi 2 was one of the 360 farmers affected by the new mining developments in ECD4 area and was targeted to participate in SDIIP project with other PAPs. Faustina and her group chose mushroom enterprise development, which included six components: mushroom agronomy, Group Dynamics and Development, Market Advisory Services, Adaptive Technology Training, Post-harvest Processing, Food Safety and Quality Assurance. Faustina chose mushroom because mushroom provides quick returns, even from small plots, and the physical labor required is minimal. Most importantly, mushrooms already play an important

Metu emire kilo aduosa da biara na eho sika som sidi mpem mmienu bosome biara (I harvest at least 60kg of mushroom per day and earns an average of GH¢ 2000 per month)

## A beneficiary (Faustina Opoku) watering her compost bags for Mushroom Production

**Name of photographer:**

Hamidu Issaka

**Organization:**

OICI-Ghana

**Date:**

4rd February, 2015

**Location:**

Kenyasi



role in household livelihood, food security and risk management strategies (consumed fresh or dried and stored for the lean season) in Kenyasi 2.

### **IMPACT OF OICI'S EMPOWERMENT OF FAUSTINA & OTHERS**

The Newmont SDIIP facility served to empower Faustina and other rural women and men equally affected by the new gold mining developments. The project also enhanced Faustina and other women's access to productive resources (Finance, technical knowhow) and increased women's participation in decision-making at the project level, as well as in the mushroom value chain governance (farmer groups or producer group, mushroom trade networks).

Over the last five years, OICI has placed increasing importance on gender equality and women's empowerment, both as objectives in workforce development in-and-of itself, but also as a key instrument in the reduction of poverty and financial exclusion. One lesson from the SDIIP project: women

can become a powerful force, transforming the lives of their families and communities, but programs must acknowledge the value each gender brings and allocate resources equally.

Faustina is now a vibrant mushroom grower, registered by a number of buyers that have loyalty to her mushroom as wholesalers or as retailers/vendors. In the past Faustina, like other women mushroom producers, encountered significant discrimination, didn't have much information beyond what she had within her community and therefore being unable to negotiate for better prices. Faustina is an emerging role model farmer and an agent of change in her community.

### **"RAISING HOUSEHOLD INCOMES"**

Akua Birago from Ntotroso was affected by Newmont mining expansion in the Amoma area. Her small plot of land, which happened to be the only source of supplementary revenue, aside from her husband's meager income was lost, leaving her family poor enough to need help from others. Her household was declared vulnerable after food security assessment and enrolled in the Vulnerable Peoples Program (VPP), where the household receives monthly food rations and other support. She was targeted to participate in SDIIP project with other PAPs. Akua and her group chose Bakery enterprise development which included six components: Group Dynamics and Development, Basic Baking Knowledge and Skills, Market Advisory Services, Safe Food Handling, Time Management and Book Keeping. Akua opted for bakery because it has ready market and provides quick returns on investment. Above and beyond all other considerations, bread has become an integral component of the breakfast of families in Ntotroso and demand exceeds supply.

OICI has placed emphasis on increasing incomes of families in rural areas, with particular attention to women who make critical contributions to household food security and incomes. It is worth mentioning that the SDIIP project has equipped about 1200 women and men alike with the requisite skills and tools needed to maintain livelihood and financial security at both individual and community levels.

Akua is currently a leading supplier of bread to vendors and retailers in the Ntotroso area. Prior to EARN's involvement in her life, her family's income was so meager that they were unable to meet their basic needs. In SDIIP, OICI brings to light how incomes of families could be improved through micro-enterprise development. Her household has been reassessed to be food secured and declared not vulnerable by the livelihood committee.

Me sikasem anya mpontuo naama me mma nso asan ko sukuu. Yedi adaune a yepe ne dodo biara a yepe. Metumi sie sika sidi ahaanu bosome biara wo abre a matete me ka nyinaa awie” (My financial improvement has allowed my kids to return to school and we eat the kind of food we want in the right quantities. I make savings of GH¢ 200 per month after all operational costs and household expenses have been deducted)

## A beneficiary (Akua Birago) display baked bread

**Name of photographer:**

Desmond Opoku-Agyemang

**Organization:**

OICI-Ghana

**Date:**

3rd February, 2015

**Location:**

Ntotroso

