



Report of Three Trainings held at Kyebi, Ellembele and Kumasi as part of
the Building Resilient and Active Communities in Extractive
Landscapes (BRACE) Project

Prepared by Merton & Everett LLP

2024

I. Executive Summary

The Building Resilient and Active Communities in Extractive Landscapes (BRACE) Project, funded by the European Union and implemented by A Rocha Ghana and other partners, aims to strengthen community capacity for environmental advocacy, legal literacy, and evidence gathering in Ghana's extractive sector.

As part of this initiative, Merton and Everett LLP, a law and policy consultancy with significant sector experience was chosen to design and implement a training programme to achieve the project objectives. The team also conducted a series of training workshops in Kyebi, Ellembelle, and Goaso (which was held in Kumasi) to equip participants with the necessary knowledge and skills to demand environmental justice, hold duty bearers accountable, and enhance community-led advocacy. There are further trainings yet to be held as part of the initiative.

Between August 8 and 17, 2024, three three-day residential training workshops were successfully organized, bringing together 137 participants, including community-based organizations (CBOs), journalists, traditional authorities, civil society organizations (CSOs), youth groups and women's groups. The trainings covered essential topics such as Ghana's environmental and extractive sector laws, land rights, compensation and resettlement procedures, Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC), legal avenues for challenging environmental violations, and collective action strategies.

A diverse set of teaching methodologies was employed, including interactive presentations, role-playing exercises, case studies, video discussions, and breakout sessions to ensure active participation and contextualized learning. The training was adapted to the specific needs of each region, taking into account the unique challenges communities face due to mining and other extractive activities. Participants engaged in critical discussions on the power dynamics of land governance, community rights under Ghanaian law, and the legal mechanisms available for holding mining companies accountable.

Key Outcomes:

- Participants gained practical legal knowledge on land rights, environmental laws, and governance structures.
- Strong interest was expressed in community-led advocacy and strategic litigation to challenge illegal mining practices.
- Action plans were developed to mobilize community-based groups, collaborate with the media, and use legal tools to defend environmental rights.
- The trainings created a network of environmental advocates who will work within their communities to educate, mobilize, and challenge violations of environmental and human rights laws.

Next Steps & Recommendations:

To sustain the impact of these trainings, follow-up engagements will be essential. Participants committed to:

- Expanding legal education within their communities through churches, youth groups, and media platforms.
- Enhancing advocacy efforts through strategic collaborations with legal professionals and investigative journalists.
- Organizing collective actions, including protests and legal interventions, against illegal mining and environmental degradation.
- Seeking institutional support for continued training, legal assistance, and policy engagement at the local and national levels.

The BRACE Project provides a structured opportunity to empower local communities to safeguard their environment, promote accountability, and contribute to a sustainable future in Ghana's extractive landscapes.

II. Introduction

This report has been prepared by Merton & Everett LLP as part of the Building Resilient and Active Communities in Extractive Landscapes (BRACE) Project, an initiative aimed at enhancing legal literacy, environmental governance, and advocacy skills among communities affected by extractive activities in Ghana. The

purpose of this report is to document the training sessions conducted in Kyebi, Ellembele, and Kumasi, capturing the key discussions, learning outcomes, and advocacy strategies developed by participants. It provides a comprehensive overview of the training methodologies, regional variations in environmental governance challenges, and the critical role of legal empowerment in strengthening community resilience. This report also outlines recommendations and next steps to ensure that the knowledge and strategies gained from these training sessions are sustained, expanded, and translated into effective community-led advocacy and legal action.

III. Brief Overview of the BRACE Project

The Building Resilient and Active Communities in Extractive Landscapes (BRACE) Project is a European Union-funded initiative aimed at strengthening community resilience, advocacy, and legal literacy in Ghana's extractive sector. The BRACE Project is a European Union-funded initiative aimed at addressing governance gaps and environmental injustices in Ghana's extractive sector. The project responds to the widespread environmental degradation, land dispossession, and socio-economic inequalities caused by mining activities. Many affected communities lack the legal knowledge and advocacy skills necessary to hold government agencies, mining companies, and other stakeholders accountable.

To address these challenges, the BRACE Project which is being implemented by A Rocha Ghana in collaboration with the Nature and Development Fund and WACAM, seeks to empower community-based organizations (CBOs), traditional councils, women's groups, and the media with the legal literacy, advocacy skills,

and strategic tools needed to demand environmental justice, transparency, and accountability in Ghana's natural resource governance framework.

Objectives of the BRACE Project

The project is designed to:

- Enhance legal awareness among communities affected by mining and extractive activities.
- Improve advocacy and evidence-gathering skills to expose environmental violations and governance gaps.
- Strengthen community networks to collectively push for policy changes and regulatory enforcement.
- Promote the use of legal mechanisms such as Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC), public interest litigation, and stakeholder engagement.
- Foster community-led actions that challenge harmful mining practices and advocate for sustainable environmental governance.

Key Components of the BRACE Project

1. Capacity-Building Workshops: Training sessions to equip communities with the legal and advocacy skills necessary to demand their rights.
2. Legal and Policy Interventions: Providing legal support for communities affected by extractive activities and advocating for stronger environmental governance policies.
3. Community Mobilization and Advocacy: Facilitating collective action, including protests, policy engagement, and media campaigns to amplify community voices.
4. Stakeholder Engagement: Strengthening relationships between communities, local authorities, environmental agencies, and civil society to promote accountability and environmental sustainability.

IV. Objectives of the Training Sessions

The BRACE Project training sessions were designed to empower community stakeholders with legal knowledge, advocacy tools, and practical skills to address environmental governance challenges in extractive landscapes. The trainings specifically aimed to:

1. Enhance Legal Awareness & Literacy

This objective was to be achieved through equipping participants with knowledge of Ghana's environmental and extractive sector laws, land rights, and regulatory frameworks. Also the training was designed to clarify the roles of government institutions, traditional authorities, and civil society in environmental governance.

2. Strengthen Community Advocacy & Evidence Gathering

The participants were to be trained on safe evidence collection techniques for reporting environmental violations. Also participants were to be supported to build skills for effective advocacy, media engagement, and grassroots mobilization.

3. Empower Participants to Demand Accountability

A key objective of the trainings were to enhance knowledge as well as legal insights into compensation, resettlement procedures, and avenues for legal redress. It was also to allow participants discuss strategies for holding state and private sector actors accountable for environmental damage and governance failures.

4. Promote the Principle of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC)

The training designed prioritized educating communities on their rights to consultation and consent before extractive activities take place. Also, it was proposed to strengthen knowledge of international legal frameworks protecting community land and environmental rights.

5. Foster Collective Action & Stakeholder Engagement

Participants were expected to explore different avenues for community-led activism, including legal action, town hall meetings, and protests. Further the training was facilitated to encourage collaboration between civil society, traditional leaders, media, and legal professionals to drive policy changes and regulatory enforcement.

6. Adapt Strategies to Local Community Needs

The training content also prioritized tailored training sessions to specific regional contexts to address community-specific challenges related to mining and land governance. This was to ensure that the content and training methodologies are accessible to diverse audiences, including non-literate participants.

By achieving these objectives, the trainings aimed to create a network of empowered environmental advocates, capable of challenging illegal mining, demanding justice, and contributing to sustainable governance in Ghana's extractive sector.

V. Merton & Everett LLP: Selection through Competitive Process for the BRACE Project

Merton & Everett LLP was selected as the legal and advocacy training partner for the Building Resilient and Active Communities in Extractive Landscapes (BRACE) Project following a competitive selection process initiated by A Rocha Ghana. The selection was based on a Request for Expression of Interest (EOI), in which multiple organizations applied to provide legal training and capacity-building services under the project.

As a rights-focused law firm in Ghana, Merton & Everett LLP demonstrated superior expertise, experience, and capacity in delivering high-impact legal

advocacy, environmental law training, and strategic litigation. The firm's proven track record in environmental governance, access to justice, and community empowerment made it an ideal candidate for the BRACE Project's objectives.

Merton & Everett LLP's Competitive Edge in the Selection Process

The firm's EOI submission highlighted its ability to:

- Provide comprehensive legal training on Ghana's environmental and extractive sector laws, including regulatory frameworks, Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC), land rights, and community-led advocacy.
- Enhance environmental governance and accountability by equipping communities with tools to hold state and private sector actors accountable for environmental violations.
- Train diverse stakeholders such as community-based organizations (CBOs), women's groups, civil society organizations (CSOs), traditional councils, and media practitioners, ensuring that the training had a broad and lasting impact.
- Offer innovative and interactive training methodologies, including case studies, role-playing exercises, video sessions, and field visits, to provide practical and contextualized learning experiences.
- Leverage its extensive network and experience in conducting high-level policy advocacy, legal reform initiatives, and grassroots mobilization to drive sustainable environmental justice efforts.

Merton & Everett LLP's Experience and Track Record

As part of its selection, Merton & Everett LLP showcased a strong portfolio of relevant projects, including:

- Training of police and forestry prosecutors on environmental crimes and legal enforcement mechanisms.
- Capacity building for civil society organizations and activists on freedom of assembly, strategic litigation, and human rights.
- Legal advocacy and strategic litigation support for cases involving environmental violations and land disputes.
- Development of training manuals and legal frameworks on land rights, community mobilization, and environmental governance.

Merton & Everett LLP's selection under the BRACE Project reflects its expertise in environmental governance, legal education, and advocacy. Through its role in the project, the firm has provided cutting-edge training and legal capacity-building support, ensuring that affected communities have the knowledge and tools needed to advocate for environmental justice and sustainable resource governance.

VI. Training Sessions Overview

The training sessions conducted under the Project were designed to empower local communities, civil society organizations (CSOs), traditional authorities, women's

groups, and media practitioners with the knowledge, skills, and tools necessary to engage effectively in environmental governance, advocacy, and legal protection of community rights in the extractive sector. These sessions were structured around a comprehensive training curriculum, incorporating interactive learning methodologies, real-life case studies, role-playing exercises, and community-based problem-solving to ensure participants could practically apply their knowledge in their respective communities.

Each session was tailored to the specific challenges and needs of the training location, ensuring that content remained relevant and impactful for participants from different backgrounds. The trainings served as a platform for fostering collaboration between community members, government regulators, legal experts, and advocacy groups, encouraging the development of long-term networks for collective action against environmental degradation, land dispossession, and governance failures in Ghana's extractive sector.

a. How the Objectives of the Trainings were Implemented

The training sessions under the BRACE Project were comprehensive, practical, and impact-driven, providing participants with legal knowledge, advocacy skills, and the ability to take collective action against environmental injustices. By focusing on legal literacy, evidence gathering, regulatory frameworks, and stakeholder collaboration, these trainings have laid the foundation for sustained community engagement in environmental governance and have empowered local actors to drive meaningful change in Ghana's extractive sector.

As indicted primary objectives of the BRACE Project training sessions were to:

1. Enhance Legal Literacy and Awareness on Environmental Governance

One of the fundamental objectives of the trainings was to increase participants' understanding of legal frameworks governing environmental and natural resource management in Ghana. Many community members and local activists are often unaware of their legal rights, the responsibilities of state agencies, or the avenues available for legal redress when their land, water, or environment is affected by mining and other extractive activities. To achieve this, the training covered:

- Understanding Ghana's Environmental and Extractive Sector Laws – Explaining key legislation such as the Environmental Protection Act, Minerals and Mining Act, and Land Act, and how they impact community rights.
- Roles and Responsibilities of Government Regulatory Bodies – Educating participants about agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Minerals Commission, and Forestry Commission, including their mandates, powers, and obligations to protect communities.
- Customary vs. Statutory Land Rights – Clarifying who has the authority to allocate land for mining, the role of chiefs and traditional councils, and the legal protections available to community members in cases of forced displacement.

- Public Participation and the Right to Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) – Ensuring communities understand their legal right to be consulted before mining activities commence and how to hold authorities accountable when this right is violated.
- Understanding the Consequences of Environmental Violations – Educating participants on the criminal and civil liabilities of illegal mining, pollution, and land encroachment, as well as the legal remedies available to affected communities.

By strengthening legal literacy, participants became better equipped to challenge unlawful mining practices, demand accountability from duty-bearers, and advocate for stronger environmental protections.

2. Strengthening Community Capacity for Advocacy and Evidence Gathering

Environmental violations often go unchallenged due to a lack of well-documented evidence, poor legal knowledge, and weak advocacy strategies at the community level. The trainings aimed to enhance participants' ability to collect credible evidence of environmental damage, mobilize support, and advocate effectively for justice. Key focus areas included:

- Safe and Effective Evidence Gathering Techniques – Teaching participants how to document illegal mining activities, pollution, and land encroachment using photos, videos, geolocation tools, and witness testimonies while ensuring their personal safety.
- Reporting Environmental Violations – Training community members on how to submit formal complaints to regulatory agencies, draft petitions, and engage media outlets to publicize environmental abuses.
- Legal Advocacy and Grassroots Mobilization – Equipping participants with advocacy strategies for mobilizing their communities, engaging in public demonstrations, and using legal instruments such as Right to Information (RTI) requests and public interest litigation.
- Stakeholder Engagement and Negotiation – Strengthening participants' ability to engage with government officials, mining companies, and traditional leaders, negotiate compensation claims, and demand improved environmental governance policies.

Through practical exercises, role-playing scenarios, and interactive discussions, participants were able to apply their knowledge to real-world situations, ensuring they left the training with tangible skills to support their advocacy work.

3. Understanding the Legal Framework for Environmental Rights and Extractive Industries

Many local communities lack access to accurate and comprehensive information about how Ghana's legal and regulatory framework governs mining, land rights, and environmental protection. The training sessions provided in-depth explanations of these frameworks to ensure participants:

- Recognize their Rights Under National and International Laws – Understanding how Ghanaian law and international treaties, such as the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), safeguard community rights against environmental harm.
- Learn the Legal Steps for Challenging Environmental Injustices – Breaking down the legal procedures for filing complaints, seeking compensation, and engaging in public interest litigation.
- Differentiate Between Mining License Types and Their Implications – Educating participants about the different types of mining permits (reconnaissance, prospecting, large-scale mining, small-scale mining), and their legal implications for local communities.
- Understand the Role of Compensation and Resettlement Laws – Discussing the legal obligations of mining companies to compensate displaced individuals, the rights of landowners and tenants, and how to challenge unfair compensation processes.

By providing a clear and practical understanding of the legal landscape, participants gained confidence and the necessary tools to engage in informed decision-making and advocacy efforts within their communities.

4. Building Collaboration Among Stakeholders for Collective Action

Addressing environmental governance challenges requires multi-stakeholder engagement and strong coalitions between affected communities, civil society, legal practitioners, government agencies, and the media. The training sought to:

- Strengthen Community Networks for Advocacy – Encouraging participants to form alliances with CSOs, youth groups, and women’s organizations to push for legal reforms and policy enforcement.
- Foster Collaboration Between Legal Experts and Activists – Ensuring participants had access to legal professionals who could support them in filing lawsuits, drafting petitions, and navigating legal procedures.
- Engage Media Practitioners to Amplify Community Voices – Teaching communities how to work with journalists, write press releases, and leverage digital platforms to bring national attention to environmental violations.
- Encourage Traditional Authorities and Local Leaders to Support Advocacy Efforts – Educating chiefs and traditional councils on the importance of responsible land governance and how they can protect community interests in mining negotiations.
- Facilitate Dialogue with Government and Regulatory Agencies – Providing strategies for constructive engagement with policymakers, lobbying for legal reforms, and ensuring enforcement of environmental regulations.

Through collaborative discussions and practical action-planning exercises, participants left the training sessions with stronger networks and a clearer understanding of how to leverage partnerships to demand justice and accountability.

b. Training Methodology

The BRACE Project training sessions were designed using interactive and participatory methodologies to ensure effective knowledge transfer, engagement, and practical application of concepts. Recognizing the diverse educational backgrounds of participants, the training employed multiple teaching approaches to make the learning process inclusive, engaging, and accessible to all.

A blended learning approach was adopted, combining presentations, hands-on activities, multimedia tools, and peer learning exercises to maximize impact. The training methodologies focused on both theoretical understanding and practical application, ensuring that participants not only gained legal knowledge but also developed the advocacy skills necessary to apply it within their communities.

The BRACE Project training methodology combined structured presentations, experiential learning, multimedia tools, and participatory discussions to create an engaging and impactful training experience. By ensuring that learning was interactive, contextualized, and practical, the sessions equipped participants not just with knowledge but with actionable skills and strategies to drive environmental advocacy and legal action within their communities.

Key Training Methods Used:

1. Presentation-Based Learning

Structured presentations formed the foundation of the training, allowing facilitators to deliver key concepts, legal frameworks, and case studies in a clear and structured manner. These sessions provided participants with:

- A structured introduction to Ghana's environmental laws, land rights, and extractive sector regulations.
- Detailed explanations of legal principles such as Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC), compensation rights, and the role of regulatory agencies.
- Simplified breakdowns of complex legal and environmental policies to make them accessible to non-legal professionals.

The presentations incorporated visual aids, PowerPoint slides, and printed handouts to reinforce key learning points. Facilitators ensured that the sessions were interactive, encouraging participants to ask questions, share their own experiences, and engage in discussions.

2. Role-Playing Exercises

A key component of the BRACE Project training sessions was the use of role-playing exercises, which allowed participants to engage in simulated real-world scenarios related to environmental governance and legal advocacy. These exercises were interactive and immersive, encouraging participants to step into the roles of key stakeholders and navigate complex environmental and legal challenges in a safe and controlled learning environment.

During the sessions, participants assumed different roles to gain a practical understanding of the power dynamics and challenges involved in addressing environmental governance issues. Some participants played the role of community leaders negotiating land rights with a mining company, where they had to assert their legal rights while balancing the interests of their people and the pressures from mining corporations. This exercise highlighted the importance of understanding Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) and the strategies communities can use to demand fair compensation, environmental safeguards, and transparent agreements before allowing mining operations on their land.

Others stepped into the role of affected citizens seeking compensation for environmental damages, where they had to present claims for land degradation, water pollution, and loss of livelihoods due to mining activities. This exercise provided practical exposure to compensation laws and regulatory mechanisms, helping participants understand the burden of proof required when filing claims, the role of evidence gathering, and the legal procedures for seeking redress. Through this simulation, participants learned how to effectively engage with regulatory bodies, articulate their grievances, and navigate the bureaucratic and legal hurdles that often hinder communities from receiving justice.

Some participants played the role of regulatory officials tasked with enforcing environmental laws. Acting as representatives of Ghana's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Minerals Commission, they were responsible for conducting inspections, responding to environmental complaints, and ensuring that mining companies adhered to legal and environmental standards. This scenario exposed participants to the challenges faced by enforcement agencies, including corporate influence, political interference, and limited institutional capacity, reinforcing the critical role of community-led monitoring and advocacy in holding regulators accountable.

Another important role in the exercise was that of journalists reporting on illegal mining and environmental violations. Participants in this role were required to conduct investigations, interview affected communities, document environmental damage, and prepare reports for publication. This exercise emphasized the power of the media in amplifying advocacy efforts and holding both corporate entities and government agencies accountable. It also highlighted the importance of ethical reporting, fact-based storytelling, and the risks faced by journalists covering extractive sector issues.

Through these role-playing exercises, participants improved their negotiation and public speaking skills, learning how to engage in constructive dialogue with stakeholders, present persuasive arguments, and counter misinformation. The simulations also enhanced their understanding of legal processes and rights-based advocacy, reinforcing lessons from previous training sessions on land rights, environmental regulations, and access to justice mechanisms.

By stepping into these roles, participants gained firsthand insights into the complexities of environmental governance, the barriers communities face when seeking justice, and the strategic approaches necessary to navigate these challenges effectively. These exercises provided a safe space for experimentation

and learning, allowing participants to refine their advocacy strategies, build confidence in engaging with government and corporate actors, and prepare for real-world interactions. Ultimately, the role-playing exercises strengthened the participants' ability to mobilize their communities, challenge governance failures, and contribute meaningfully to environmental justice efforts in Ghana.

3. Case Studies and Group Discussions

Real-life case studies played a central role in the training sessions, serving as practical illustrations of environmental governance challenges and the legal tools available to address them. These case studies were carefully selected to reflect the realities faced by communities affected by mining, land dispossession, and environmental degradation. By grounding the training in actual legal and advocacy efforts, participants were able to see how theoretical knowledge translates into real-world impact.

The case studies highlighted successful community-led advocacy efforts against illegal mining and land dispossession, demonstrating how affected communities have mobilized, engaged regulatory agencies, and taken legal action to protect their rights. These examples provided participants with concrete strategies for grassroots organizing, legal intervention, and media engagement, showing that effective advocacy can lead to meaningful policy change and enforcement of environmental laws.

Additionally, the training explored legal battles and public interest litigation cases where individuals, civil society organizations, and legal practitioners have challenged government inaction, corporate malpractice, and environmental violations through the courts. By analyzing these cases, participants gained a deeper understanding of legal frameworks such as the Environmental Protection Act, the Minerals and Mining Act, and constitutional provisions on environmental rights. They also learned about the legal avenues available to communities, including filing petitions, seeking injunctions, and engaging in strategic litigation to enforce environmental protection laws.

International case studies were also incorporated to showcase best practices in natural resource governance. These examples from countries with stronger environmental enforcement mechanisms or innovative community-led solutions provided participants with a broader perspective on how legal and advocacy tools can be leveraged for sustainable environmental governance. Learning from successful models in Africa, Latin America, and Asia, participants were encouraged to adapt and apply relevant strategies to their local contexts.

After each case study presentation, group discussions were facilitated to allow participants to engage critically with the material and reflect on its applicability to their own experiences. These discussions provided an opportunity for participants to analyze the legal and advocacy strategies used in each case, assess what worked well and what could be improved, and draw lessons that could inform their own community advocacy efforts. The group setting enabled participants to share their perspectives, experiences, and insights, fostering a rich exchange of knowledge and ideas.

The interactive nature of these discussions strengthened problem-solving and strategic thinking skills, encouraging participants to develop advocacy roadmaps and legal strategies tailored to the unique challenges in their communities. By working together, they formulated action plans, identified key stakeholders for engagement, and explored collaborative approaches to addressing environmental injustices.

Through this collaborative learning process, participants not only benefited from diverse perspectives and experiences, but also built a sense of solidarity and collective action. The discussions reinforced the idea that community efforts, when backed by legal knowledge and strategic advocacy, can drive significant change in environmental governance. This approach empowered participants to take proactive steps in their own communities, ensuring that the training translated into real-world action for environmental justice.

4. Video Sessions and Interactive Q&A

To enhance engagement and deepen participants' understanding of environmental governance challenges, video documentaries and short clips were integrated into the training sessions. This multimedia approach provided visual and narrative-driven insights into the realities of illegal mining (galamsey), environmental advocacy efforts, and effective community engagement strategies. By incorporating audiovisual materials, the training sessions became more dynamic, relatable, and impactful, especially for participants who learn best through storytelling and visual representation.

The video sessions were carefully curated to illustrate the impact of illegal mining on communities and the environment. These documentaries provided real-life footage of polluted rivers, deforested landscapes, and displaced communities, allowing participants to witness firsthand the devastating consequences of extractive activities. By seeing how environmental degradation has affected livelihoods, agriculture, and public health in other communities, participants gained a heightened awareness of the urgency of environmental governance and advocacy efforts.

In addition to exposing participants to the problems caused by mining, the videos also showcased successful environmental advocacy campaigns in Ghana and around the world. These included case studies of communities that have resisted land grabs, filed lawsuits against corporations, or successfully lobbied for stronger environmental protections. By seeing concrete examples of effective grassroots movements, legal interventions, and policy changes, participants were inspired to believe that change is possible when communities organize and demand accountability.

The video materials further highlighted best practices in community engagement and environmental protection, drawing on experiences from different countries. These included sustainable land management projects, citizen-led environmental monitoring, and innovative legal strategies for holding extractive companies accountable. Participants were exposed to diverse approaches to environmental

governance, helping them to identify strategies that could be adapted to their own communities.

Following each video screening, facilitators led interactive Q&A sessions, encouraging participants to reflect on the themes presented. These discussions provided a structured space for participants to critically analyze what they had seen, linking the video content to their own experiences. Participants were asked to identify similarities between the cases shown in the videos and the environmental challenges in their own communities, fostering a deeper connection to the learning material.

Through guided discussions, participants also brainstormed potential advocacy actions and legal interventions that could be applied in their regions. Facilitators encouraged them to consider which strategies from the videos could be realistically implemented, and how to mobilize their communities to push for change. This exercise helped participants to move beyond passive learning, challenging them to think strategically about how they could translate knowledge into action.

The integration of video storytelling and interactive discussions proved to be a highly effective teaching tool, making complex environmental issues more tangible and emotionally resonant. By seeing real people and real struggles, participants gained a deeper emotional investment in environmental justice issues, strengthening their commitment to advocacy and community action. The videos served as powerful motivators, demonstrating that with the right knowledge, legal tools, and collective action, communities can successfully challenge environmental injustices and protect their natural resources.

5. Co-Creation and Expectation Setting

At the start of each training session, a co-creation session was held to ensure that the learning experience was participant-driven, contextually relevant, and responsive to real-life challenges. This interactive process encouraged participants to define their expectations, express their concerns, and shape the direction of the training. Rather than following a rigid, pre-set agenda, the training facilitators adopted a flexible, responsive approach, allowing for adaptations based on participants' inputs and lived experiences.

During these sessions, participants were first asked to define their expectations and articulate what they hoped to achieve by the end of the training. This exercise provided valuable insights into their prior knowledge, specific concerns, and learning priorities. Some participants emphasized the need for practical skills in legal advocacy, while others expressed interest in understanding the technicalities of land rights, compensation claims, and environmental litigation. By openly discussing their expectations, facilitators were able to clarify training objectives and align content with participant needs.

Another crucial aspect of the co-creation session involved identifying key challenges faced by participants in their communities regarding environmental governance. Many attendees came from mining-affected regions where issues such as land dispossession, water pollution, inadequate compensation, and weak

enforcement of environmental laws were pressing concerns. By mapping out these challenges, facilitators were able to structure discussions around real-life problems, making the training practical and directly applicable to participants' advocacy efforts.

Participants were also encouraged to suggest priority areas for focus, ensuring that the training sessions were tailored to their immediate needs and struggles. This participatory approach allowed them to influence the content and structure of the training, making it more engaging and relevant. Facilitators adjusted their presentations, case study selections, and role-playing scenarios based on these suggestions, bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world application.

Beyond content customization, the co-creation process had a profound impact on participants' sense of ownership over the training. Rather than being passive recipients of information, they became active contributors, shaping the discussions and influencing the learning outcomes. This sense of agency increased engagement and motivation, as participants saw the training as a collaborative effort rather than a top-down lecture.

By ensuring that sessions were tailored to local realities, the training resonated more deeply with participants. They could see direct connections between the material covered and the struggles they faced in their communities, making the learning process more meaningful and impactful. The participatory approach also fostered a learning environment where participants felt heard and valued, creating a sense of trust and mutual respect between facilitators and attendees.

Through active involvement in shaping the training, participants remained highly engaged and committed throughout the sessions. This engagement translated into greater enthusiasm, deeper discussions, and a stronger willingness to apply the knowledge gained in their communities. Ultimately, the co-creation process ensured that the BRACE Project training was not just informative, but truly empowering, equipping participants with knowledge, skills, and confidence to drive environmental justice efforts in their own communities.

VII. Detailed Training Reports

As part of the BRACE Project, three major training sessions were conducted in Kyebi, Ellembele, and Kumasi, targeting communities directly affected by extractive activities. These training sessions were designed to equip participants with legal knowledge, advocacy strategies, and practical tools to address challenges such as environmental degradation, land dispossession, and weak regulatory enforcement. By focusing on legal frameworks, land rights, environmental governance, and strategic advocacy techniques, the training aimed to empower participants to hold mining companies and government agencies accountable for their actions. Each session was tailored to the unique challenges faced by participants in their respective communities, ensuring that discussions remained relevant, practical, and action-oriented.

The Kyebi training (August 8-10, 2024) focused on extractive sector regulations, environmental governance, and safe evidence gathering techniques, reflecting the community's concerns over illegal mining (galamsey) and land degradation. The Ellembele training (August 14-17, 2024) emphasized land rights, compensation mechanisms, and resettlement policies, equipping participants with legal tools to challenge unfair land acquisition and advocate for just compensation. The Kumasi training (August 26-28, 2024) provided a broader legal and policy framework, covering national and international environmental law, licensing procedures, and Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) to strengthen community engagement in decision-making processes related to extractive activities.

The following sections provide a detailed report on each of the three training sessions, outlining the topics covered, key discussions, participant feedback, role-playing exercises, and commitments for action. These reports capture the insights, challenges, and lessons learned from the three training locations and highlight the significant steps taken by community members, traditional leaders, and journalists in advancing environmental justice and land rights advocacy.

a. Training in Kyebi

Dates & Venue

The Kyebi training session was held from August 8-10, 2024, at K-Archy Hotel, Kyebi, Eastern Region. Kyebi, a region significantly impacted by illegal mining (galamsey) and environmental degradation, was selected as a key location for this training due to ongoing concerns about water pollution, land dispossession, and ineffective regulatory enforcement. The training aimed to equip community members, traditional leaders, and activists with legal knowledge, advocacy skills, and tools to address these pressing environmental challenges.

Topics Covered

The training covered a wide range of legal and environmental governance topics, ensuring participants gained both theoretical knowledge and practical advocacy tools. The key topics included:

1. **Legal Frameworks and Environmental Governance**
Participants were introduced to Ghana's legal and policy frameworks governing natural resource management, environmental protection, and extractive sector governance. The session provided an overview of key legislation, including the Environmental Protection Act, Minerals and Mining Act, Land Act, and Forestry laws, ensuring that participants understood their legal rights and the obligations of mining companies and regulatory agencies.
2. **Extractive Sector Regulations and Mining Laws**
The session provided an in-depth analysis of the legal requirements and procedures governing mining activities, covering topics such as:
 - Types of mining permits and licenses (reconnaissance, prospecting, and large-scale mining).

- The role of regulatory bodies such as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Minerals Commission, and Water Resources Commission.
 - Legal recourse and remedies for communities affected by mining operations, including compensation claims, injunctions, and strategic litigation.
3. **Safe Evidence Gathering Techniques**
 Participants were trained on how to safely document and report environmental violations, which is critical in holding mining companies and regulatory agencies accountable. The session covered:
- Methods for collecting photographic and video evidence without endangering oneself.
 - How to log and report environmental violations to relevant agencies and advocacy groups.
 - Best practices in interviewing affected community members and documenting testimonies for legal purposes.
4. **Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) Principles and Collective Action Avenues**
 The FPIC session focused on ensuring that communities understand their right to be consulted before extractive projects are initiated. Participants were guided through:
- International and national legal frameworks governing FPIC.
 - How to challenge mining projects that bypass consultation processes.
 - Collective action strategies, including community mobilization, media engagement, and legal interventions.

Key Participant Feedback and Discussions

Participants actively engaged in discussions on the challenges they faced in holding mining companies accountable. Several key themes emerged from the discussions:

- Concerns over weak enforcement of mining regulations and the political influence of illegal miners. Many participants expressed frustration over the failure of regulatory agencies to act against illegal mining operations, despite widespread community reports.
- Lack of transparency in land allocation for mining projects. Traditional authorities noted that some chiefs and local leaders approve mining activities without proper community consultations, leading to conflicts.
- Health and environmental concerns linked to mining activities. Participants discussed the increasing cases of waterborne diseases, destruction of farmlands, and loss of biodiversity due to mining.

These discussions helped tailor the training to focus on practical solutions and strategies for overcoming these barriers.

Role-Playing and Case Study Outcomes

To apply their learning in real-world scenarios, participants engaged in role-playing exercises and case study analyses.

1. **Role-Playing Exercises: Community Leaders vs. Mining Companies:** Participants simulated a negotiation between community representatives and a mining company seeking land for a new project. Through this exercise, they learned negotiation tactics, legal arguments, and how to demand transparency in agreements.

Regulatory Officials vs. Environmental Advocates: Some participants played environmental activists demanding government action, while others acted as EPA officials justifying inaction. This helped participants understand bureaucratic challenges and how to build stronger legal cases against environmental violations.

2. **Case Study Discussions:** Participants analyzed real-life legal cases where communities challenged mining operations, learning from successful advocacy and legal strategies. A notable case examined involved a community in Ghana that used FPIC provisions to halt a mining project due to lack of consultation.

Next Steps and Commitments from Participants

As a result of the training, participants developed concrete action plans for their communities. The following commitments were made:

1. **Strengthening Community Advocacy**
 - Participants agreed to organize local advocacy groups to monitor and report illegal mining activities.
 - Traditional leaders committed to ensuring FPIC processes were properly followed before approving mining projects.
2. **Engaging Media and Legal Experts**
 - Journalists who attended the training pledged to investigate and report on environmental violations.
 - Participants agreed to collaborate with legal experts to explore strategic litigation and petition regulatory bodies.
3. **Educating Others in Their Communities**
 - Many participants planned community sensitization programs to educate others on environmental rights, legal protections, and advocacy tools.
 - Church and youth leaders committed to integrating environmental governance education into their regular community programs.

The Kyebi training session was highly impactful, equipping participants with knowledge, skills, and strategies to hold mining companies accountable and advocate for stronger environmental protections. The next steps outlined by participants reflect a commitment to applying the lessons learned, ensuring that the training results in tangible advocacy efforts and community action.

b. Training in Ellembele

Dates & Venue

The training in Ellembelle took place from August 14-17, 2024, at Wantapa Hotel, Esiama, Western Region. Ellembelle was selected as a key training location due to its significant mining activities, land disputes, and ongoing environmental challenges related to both legal and illegal extraction of natural resources. The training aimed to equip participants with legal knowledge on land rights, compensation mechanisms, and effective advocacy strategies to strengthen community resilience and stakeholder engagement in the extractive sector.

Topics Covered

The Ellembelle training session covered four core areas tailored to the needs of communities affected by mining operations and environmental degradation:

1. Understanding Land Rights, Compensation, and Resettlement
 - Participants were educated on statutory and customary land tenure systems, focusing on who has the legal right to allocate land for mining activities.
 - The compensation and resettlement process for displaced communities was explored, covering legal provisions in the Land Act and the Minerals and Mining Act.
 - Participants examined cases of forced evictions and inadequate compensation, identifying legal avenues available to challenge unjust practices.
2. Environmental Protection Laws and Regulatory Agencies
 - The session provided an overview of Ghana's environmental governance framework, focusing on laws that protect natural resources and communities from environmental harm.
 - Participants learned about the mandates of key regulatory bodies, including the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Minerals Commission, Water Resources Commission, and Forestry Commission.
 - Case studies demonstrated how regulatory agencies enforce environmental laws and the challenges faced in holding violators accountable.
3. Mining License Procedures and Stakeholder Engagement
 - The legal process of obtaining mining licenses was explained, including the different stages of approvals, environmental impact assessments (EIAs), and community consultations.
 - Participants discussed how mining companies often bypass proper consultation procedures, leading to land disputes and conflicts between affected communities and traditional authorities.
 - Strategies were shared on how communities can engage with mining companies and demand transparency in licensing agreements.
4. Advocacy Strategies and Community Empowerment
 - Participants were introduced to effective advocacy techniques, including how to organize community meetings, engage local leaders, and draft petitions.

- The session highlighted successful community-led environmental advocacy efforts, demonstrating how legal frameworks can be leveraged to demand accountability and policy change.
- Media engagement strategies were explored, with a focus on how to use storytelling, investigative journalism, and social media campaigns to amplify advocacy efforts.

Key Participant Feedback and Discussions

Discussions during the training revealed widespread frustrations and challenges among participants, particularly regarding land ownership disputes, weak enforcement of compensation agreements, and environmental destruction caused by mining operations. Some of the key issues raised included:

- Confusion over land ownership and mining concessions. Many participants expressed concern that mining licenses were often granted without clear consultation with affected landowners, leading to land disputes and loss of livelihoods.
- Inadequate and unfair compensation processes. Community members who had been displaced due to mining activities shared experiences of low compensation payments, delays in resettlement, and legal obstacles in challenging unfair settlements.
- Weak enforcement of environmental laws. Participants noted that despite clear environmental laws, many mining companies continue to pollute rivers and destroy forests, with little to no intervention from regulatory agencies.
- Lack of community involvement in decision-making. Many attendees stated that they were excluded from discussions on mining projects, despite legal provisions requiring stakeholder engagement and consent.

These discussions provided facilitators with valuable insights into the local realities of mining-affected communities, allowing for targeted recommendations and strategic guidance during the training.

Role-Playing and Action Planning

To bridge the gap between theory and practice, participants engaged in role-playing exercises and strategic action planning. These interactive sessions helped reinforce key concepts and prepare participants for real-world advocacy efforts.

1. Role-Playing Exercises

- Mining Company vs. Affected Community: Participants simulated a meeting between a mining company and displaced landowners, negotiating fair compensation, relocation, and environmental restoration plans. Through this exercise, participants learned how to advocate effectively, use legal arguments, and challenge unfair compensation offers.
- Regulatory Agency vs. Advocacy Group: Some participants acted as EPA officials, while others played community activists demanding

enforcement of environmental laws. This exercise highlighted the bureaucratic challenges in environmental governance and helped participants develop strategies for engaging with regulators more effectively.

- Community-Led Protest Simulation: Participants planned and staged a mock advocacy campaign, identifying key messages, target audiences, and strategic actions to demand stronger environmental protections and fair compensation policies.
2. Action Planning and Community Commitments
 - Participants worked in groups to develop community action plans outlining how they would implement lessons from the training.
 - Each group identified key stakeholders for engagement, including traditional leaders, local government representatives, journalists, and civil society organizations.
 - The plans included specific steps for mobilizing their communities, filing legal complaints, and raising awareness about land rights and environmental laws.

Next Steps and Commitments from Participants

By the end of the training, participants had developed practical commitments to apply their knowledge and advocacy skills in their communities. Some of the key commitments included:

1. Community Awareness Campaigns
 - Participants pledged to organize sensitization meetings to educate community members on land rights, compensation claims, and environmental protection laws.
 - Traditional leaders committed to sharing legal knowledge with other chiefs and elders, ensuring better-informed decision-making in future land transactions.
2. Engagement with Local Authorities and Regulatory Agencies
 - Participants planned to submit formal petitions to the Minerals Commission and EPA, demanding greater transparency in mining license approvals and stricter enforcement of environmental laws.
 - They also agreed to formally engage local government officials to advocate for more inclusive decision-making processes regarding land use and resource management.
3. Strengthening Legal Advocacy and Documentation
 - Several participants committed to gathering evidence of illegal mining activities and working with legal experts to file cases against violators.
 - Women's groups expressed interest in documenting cases of land dispossession affecting female landowners and pushing for gender-inclusive compensation policies.
4. Media and Public Awareness Strategies
 - Journalists who attended the training pledged to publish investigative reports on environmental violations and community struggles.

- Participants planned to use social media platforms to amplify their advocacy efforts, reaching a broader audience and pressuring decision-makers into action.

The Ellembele training was highly impactful, equipping participants with legal knowledge, advocacy skills, and strategic tools to address land rights issues, environmental degradation, and unfair compensation practices in their communities. The role-playing exercises, discussions, and action planning sessions ensured that participants were not just passive learners but active contributors to the solutions needed to improve environmental governance. The commitments made by participants reflect a strong determination to implement their learning, strengthening grassroots advocacy efforts and ensuring that affected communities have the legal tools and collective power to demand justice.

c. Training in Kumasi

Dates & Venue

The final training under the Building Resilience and Active Communities in Extractive Landscapes (BRACE) Project was held from August 26-28, 2024, at Royal Lamerta Hotel, Kumasi, Ashanti Region. This session brought together 30 participants from diverse backgrounds, including BRACE community members, journalists from local media outlets, and traditional authorities from surrounding communities. The training was facilitated by Oliver Barker-Vormawor and Michelle Akuffo, with additional contributions from Valerie Esther Agyei-Mensah.

Kumasi was chosen as a training location due to its centrality in Ghana's extractive sector and its strategic importance in mobilizing community engagement and advocacy. The region has seen increased mining activities, leading to disputes over land rights, environmental degradation, and community displacement. Given these concerns, the training aimed to equip participants with legal literacy, advocacy strategies, and practical tools to challenge illegal mining, land dispossession, and weak environmental governance.

Topics Covered

The training in Kumasi covered a wide range of legal and environmental governance topics, emphasizing community rights, legal protections, and advocacy strategies. The sessions were designed to simplify complex legal principles and provide actionable insights that participants could apply in their communities.

1. Explanation of Key Legal Terminologies

This session introduced participants to fundamental legal concepts, including The Constitution, Acts of Parliament, Regulations, Policies, and Customary Law. Participants were guided on how these legal frameworks shape environmental governance and land ownership in Ghana. The discussion also emphasized

the importance of legal literacy in protecting community rights and ensuring accountability in the extractive sector.

2. Individual, Family, and Stool Land Rights | Compensation & Resettlement Procedures

This session explored the different types of land ownership in Ghana, highlighting individual, family, and stool lands. Participants learned about land tenure systems, land acquisition laws, and the rights of landowners when confronted with mining activities. The session also delved into compensation and resettlement procedures, outlining the legal requirements for fair compensation, proper consultation, and due process in land transactions.

3. Land Rights in Ghana | International & National Environmental Law | Licensing Procedures & EIAs

This session provided a detailed analysis of land rights in Ghana, linking customary laws, constitutional provisions, and statutory regulations to environmental protection. Participants were introduced to key international legal instruments, such as the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, which reinforce community rights to land and environmental protection.

The session also covered licensing procedures and Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs), explaining the legal obligations of mining companies to consult communities before operations commence. Special attention was given to cases where mining licenses were granted without community consent, sparking discussions on the importance of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) as a legal tool for challenging unauthorized extractive activities.

4. Public & Private Law in Ghana

A discussion on Public and Private Law explored how different legal frameworks intersect in environmental governance. It was explained that Public Law operates at multiple levels, including constitutional provisions, executive instruments, judicial precedents, and customary law. Participants examined Article 41(k) of the Constitution, which mandates citizens to protect Ghana's natural environment, and Article 268, which requires parliamentary ratification for agreements involving natural resource exploitation.

The session also addressed Private Law, particularly in the context of contractual agreements between landowners and mining companies. Participants were taught how legal contracts influence land transactions, compensation settlements, and community rights. The discussions highlighted cases where chiefs unlawfully seized land, leading to disputes over power imbalances and limited legal knowledge among affected communities.

5. Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) & Licensing Procedures

This session emphasized the importance of FPIC, stressing that community members must be consulted before any activity that could impact their environment and livelihoods. Participants were informed of their legal right to approve or reject mining operations on their lands. Discussions revealed that many participants were unaware of their FPIC rights, underscoring the need for wider community education and legal empowerment.

A summary of the mining license application process and requirements was also provided. During this session, a queen mother admitted to authorizing illegal mining activities without consulting her community, leading to a heated discussion on the lack of proper consultation in decision-making. One participant suggested that chiefs in affected communities should also undergo similar training to ensure better awareness and adherence to due processes.

Key Participant Feedback & Concerns

Throughout the training, participants raised critical concerns about land ownership, environmental degradation, and regulatory oversight. Some of the key concerns included:

- Confusion over land ownership and authority: Many participants were unclear on whether chiefs, the government, or individual landowners had the legal right to allocate land for mining.
- Compensation and resettlement issues: Community members who had been displaced due to mining activities reported receiving little to no compensation, with no clear legal avenues for challenging these injustices.
- Weak enforcement of environmental laws: Participants expressed frustration over the lack of accountability in the extractive sector, noting that many mining companies violate environmental regulations without facing penalties.
- Limited knowledge of FPIC and licensing procedures: Most participants did not know they had the legal right to refuse mining operations on their land, reinforcing the importance of legal education.

Role-Playing & Action Planning

To reinforce key lessons, participants engaged in role-playing exercises and strategic action planning.

- In a mock negotiation between community leaders and a mining company, participants practiced asserting their rights, demanding fair compensation, and insisting on FPIC compliance.
- A role-play exercise featuring environmental regulators and advocacy groups allowed participants to experience the bureaucratic challenges of environmental enforcement.
- Participants worked in groups to develop action plans for their communities, outlining steps to educate others, engage local authorities, and demand accountability from mining companies.

Next Steps & Commitments from Participants

By the end of the training, participants committed to taking concrete action in their communities:

1. **Community Awareness Campaigns:** Participants pledged to conduct local education sessions on land rights and environmental protection.
2. **Legal & Policy Engagement:** Plans were made to submit formal petitions to regulatory agencies, calling for better enforcement of environmental laws.
3. **Strengthening Media & Advocacy Efforts:** Journalists in attendance committed to reporting on environmental violations and illegal mining activities.
4. **Expanding Training to Other Communities:** Many participants advocated for further legal literacy training, particularly for chiefs and local leaders.

The Kumasi training session was a highly successful and impactful engagement, equipping participants with legal knowledge, advocacy skills, and community mobilization strategies to combat illegal mining, land dispossession, and environmental injustices. The active participation, deep discussions, and hands-on exercises ensured that attendees left with practical tools for implementing what they had learned. The enthusiasm for continued training and legal education underscores the growing demand for legal empowerment in Ghana's extractive sector. The BRACE Project remains committed to supporting communities in their fight for environmental justice, sustainable land management, and equitable development.

VIII. Key Lessons Learned

The BRACE Project training sessions in Kyebi, Ellembelle, and Kumasi provided critical insights into the legal, environmental, and social challenges faced by extractive communities in Ghana. The training engagements highlighted regional variations in concerns, challenges in environmental advocacy, effective engagement strategies, and the transformative impact of legal literacy on community activism. Below are the key lessons drawn from the training sessions:

a. Regional Variations in Concerns and Engagement

The training sessions revealed distinct regional differences in the concerns, priorities, and levels of engagement among participants. Each location faced unique challenges based on the nature of extractive activities, regulatory enforcement, land ownership structures, and historical disputes over natural resource management.

In Kyebi (Eastern Region), participants expressed deep frustrations over illegal mining (galamsey) and its devastating impact on local water bodies, farmlands, and forest reserves. Community members were particularly concerned about the ineffectiveness of regulatory bodies, with many believing that local authorities and state institutions were complicit in environmental degradation. This led to discussions on how to hold local leaders accountable, strengthen enforcement mechanisms, and leverage legal tools to challenge illegal mining operations.

In Ellembele (Western Region), concerns centered around land ownership, compensation disputes, and forced displacement due to mining activities. Many participants shared experiences of traditional leaders and government agencies granting mining concessions without consulting landowners, leading to land dispossession and economic hardship. The discussions focused on legal provisions for compensation and resettlement, legal avenues to contest land acquisitions, and the role of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) in safeguarding community rights.

The Kumasi (Ashanti Region) training addressed a broader spectrum of legal issues, including environmental and land laws, mining license procedures, and international legal frameworks governing extractive activities. Participants, including traditional leaders and journalists, were particularly interested in legal literacy, community mobilization strategies, and the role of media in exposing environmental violations. Engagement levels were high, with attendees eager to expand the training to other regions and involve more stakeholders, including chiefs and district assemblies.

These regional differences underscored the need for tailored legal and advocacy interventions, ensuring that training sessions and policy recommendations are context-specific and responsive to community needs.

b. Challenges Faced in Environmental Advocacy and Legal Action

Throughout the training, participants identified significant barriers to environmental advocacy and legal action, including:

- Limited knowledge of legal rights and environmental laws: Many community members were unaware of their legal protections under national and international environmental laws, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation and displacement.
- Weak enforcement of environmental regulations: Regulatory agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Minerals Commission were often viewed as ineffective or compromised, failing to hold mining companies accountable for violations.
- Lack of financial and legal resources: Many communities lack access to legal representation or financial support to pursue environmental lawsuits against mining companies or state institutions.
- Political interference and intimidation: Some participants reported threats and harassment when they tried to challenge mining operations or advocate for stronger environmental protections. Chiefs and community leaders who opposed illegal mining often faced political and social pressures to remain silent.
- Complex and bureaucratic legal processes: Participants found the mining licensing process, compensation claims, and environmental impact assessment (EIA) procedures confusing and inaccessible, preventing them from effectively engaging in decision-making processes.

These challenges highlight the urgent need for sustained legal education, stronger enforcement mechanisms, and increased legal support for affected communities.

c. Best Practices and Successful Engagement Strategies

Despite the challenges faced in advocating for environmental justice, the training sessions highlighted a range of effective strategies and best practices that communities and advocacy groups can adopt to promote legal accountability. These strategies, drawn from both local experiences and international case studies, provide practical and proven methods for engaging stakeholders, challenging environmental violations, and mobilizing communities to demand justice.

One of the most powerful tools emphasized during the training was the use of media and public awareness campaigns to expose environmental violations and hold decision-makers accountable. Participants recognized that media coverage plays a crucial role in amplifying community concerns and influencing public discourse. Journalists who attended the training sessions committed to investigating and reporting on illegal mining activities, land dispossession, and corporate environmental misconduct, ensuring that these issues receive national and international attention. Additionally, community members were encouraged to leverage social media platforms, local radio stations, and storytelling techniques to document environmental abuses and mobilize public support. By sharing testimonies, videos, and investigative reports, communities can build momentum for advocacy efforts, pressure regulatory bodies to act, and attract the support of civil society organizations and legal experts.

Another key takeaway from the training was the importance of strengthening legal and community networks. Many participants expressed a strong desire to build alliances with civil society organizations, legal professionals, and advocacy groups to ensure that affected communities have access to legal resources and representation. The training sessions underscored how collaborative efforts between communities, lawyers, and human rights organizations can significantly enhance the effectiveness of environmental advocacy. In all three training locations, participants discussed the feasibility of establishing local legal aid groups to assist residents in filing legal complaints, seeking compensation for environmental damage, and challenging land disputes. These networks are critical in providing ongoing support, sharing legal expertise, and ensuring that communities are not left to navigate complex legal systems alone.

The role of traditional authorities and local government officials in environmental governance was also a major point of discussion. Given the influence chiefs and community leaders have over land allocation and natural resource management, participants acknowledged the need for greater education and sensitization of traditional leaders on environmental and land rights laws. In Kumasi, for example, there was a strong recommendation to train chiefs and local government officials on Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) and mining licensing procedures. This approach would ensure greater transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in decision-making processes related to extractive activities. Engaging these key stakeholders can help bridge the gap between communities

and government institutions, leading to more responsible resource management and better protection of local interests.

Legal mechanisms emerged as one of the most effective tools for challenging environmental violations and holding mining companies accountable. Participants were introduced to public interest litigation, strategic lawsuits, and formal petition processes, all of which have been successfully used by communities to challenge unlawful mining operations, demand compensation, and push for stronger environmental regulations. Case studies were presented to demonstrate how communities in Ghana and other countries have leveraged the legal system to halt destructive mining projects and secure environmental protections. These examples provided practical inspiration for participants, showing that legal advocacy can lead to tangible victories when communities are equipped with the right legal knowledge and support.

Through these discussions and training exercises, participants gained practical advocacy tools that they can immediately apply in their communities. By combining media advocacy, strong legal networks, traditional leadership engagement, and strategic legal interventions, affected communities are now better positioned to demand accountability, push for stronger environmental protections, and safeguard their lands from unsustainable mining activities. The lessons from these training sessions will not only enhance local environmental advocacy efforts but also contribute to broader policy discussions on resource governance and community rights in Ghana.

5.4. Impact of Legal Awareness on Community Action

One of the most significant takeaways from the training was the transformative impact of legal education on participants' confidence and willingness to engage in advocacy and environmental governance. Many community members who initially felt powerless in the face of illegal mining and land grabs expressed a renewed sense of empowerment after learning about their legal rights and available legal remedies.

Participants who were previously unaware of FPIC principles and land tenure rights left the training with a clearer understanding of their ability to contest mining projects and demand transparency in land transactions. Traditional leaders who attended acknowledged the importance of consulting their communities before granting land to mining companies, and some committed to revisiting previous land deals to ensure fairness and community involvement.

The interactive nature of the training, including role-playing exercises, case study discussions, and community action planning, ensured that participants could immediately apply what they had learned. By the end of the training sessions, there was a collective commitment to strengthening advocacy efforts, pursuing legal action against environmental violations, and mobilizing communities to demand greater accountability from government agencies and mining companies.

The training sessions ultimately reinforced the power of legal knowledge as a tool for grassroots activism, demonstrating that when communities understand their

rights, they can challenge injustice, demand accountability, and work towards sustainable environmental governance.

IX. Next Steps and Recommendations

The training sessions in Kyebi, Ellembelle, and Kumasi provided participants with critical legal knowledge, advocacy skills, and strategic tools to challenge illegal mining, land dispossession, and weak environmental governance. However, for the impact of these trainings to be sustained and expanded, it is crucial to develop strong follow-up mechanisms, enhance legal support networks, expand training outreach, and collaborate with key stakeholders. These next steps will ensure that the momentum generated by the training leads to tangible advocacy efforts, legal interventions, and policy reforms at the community and national levels.

a. Strengthening Follow-Up Mechanisms for Participants

The impact of the BRACE Project training sessions must extend beyond the three-day workshops, ensuring that participants remain engaged, supported, and equipped to implement advocacy efforts, seek legal redress, and mobilize their communities effectively. Many participants expressed a strong need for ongoing engagement, mentorship, and legal assistance, recognizing that while the training provided critical legal knowledge and advocacy strategies, sustained guidance and reinforcement would be essential in translating this knowledge into concrete action against environmental violations, land injustices, and weak governance structures.

A structured follow-up framework must be developed to provide continued mentorship, legal support, and community mobilization assistance to ensure that participants can effectively apply their training, engage with regulatory bodies, and challenge exploitative mining practices. To achieve this, a combination of direct engagement strategies, resource provision, and network-building initiatives should be implemented to keep momentum high and advocacy efforts sustained.

Regular Engagement and Progress Monitoring

To track progress, address challenges, and refine strategies, structured check-ins and follow-up meetings should be conducted at regular intervals. These sessions, held virtually or in-person, will serve as platforms for participants to report on their advocacy efforts, receive expert guidance, and refine their approaches based on emerging challenges. They will also help maintain motivation, provide troubleshooting assistance for advocacy campaigns, and encourage peer learning through shared experiences.

Follow-up meetings should be scheduled quarterly with the option for additional emergency support sessions where communities are facing urgent legal or environmental threats. These meetings should involve:

- Community advocacy leaders reporting on local environmental and land disputes.
- Legal experts providing advisory sessions on litigation strategies and policy engagement.
- Technical specialists offering guidance on media engagement, petition drafting, and regulatory compliance.
- Facilitators tracking and documenting success stories to reinforce positive outcomes.

Additionally, one-on-one mentorship can be offered to select participants or community leaders who require tailored assistance in advocacy planning, negotiation with regulatory agencies, or legal case management.

Establishing a Digital Communication & Knowledge Exchange Platform

To facilitate continuous discussions, knowledge sharing, and peer support, a dedicated communication platform should be created for participants, facilitators, and legal professionals. This could be a WhatsApp or Telegram group, an interactive email network, or a secure online forum where participants can share updates, seek advice, and receive ongoing guidance.

This platform should serve as:

- A real-time information-sharing hub where participants can report environmental violations, legal challenges, and ongoing advocacy efforts.
- A knowledge repository where training materials, legal templates, case studies, and regulatory updates can be accessed.
- A space for peer-to-peer learning, enabling participants to exchange ideas, coordinate advocacy initiatives, and share success stories.
- A direct communication channel with legal experts, allowing participants to seek legal opinions, request case evaluations, and receive procedural guidance.

To ensure accessibility and active participation, the platform should incorporate multilingual support where necessary, ensuring that participants from diverse backgrounds and literacy levels can effectively engage.

Expanding Access to Legal Resources & Advocacy Tools

For community members to take legal action, challenge unlawful mining practices, and hold government agencies accountable, they must have access to practical legal tools and advocacy resources. A comprehensive legal resource center should be developed, housing materials such as:

- Training manuals on land rights, environmental laws, and public interest litigation.
- Templates for drafting legal petitions, community resolutions, and regulatory complaints.
- Case law summaries and precedent-setting environmental judgments to guide legal strategies.

- Policy briefs on extractive sector regulations and FPIC guidelines.
- Guidance documents on engaging local government authorities, traditional leaders, and regulatory bodies.

These resources should be made available in digital formats through the dedicated communication platform, as well as printed copies distributed to community-based advocacy groups for wider accessibility.

Quarterly Progress Assessments & Community Impact Reporting

To evaluate the effectiveness of training implementation, quarterly progress assessments should be introduced, where participants provide detailed reports on their advocacy actions, challenges faced, and outcomes achieved. These assessments will allow facilitators to:

- Measure the effectiveness of legal and advocacy interventions.
- Identify gaps where additional support, training, or legal aid is needed.
- Recognize successful community-led actions that can be replicated in other regions.
- Provide strategic recommendations for enhancing advocacy effectiveness.

Structured impact reports should also be generated to document success stories, advocacy milestones, and legal victories, serving as both a progress-tracking mechanism and a tool for securing additional funding and support for future trainings.

Establishing Regional Community Task Forces

To ensure that advocacy efforts remain active and coordinated, regional community task forces should be established, composed of trained participants who take on leadership roles in their respective areas. These task forces would be responsible for:

- Leading local awareness campaigns on land rights, mining laws, and environmental justice.
- Documenting and reporting environmental violations to both legal professionals and regulatory agencies.
- Coordinating community mobilization efforts for protests, petitions, and stakeholder engagements.
- Providing peer support to other residents seeking legal advice or advocacy training.

By formalizing community advocacy structures, these task forces will ensure that training outcomes translate into long-term, community-driven action.

Establishing a strong and sustainable follow-up mechanism is essential to ensuring that the BRACE Project's training sessions lead to long-term impact. By implementing structured engagement strategies, legal aid networks, community task forces, and ongoing mentorship programs, participants will be equipped to translate their knowledge into effective environmental and legal advocacy. The

active involvement of legal professionals will further empower communities to challenge environmental violations, pursue legal remedies, and demand justice. These follow-up initiatives will not only reinforce the training's outcomes but also lay the foundation for a more resilient and organized movement against extractive injustices in Ghana.

b. Enhancing Legal Support and Advocacy Networks

A key challenge identified during the training sessions was the lack of access to legal resources and advocacy networks for communities affected by illegal mining, land dispossession, and environmental violations. Many participants emphasized that without legal representation, financial support, and coordinated advocacy efforts, affected communities struggle to challenge powerful mining corporations, navigate complex regulatory frameworks, and hold government agencies accountable. To bridge this gap and strengthen community resilience, it is essential to establish robust legal support structures and advocacy networks that can provide proactive legal assistance, policy engagement, and strategic litigation support.

Expanding Access to Legal Aid and Representation

To ensure that affected communities can seek justice and challenge illegal practices, there is a need to establish accessible, affordable, and sustainable legal aid services. This can be achieved through:

- The development of a network of pro bono and public interest lawyers who are willing to provide free or subsidized legal representation for affected communities in cases involving land disputes, forced evictions, mining-related environmental damage, and corporate misconduct.
- The creation of mobile legal aid clinics, where legal professionals visit mining-affected areas to offer direct legal consultations, assist in drafting legal documents, and provide legal guidance to communities.
- The establishment of regional legal aid centers, which would serve as permanent support hubs for community members seeking legal assistance, allowing them to file complaints, request legal advice, and access legal literacy resources.
- A referral system linking affected communities to law firms, human rights organizations, and academic legal aid programs, ensuring that cases receive the necessary legal expertise and institutional backing.

By expanding access to legal representation, communities will be better positioned to hold mining companies and regulatory agencies accountable, ensuring that their rights are protected and enforced.

Strengthening Strategic Litigation and Public Interest Lawyering

One of the most effective tools for challenging environmental injustices is public interest litigation, where legal cases are filed not just to resolve individual disputes, but to set broader legal precedents that strengthen environmental governance and land rights protections. Participants emphasized the need

to pursue landmark cases that can drive policy change, improve regulatory enforcement, and ensure corporate accountability. To facilitate this:

- A legal working group should be established, composed of lawyers, legal scholars, and human rights organizations, to identify high-impact cases and coordinate strategic litigation efforts.
- Communities should be trained on how to gather admissible evidence, ensuring that legal cases are well-documented, factually strong, and supported by concrete proof of environmental harm or rights violations.
- Test cases should be developed to challenge illegal mining practices, government inaction, and land dispossession, with legal teams providing structured support from case initiation to court proceedings.
- Legal partnerships should be formed with universities and law schools, encouraging law students to engage in environmental justice initiatives through clinical legal education programs, research projects, and legal internships.

By prioritizing strategic litigation and public interest lawyering, communities will not only secure justice in individual cases but also contribute to long-term legal and policy reforms that strengthen environmental protection laws and land governance frameworks.

Building Community-Based Legal Networks

To empower communities to take ownership of their advocacy efforts, there is a need to establish grassroots legal networks that can serve as the first line of defense against environmental violations. This can be done by:

- Training and equipping community paralegals, who can serve as local legal advisors to residents, assisting them with filing complaints, documenting violations, and engaging with authorities.
- Creating village-level legal aid committees, composed of trained community members, traditional leaders, and activists, to monitor land transactions, assess legal violations, and provide advisory services to community residents.
- Providing digital and physical legal toolkits, including handbooks on land rights, environmental laws, and procedural guidelines for engaging with regulatory agencies.
- Developing a rapid response mechanism, where communities can quickly access legal support when faced with immediate threats such as forced evictions, mining-related violence, or environmental destruction.

By establishing community-based legal networks, local advocates will be better equipped to defend their rights, reducing dependence on external legal interventions and ensuring long-term sustainability of legal empowerment efforts.

Enhancing Collaboration Between Advocacy Groups, Media, and Civil Society Organizations

For legal interventions to be effective and sustainable, they must be supported by strong collaborations between advocacy groups, civil society organizations (CSOs), media outlets, and community leaders. Multistakeholder engagement is critical in ensuring that environmental injustices receive public attention, that policy changes are pursued, and that legal efforts have the necessary institutional backing.

To strengthen these partnerships:

- Even more Civil society organizations should be engaged as key partners, providing communities with advocacy training, research support, and financial resources for legal interventions.
- Media partnerships should be developed to amplify advocacy efforts, ensuring that environmental violations, corporate misconduct, and regulatory failures receive national and international visibility. Journalists should be trained on how to report on environmental issues accurately and safely, ensuring that their coverage supports legal and policy reforms.
- Traditional authorities should be integrated into advocacy efforts, ensuring that chiefs and local leaders are educated on legal protections and FPIC (Free, Prior, and Informed Consent) principles so that they advocate for community interests rather than corporate or political agendas.
- Local government authorities should be engaged, encouraging district assemblies and municipal authorities to enforce environmental laws, provide oversight over mining activities, and engage communities in decision-making processes.
- International environmental and human rights organizations should be leveraged, seeking technical assistance, financial support, and policy advocacy at the global level to strengthen local interventions.

By enhancing collaboration across different sectors, legal support efforts will be more comprehensive, coordinated, and impactful, ensuring that affected communities have the backing they need to drive meaningful change.

Strengthening Policy Engagement and Legislative Reforms

While legal aid and community advocacy are essential, long-term solutions require structural reforms to Ghana's environmental and land governance policies. Participants in the training sessions recognized that many of the legal challenges they face stem from gaps in existing laws, weak enforcement mechanisms, and the absence of community-centered policies. To address this, the following policy engagement strategies should be pursued:

- Engagement with policymakers and legislators, advocating for stronger laws that prioritize community land rights, ensure corporate accountability, and improve environmental governance.
- Advocacy for stronger enforcement of FPIC laws, ensuring that mining companies are legally required to consult communities before initiating extractive projects.

- Proposing legal reforms to increase transparency in mining contracts, preventing backdoor deals between companies and government officials that exclude affected communities.
- Strengthening legal protections for environmental defenders and activists, ensuring that those who challenge illegal mining activities are not subjected to harassment, threats, or criminalization.
- Pushing for the establishment of independent environmental oversight bodies, separate from government regulatory agencies that often face political interference and corruption.

By strengthening policy engagement and legal reforms, communities will have stronger legal frameworks to protect their rights and enforce environmental regulations.

Enhancing legal support and advocacy networks is critical to ensuring that affected communities have the tools, resources, and institutional backing needed to challenge environmental and land injustices. Through expanded legal aid services, strategic litigation initiatives, community legal networks, cross-sector collaboration, and policy engagement, the BRACE Project can help build a strong, sustainable movement for environmental justice in Ghana. These efforts will not only support individual communities but also contribute to broader legal and policy reforms, ensuring that environmental governance is more transparent, just, and accountable.

c. Expanding the Training Model to More Affected Regions

The success of the BRACE Project training sessions in Kyebi, Ellembelle, and Kumasi has demonstrated a clear demand for legal literacy, environmental governance education, and advocacy skills training among communities affected by extractive activities. Many participants emphasized that similar training programs are urgently needed in other mining-affected regions, as issues such as land dispossession, environmental degradation, corporate impunity, and regulatory inaction are widespread across Ghana. Expanding the training model to additional high-risk areas will ensure that more communities are empowered with the knowledge and tools to defend their rights, demand accountability, and actively participate in environmental governance.

Identifying and Prioritizing Additional Training Locations

To scale up the training model effectively, it is essential to conduct a needs assessment to identify additional regions where extractive activities have resulted in serious environmental, social, and economic challenges. The expansion should prioritize communities that are heavily impacted by illegal and legal mining operations, deforestation, land grabs, and weak enforcement of environmental laws. A comprehensive mapping of these and other affected areas should be conducted to ensure that training resources are allocated to the communities most in need.

Securing Funding and Strategic Partnerships for Expansion

Expanding the training model will require additional financial and institutional support to cover logistics, materials, facilitation costs, and post-training follow-up initiatives. To ensure sustainability, the BRACE Project should actively seek funding from multiple sources, including:

- Private sector partnerships, engaging ethical investors, environmental organizations, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives from mining and extractive companies committed to sustainable and responsible practices.
- Government funding, particularly through the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology, and Innovation (MESTI), and the Minerals Commission, which have mandates to support environmental education and responsible mining governance.
- Collaboration with local and international universities, particularly law schools and environmental science faculties, to establish training fellowships, research programs, and legal aid clinics focused on environmental justice.
- Crowdfunding and grassroots fundraising, leveraging diaspora networks, environmental advocacy groups, and social impact platforms to generate financial support for community-led training initiatives.

Adapting the Training Model for Different Regions and Literacy Levels

While the core training framework on land rights, environmental governance, and advocacy strategies remains relevant across affected regions, the training curriculum has been and must continue to be further customized to reflect the specific linguistic and literacy levels of each region. This requires:

- Conducting preliminary consultations with local communities to identify region-specific challenges and training needs.
- Adapting training materials to different literacy levels, incorporating visual aids, role-playing exercises, storytelling methods, and radio-based training for non-literate participants.
- Including language translation services for areas where English is not the primary spoken language, ensuring that traditional authorities and community elders can fully engage.
- Developing specialized training modules, such as:
 - Land rights and customary law for regions where traditional authorities play a dominant role in land allocation.
 - Small-scale mining regulation and safety for areas where artisanal mining is prevalent.
 - Public health and environmental pollution for communities suffering from heavy metal contamination, water shortages, and deforestation.

By ensuring that training materials are regionally adapted and accessible, the expanded training model will maximize engagement and long-term impact.

Training Local Trainers and Establishing a Train-the-Trainer Model

To scale up training efforts sustainably, it is crucial to empower local leaders, paralegals, and advocacy champions who can continue the training in their respective communities. The Train-the-Trainer model will:

- Select and train local facilitators from affected regions, equipping them with in-depth legal knowledge, advocacy skills, and community mobilization techniques.
- Provide ongoing mentorship and refresher courses to trainers, ensuring that they stay updated on legal developments, policy changes, and advocacy best practices.
- Develop a cascading training system, where trained facilitators return to their communities and organize additional workshops for other community members.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of community-led training initiatives, identifying successful trainers and providing incentives for sustained engagement.

This decentralized approach will ensure that knowledge is transferred beyond the initial training sessions, allowing for wider community impact and long-term capacity building.

Establishing Community Resource Centers for Legal and Advocacy Support

To sustain the impact of the training model, there is a need to establish community resource centers that can serve as permanent knowledge hubs for advocacy and legal empowerment. These centers should:

- Provide access to legal materials, training manuals, and regulatory documents related to land rights and environmental governance.
- Offer legal aid services, with trained paralegals and visiting lawyers providing free consultations and case assessments.
- Act as reporting hubs for environmental violations, where community members can document and report cases of illegal mining, land encroachments, and pollution.
- Host regular community meetings and advocacy workshops, ensuring that knowledge-sharing continues beyond the formal training sessions.

These centers can be hosted by local Community based initiatives or organizations, or supportive traditional councils, ensuring that they remain easily accessible to affected communities.

X. Conclusion

The Building Resilient and Active Communities in Extractive Landscapes (BRACE) Project training sessions conducted in Kyebi, Ellembelle, and Kumasi have provided a critical foundation for enhancing environmental governance, legal literacy, and advocacy within mining-affected communities. Through a series of structured and participatory training methodologies, including legal education, case studies, role-playing exercises, and community action planning, participants have been empowered with the tools and knowledge necessary to engage

meaningfully with regulatory agencies, demand transparency, and advocate for stronger environmental protections.

One of the key takeaways from the training sessions is the transformative power of legal awareness in fostering grassroots activism. Participants who previously lacked confidence in challenging unlawful mining activities, land dispossession, and environmental degradation have now gained practical skills to document violations, engage with traditional leaders and government officials, and mobilize their communities for collective action. The regional variations in challenges and concerns underscore the need for tailored advocacy approaches, as each training location revealed unique environmental governance issues, from weak regulatory enforcement in Kyebi to land tenure disputes in Ellembelle and broader legal literacy gaps in Kumasi. Despite these differences, a common theme throughout the sessions was the urgent demand for legal support, sustained community engagement, and stronger enforcement mechanisms to protect vulnerable communities.

Moving forward, the impact of these training sessions must be sustained through structured follow-up mechanisms, expanded legal aid initiatives, and stronger advocacy networks. The establishment of community legal task forces, pro bono legal support programs, and ongoing mentorship from environmental law experts will be critical in ensuring that participants can continue their advocacy beyond the training sessions. Additionally, expanding the training model to more affected regions will help scale up the impact, ensuring that more communities gain access to the legal knowledge and advocacy strategies needed to safeguard their rights. With the continued commitment of Merton & Everett LLP, A Rocha Ghana, and other project partners, the BRACE Project can serve as a catalyst for systemic change, strengthening environmental governance, promoting sustainable resource management, and empowering communities to stand up against environmental injustices in Ghana's extractive sector.

XI. Appendices

- Photos from the sessions

Photo from sessions



Participants on day 1 of training



Participants at the end of the training



Participant making a contribution during training session



Photo of trainers and organizers