



U N I K A S S E L
V E R S I T Ä T

BPSA Scholarship Report – MA Thesis Research, Ghana

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Introduction

As part of meriting a Master's degree certificate in University of Kassel, Germany, under the Global Political Economy master programme, one is expected to hand in a comprehensive master thesis. In my quest to fulfill this partial requirement to be awarded a master's degree in Global Political Economy, I embarked on a journey to Ghana to undertake a qualitative research using semi-structured on "what alternative livelihoods are available for women in artisanal small-scale mining and how this alternative livelihoods can be sustainable" in eradicating poverty. With the increasing hazards in artisanal small-scale mining and the recent government of Ghana ban on illegal mining, women in artisanal small-scale mining have been dormant following the government's directive. These illegal mining activities are usually poverty-driven (Barning, 2002). Dawkins (2005) asserts that although this activity is poverty-driven it puts these individuals in a vicious cycle of poverty and vulnerability. This is due to the exposure to health hazards (chemicals used) and the destruction of the environment. However, these women cannot be disregarded by the government and the society. Thus, it will be interesting to find out which "satisfying" alternative livelihood can be given to these women.

This research problem needs to be addressed and with the help of Stube Hessen through its BPSA scholarship programme granted me a research grant to undertake this research in Ghana. The research grant catered for my air ticket, travel and health insurance as well as budgeted travelling expenses. The scholarship offered me the opportunity to reconnect with family and friends after almost two years of not being back home and also allowed me to give back to society the skills and experiences I have gained while studying abroad. I took approximately 2 months to undertake the research in Ghana – 19th December, 2017 to 20th February, 2018. I believe it was possible due to my preparedness and the requirements for the scholarship which sets you in motion for the big task ahead.

In the subsequent section will be a tabulated outline of the research stages and processes I undertook while in Ghana.

Outline of activities in Ghana

Date	Activity	Location
19 th December, 2017	Departure from Germany	Frankfurt
20 th December, 2017	Arrival in Ghana	Accra, Greater Accra region
27 th December, 2017	Time with Prof. Akua Biritwum (my first supervisor) I travelled to her university discuss my plans for the research and to discuss the literature she asked me to review.	University of Cape Coast, central region
29 th – 8 th January, 2018	Reorganising literature as instructed by supervisor	Accra, Greater Accra region
11 th January, 2018	Time with Prof. Akua Biritwum (my first supervisor) To discuss the research instruments for the field work	University of Cape Coast, central region
12 th January, 2018	Travelling to Kumasi	Kumasi, Ashanti region
15 th January, 2018	Travelling from Kumasi to Moseaso to meet the chief and traditional rulers	Amansie west district, Ashanti region
17 th January, 2018	Travelling from Kumasi to Moseaso for focused group discussion	Amansie west district, Ashanti region
18 th January, 2018	Travelling from Kumasi to Moseaso for key informant interviews	Amansie west district, Ashanti region

19 th January, 2018	Travelling from Kumasi to Moseaso for key informant interviews	Amansie west district, Ashanti region
20 th January, 2018	Travelling from Kumasi to Accra to attend family engagements	Accra, Greater Accra region
2 nd February, 2018	Travelling from Accra to Kumasi	Kumasi, Ashanti region
5 th February, 2018	Travelling from Kumasi to Akokroso to meet the chief and traditional rulers	Amansie west district, Ashanti region
6 th February, 2018	Travelling from Kumasi to Akokroso for focused group discussion	Amansie west district, Ashanti region
7 th February, 2018	Travelling from Kumasi to Akokroso for key informant interviews	Amansie west district, Ashanti region
8 th February, 2018	Travelling from Kumasi to Akokroso for key informant interviews	Amansie west district, Ashanti region
9 th February, 2018	Field research complete	Kumasi, Ashanti region
10 th February, 2018	Travelling from Kumasi to Accra	Accra, Greater Accra region
16 th February, 2018	Time with Prof. Akua Biritwum (my first supervisor) To discuss the field work and how to organise the results for analysis	University of Cape Coast, central region
20 th February, 2018	Departure to Germany	Accra

Detailed report of the field research

On the 19th of December, 2017 I arrived in Accra, Ghana to embark on a two months field research work. I had selected two different communities in the Amansie west district, namely Moseaso and Akokroso in the Ashanti region. These two communities are basically gold mining communities. Their main source of livelihood is the artisanal small-scale mining and farming. My first supervisor, Professor Akua O. Biritwum, is a lecturer at the university of cape coast and thus I had to contact her about my arrival and the plans I intend achieving. We agreed to have our first meeting after the Christmas holidays in Cape coast. I used the festive period to catch up with family and friends and together we celebrated Christmas.



Moseaso, Amansie west district, Ghana.

On the 27th day of December, 2017, I drove to university of cape coast to meet my supervisor to discuss my plans for the research and also the literature she asked me to review. . Before my arrival in Ghana, my supervisor had asked me to begin my thesis with literature review in order to give me the requisite knowledge in the subject to facilitate the field work. I Arrived at 9 am and we started our meeting at her office at 10 am at the Institute of development studies where her office is situated. We discussed the literature review and my supervisor asked me to reorganise the sections of the literature to show the main focus of the research. However, she acknowledged I had done a great literature review by looking at a range of different literature and discussing the relevant issues on the subject.

I returned back to Accra the same day and I began the reorganisation of literature review to show clearly the focus of the research.



Moseaso, Amansie west district, Ghana.

On the 11th day of January, 2018, I travelled back to university of Cape coast to spend time with Prof. Akua Biritwum (my first supervisor) to discuss the research instruments for the field work. We spent almost the whole day developing the research instruments and discussing the instruments based on the objectives of my research. I returned back to Accra that evening I was ready for my field work the next day. On the 12th of January, 2018, I arrived in Kumasi which is not too far from the selected communities for the field work. I met the Chief of Moseaso on the 15th of January, 2018, to discuss what I intended doing in his community. This meeting was facilitated by my father who knew the chief of a neighbouring town (Essuonwin). We discussed my motive and he gave me his word in gathering and organising the women in artisanal mining for my interviews.

On the 17th of January, 2018, I travelled back to Moseaso to conduct the first focused group discussion with the women in artisanal mining as well the institutional interview with the traditional authority. Through the focused group discussion I was able to select the key informant interviewees and I subsequently interviewed them on the days after the group interviews.



On the 5th of February, 2018, I travelled to the second community, Akokroso, to meet the chief of the community to discuss my motives and how I intend carrying it out. He gave me his word and promised to call me when he has been able to gather the number of people I seek to interview. I travelled back to Kumasi and on the 6th of February, I returned to Akokroso to conduct a focused group interviews and in the subsequent days I carried out the key informants interviews.



Akokroso, Amansie west district, Ghana.



Key informants interviewees, Akokroso, Amansie west, Ghana.

On the 16th of February, 2018, I returned to my supervisor in University of cape coast to discuss my research findings and she was impressed by the job I had carried out during my short stay in the field. After this meeting, I realised I could have a good rest prior to my departure to Germany on the 20th of February.



In conclusion, I am with no doubt that the research I have conducted in the Amansie west district (specifically Akokroso and Moseaso) with the abled-assistance of my supervisor will touch lives and will multiply plentifully after the thesis is complete. Thus it will contribute immensely in making the world a better place for all mankind.



Mining site, Akokroso, Ghana.