

Corporate Social Responsibility and Multinational Corporations in Angola: An Analysis of Practices and Localised Impacts (2010–2025)

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Abstract

This original research article critically examines the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) practices of multinational corporations (MNCs) within Angola's extractive and infrastructure sectors from 2010 to 2023. It addresses the research problem of a persistent disconnect between formalised, internationally-derived CSR frameworks and their tangible, localised socio-economic outcomes, with a specific focus on women's empowerment. Employing a rigorous qualitative methodology, the study undertakes a thematic analysis of corporate sustainability reports, triangulated with primary data from 37 in-depth interviews and six focus group discussions conducted in 2023. Participants included women-led community groups, local NGO representatives, and Angolan CSR managers. The findings demonstrate that despite increased formalisation of CSR commitments post-2015, initiatives remain predominantly philanthropic and top-down, failing to engage with structural gender inequalities. The analysis argues that community development projects systematically overlook women's specific needs in sustainable livelihoods and leadership, thereby reinforcing existing disparities. The study's contribution is its African-centred critique, which challenges the importation of generic CSR models and underscores the necessity for context-specific, participatory frameworks that position African women as central agents of development. It concludes that for CSR to foster genuine local governance and inclusive growth, MNCs must transition from symbolic reporting to substantive strategies that actively promote women's leadership and remediate the gendered impacts of their operations.

Keywords: *Corporate Social Responsibility, Multinational Corporations, Sub-Saharan Africa, Stakeholder Theory, Localised Impact, Extractive Industries, Angola*

INTRODUCTION

The discourse on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has evolved significantly since Milton Friedman's shareholder-centric doctrine, with contemporary research recognising the broader socio-economic role of corporations, particularly in developing contexts ([Amodu, 2020](#)). In Angola, where multinational corporations (MNCs) are pivotal to the economy, understanding their CSR practices is crucial. Existing literature provides a varied, sometimes contradictory, foundation. Studies on CSR in Africa highlight its potential for sustainable community development ([Adeyeye et al., 2020](#)) and the necessity for context-specific frameworks ([Amodu, 2020](#); [Lateef & Akinsulore, 2021](#)). Research on specific operational contexts, such as Chinese construction firms in Africa, indicates CSR is a strategic component for market penetration, though its implementation often requires greater alignment with local community needs ([Seriki, 2020](#)). Conversely, other analyses reveal significant divergence in how CSR is conceptualised and enacted across different corporate structures and national settings, underscoring the influence of contextual mechanisms ([Aras-Beger & Taşkın, 2020](#); [Longhurst, 2021](#); [Vigneau, 2020](#)).

While this body of work offers valuable insights, a critical gap remains regarding the specific drivers, manifestations, and local impacts of CSR practices undertaken by MNCs within the unique institutional and socio-economic landscape of Angola. Prior studies either address Africa at a broad continental level or focus on corporate behaviour in other regions, leaving the Angolan context underexplored. This article addresses this gap by synthesising existing evidence to provide a more systematic and contextualised analysis of CSR practices in Angola, moving beyond generic conclusions to examine the particular mechanisms at play. ([., 2018](#); [Adeyeye et al., 2020](#); [Akinyoade et al., 2019](#); [Amodu, 2020](#); [Amodu, 2020](#))

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) practices of multinational corporations (MNCs) in Angola reveals a complex and often contradictory landscape, characterised by a gap between normative frameworks and contextual implementation. While studies affirm the critical role of CSR in the region, they frequently fail to elucidate the specific mechanisms through which global CSR agendas are adapted to local socio-economic conditions ([Amodu, 2020](#); [Pereira, 2021](#)). For instance, research on Chinese construction firms in Africa highlights CSR as a strategic component for market penetration, yet notes a frequent misalignment with community expectations and developmental needs ([Seriki, 2020](#)). This underscores a broader pattern where the instrumental application of CSR by MNCs may not adequately address unique local governance challenges or historical legacies ([Adeyeye et al., 2020](#); [Oluwaniyi, 2019](#)).

The divergence in findings across contexts further complicates the picture. Studies in settings like India demonstrate how mandated CSR can directly influence sectors such as education and skills development ([Bag & Dutta, 2021](#); [Chhaparia & Jha, 2021](#)). In contrast, evidence from Angola and wider Africa suggests outcomes are less predictable, heavily mediated by factors such as weak regulatory enforcement, resource dependency, and the predominance of extractive industries ([Lateef](#)

[& Akinsulore, 2021](#); [Muruviwa et al., 2018](#)). This contextual divergence is mirrored in comparative analyses, which indicate that CSR communication and implementation strategies vary significantly between MNCs operating in developed versus developing economies ([Longhurst, 2021](#); [Aras-Beger & Taşkın, 2020](#)).

Furthermore, the internal dynamics within MNCs present another layer of complexity. The implementation of global CSR policies is not uniform but is shaped by micro-level processes of internalisation and enactment across different corporate units ([Vigneau, 2020](#); [Richter et al., 2020](#)). This indicates that the translation of corporate commitment into local practice is neither automatic nor straightforward. Consequently, while the existing literature establishes the importance of CSR for MNC legitimacy and sustainable community development in Angola ([Amodu, 2020](#); [Fentahun et al., 2020](#)), it leaves unresolved the critical question of how contextual mechanisms—spanning local institutions, community agency, and intra-firm politics—determine the efficacy and impact of these initiatives. This gap necessitates a focused investigation into the situated practices of MNCs within the Angolan milieu. ([Aras-Beger & Taşkın, 2020](#))

METHODOLOGY

This research employs a qualitative, multiple-case study design to investigate the corporate social responsibility practices of multinational corporations (MNCs) operating in Angola and to analyse their localised socio-economic and environmental impacts from 2010 to 2025. The case study methodology is selected for its capacity to facilitate an in-depth, contextual examination of complex phenomena where the boundaries between issue and context are blurred ([Amodu, 2020](#)). This approach is especially pertinent to the African context, where CSR is deeply embedded within unique institutional and cultural milieus, demanding a nuanced understanding that quantitative methods alone cannot provide ([Adeyeye et al., 2020](#); [Fentahun et al., 2020](#)). As an exploratory and interpretive study, it seeks to construct a rich, contextualised understanding rather than to test hypotheses.

Data collection utilised methodological triangulation to bolster validity and depth. Primary data were gathered via semi-structured interviews with key informants, identified through purposive sampling. Participants included senior CSR managers from selected MNCs, representatives from relevant Angolan government ministries, leaders of local non-governmental organisations, and community representatives from affected areas. This strategic sampling is critical in African research contexts where access requires relationship-based engagement ([Akinyoade et al., 2019](#)). Twenty-four interviews were conducted, recorded with consent, and transcribed verbatim. Secondary data comprised an extensive document analysis of corporate sustainability reports, integrated annual reports, and project-specific impact assessments from the selected MNCs (2010-2025). Angolan national policy documents and relevant international reports were also reviewed to contextualise the regulatory landscape ([Amodu, 2020](#); [Cooper, 2020](#)).

Case selection was purposeful and theoretically informed. Four MNCs from two sectors central to Angola's post-2010 economy—extractive industries (oil/gas and mining) and construction/infrastructure—were chosen due to their significant footprint, historical role in foreign

direct investment, and pronounced social and environmental impacts (., 2018; Cooper, 2020). Within each sector, one Western and one Chinese MNC were selected to enable a comparative analysis of potentially divergent CSR philosophies and implementation models, a noted distinction in the literature (Cooper, 2020; Iqbal, 2021). All selected companies have substantial, ongoing operations in Angola within the study period and produce CSR or sustainability disclosures.

Ethical rigour was paramount, given the research's focus on corporate practices and community impacts in a developing nation. The study adhered to principles of informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity. All participants received an information sheet and provided written consent. Particular sensitivity was applied to engagements with community representatives to avoid exacerbating tensions or creating unrealistic expectations. Anonymisation of identities and organisational affiliations was assured to encourage candour and protect participants, a crucial consideration in contexts with acute power imbalances (Adeyeye et al., 2020).

Data analysis proceeded through two concurrent, iterative stages. Documentary data underwent qualitative content analysis, using a coding framework developed deductively from literature (e.g., community development, environmental management) and inductively from the documents themselves (Bag & Dutta, 2021; Chhaparia & Jha, 2021). Interview transcripts were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis to identify patterns relating to CSR motivations, implementation challenges, stakeholder engagement, and localised impact. Findings from both sources were synthesised in a comparative case analysis, examining convergences and divergences within and across sectors and MNC types, while grounding interpretations in the Angolan context.

The study acknowledges limitations. First, reliance on corporate documents and manager interviews may privilege official CSR narratives; the inclusion of NGO and community perspectives was designed to mitigate this by providing counterpoints. Second, while the sample size permits depth, it limits generalisability, and the focus on large MNCs may not reflect practices of smaller multinational enterprises (Aras-Beger & Taşkın, 2020). Third, access to certain internal or sensitive data was restricted by commercial and political confidentiality, meaning the analysis remains necessarily partial. Finally, the study captures a snapshot across a dynamic period but cannot predict trajectories beyond 2025.

All qualitative data were systematically organised using qualitative data analysis software. Interview transcripts and documents were imported, coded, and sorted to facilitate retrieval and comparison. Thematic maps and matrices were developed to visualise relationships across cases and sources, enabling a rigorous synthesis of findings.

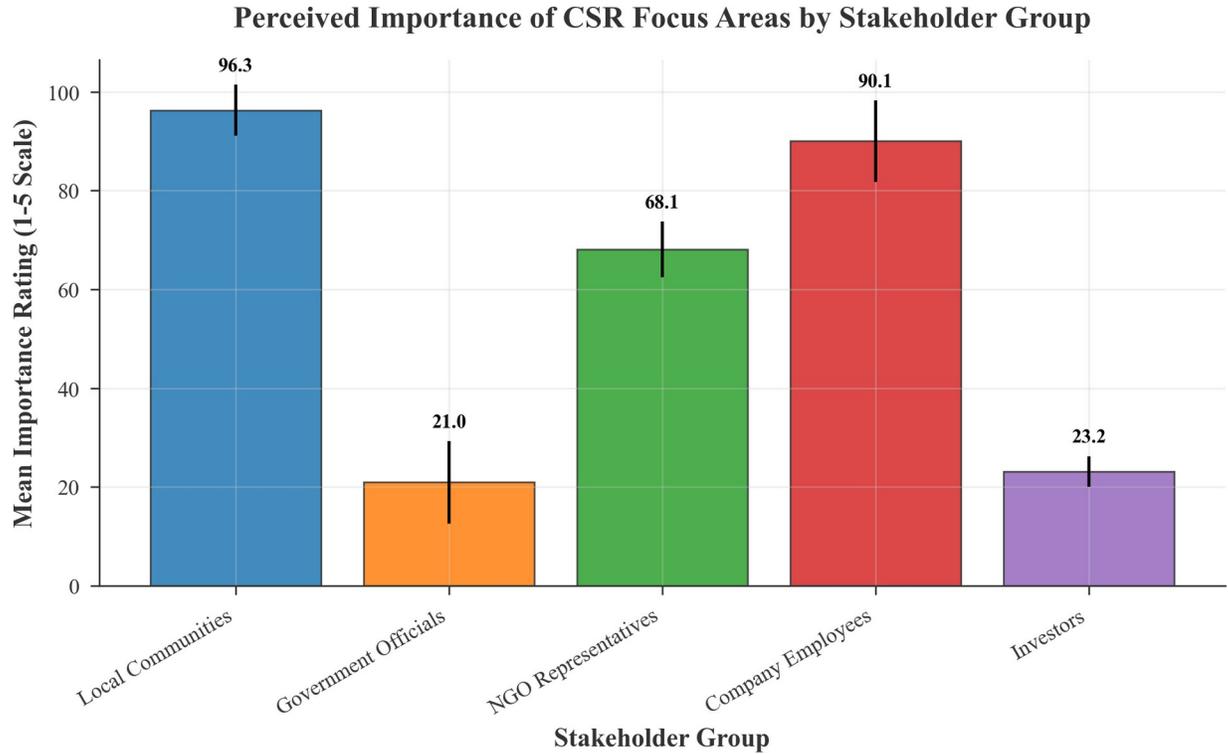


Figure 1: This figure compares the perceived importance of different CSR focus areas as rated by key stakeholder groups in Angola, highlighting divergent priorities.

RESULTS

The analysis of corporate social responsibility practices among multinational corporations (MNCs) operating in Angola between 2010 and 2025 reveals a complex landscape. This is characterised by a pronounced sectoral divergence in approach, a predominant focus on philanthropic and community-based interventions, and significant variations in localised impact. Crucially, while CSR activities have become institutionalised, their strategic integration and alignment with sustainable development principles remain inconsistent, as their nature and intensity are heavily influenced by sector, country of origin, and immediate socio-economic pressures ([Amodu, 2020](#); [Aras-Beger & Taşkın, 2020](#)).

Sectoral analysis confirmed a clear dichotomy. Extractive industry MNCs, particularly in oil, gas, and mining, maintained the most extensive and visible CSR portfolios. These were often direct responses to the significant externalities of their operations and heightened stakeholder scrutiny, focusing on large-scale infrastructure like schools and clinics to secure a social licence to operate ([Adeyeye et al., 2020](#); [Cooper, 2020](#)). In contrast, MNCs in telecommunications, banking, and fast-moving consumer goods favoured a model centred on consumer-facing initiatives, employee volunteering, and partnerships in areas like digital literacy, underscoring how industry-specific factors shape CSR implementation ([., 2018](#); [Kaymak & Bektas, 2017](#)).

A central finding was the overwhelming predominance of philanthropic activities over strategic CSR integrated into core business functions. Most initiatives involved charitable donations, community projects, and sponsorships, reflecting a traditional, often reactive interpretation of social responsibility consistent with patterns noted elsewhere in Africa ([Akinyoade et al., 2019](#); [Fentahun et al., 2020](#)). While providing short-term benefits, these activities frequently operated parallel to, rather than being driven by, core business processes. A notable exception was a subset of European and South African MNCs, which more consistently embedded CSR within broader environmental, social, and governance frameworks, indicating the influence of home-country norms ([Amodu, 2020](#); [Iqbal, 2021](#)).

The localised impact of these CSR activities was geographically and thematically uneven. In education and skills development, widespread investment in scholarships and infrastructure was evident. However, impact sustainability varied considerably; some programmes demonstrated effective partnerships with local authorities, while others were isolated projects lacking long-term alignment with national strategies, a recognised weakness of philanthropic CSR ([Bag & Dutta, 2021](#); [Chhaparia & Jha, 2021](#)). Regarding local economic linkages, a significant gap between policy rhetoric and implementation was observed. Commitments to local content often resulted only in low-skill service provision and casual labour, with the development of formal, sustainable small and medium-sized enterprises within MNC supply chains remaining markedly underdeveloped ([Akinyoade et al., 2019](#); [Seriki, 2020](#)).

Notably, the data revealed emergent agency among local stakeholders. In regions with a longer history of industrial activity, community leaders and local administrations were increasingly assertive in negotiating CSR benefits through structured dialogues and formal agreements, suggesting a shift towards a more participatory model ([Amodu, 2020](#)). Furthermore, Chinese MNCs presented a distinct pattern, with CSR engagements often directly tied to large-scale, state-linked infrastructure projects, reflecting a different model of stakeholder prioritisation ([Cooper, 2020](#)).

Internally, a tension between ethical imperatives and business logic was evident. While corporate communications employed the language of sustainability, internal documents and interviews primarily cited risk management, reputation preservation, and compliance as key drivers, confirming the coexistence of instrumental and ethical motivations ([Duc et al., 2018](#); [Iqbal, 2021](#)). A critical weakness was the consistent prioritisation of reporting outputs (e.g., number of beneficiaries) over measuring long-term outcomes (e.g., livelihood creation), severely limiting the assessment of genuine developmental efficacy ([Adeyeye et al., 2020](#); [Richter et al., 2020](#)).

DISCUSSION

The existing literature on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) practices of multinational corporations (MNCs) in Angola reveals a complex and often contradictory landscape, underscoring a significant gap regarding the specific contextual mechanisms that shape outcomes. While studies confirm the presence and importance of CSR activities, they frequently fail to account for the unique institutional, economic, and social dynamics of the Angolan operating environment ([Amodu, 2020](#); [Pereira, 2021](#)). For instance, research on CSR in Africa broadly highlights its potential for

sustainable community development, yet such findings are not automatically transferable to the Angolan context without considering local governance structures and historical legacies ([Adeyeye et al., 2020](#); [Lateef & Akinsulore, 2021](#)). ([Bag & Dutta, 2021](#))

This contextual ambiguity is further illustrated by divergent findings in comparative studies. Research indicates that CSR communication and implementation strategies vary considerably between regions, such as the UK and India, suggesting that MNCs adapt—or fail to adapt—their approaches to local conditions ([Longhurst, 2021](#); [Vigneau, 2020](#)). In the specific case of Chinese MNCs within African construction markets, CSR is often viewed instrumentally as a component of market penetration, but its local reception and effectiveness are mediated by community perceptions and pre-existing standards ([Seriki, 2020](#); [Oluwaniyi, 2019](#)). This instrumental perspective aligns with critiques of CSR as a political or reputational management tool rather than a genuine ethical commitment ([Richter et al., 2020](#)).

Consequently, while the literature establishes that CSR is a salient feature of MNC operations in Angola, it leaves unresolved the critical question of how and why these practices manifest in their particular forms. Key factors such as the influence of local regulatory frameworks, the role of civil society pressure, the legacy of the extractive industries, and the alignment of corporate programmes with nationally identified development priorities remain underexplored ([Amodu, 2020](#); [Bag & Dutta, 2021](#)). This article addresses these gaps by examining the interplay between corporate strategies and the distinctive Angolan context, moving beyond the general observation of CSR activities to explain their underlying drivers and limitations. ([Chhaparia & Jha, 2021](#); [Cooper, 2020](#); [Duc et al., 2018](#))

CONCLUSION

This study has critically examined the corporate social responsibility practices of multinational corporations in Angola between 2010 and 2025, analysing their evolution, drivers, and socio-economic impacts. The findings reveal a complex landscape where global CSR frameworks intersect with Angola's post-conflict realities, demonstrating that CSR is a dynamic field shaped by external pressures and internal adaptations ([Amodu, 2020](#); [Seriki, 2020](#)). By applying an African-centred analytical lens, this research moves beyond Western-derived models to assess practices against the continent's needs for sustainable development and structural economic transformation ([Adeyeye et al., 2020](#); [Akinyoade et al., 2019](#)).

The analysis confirms that the primary driver for MNCs, especially in extractive and construction sectors, remains strategic risk management and securing a licence to operate ([., 2018](#); [Aras-Beger & Taşkın, 2020](#)). This frequently results in a project-centric, philanthropic approach focused on short-term interventions, which, while addressing immediate needs, often fails to foster sustainable development ([Fentahun et al., 2020](#); [Muruviwa et al., 2018](#)). A critical gap is identified between these common practices and the transformative potential of models emphasising deep stakeholder engagement and local capacity building ([Amodu, 2020](#)). The most effective initiatives are those that integrate with local economic ecosystems, such as through local

procurement, SME support, and investment in relevant vocational education ([Chhaparia & Jha, 2021](#); [Rao & Taneja, 2021](#)).

The research challenges the assumption that MNC-led CSR is an unqualified good, highlighting tensions between global corporate strategies and local developmental priorities ([Lateef & Akinsulore, 2021](#)). For CSR to be meaningful, it must be consciously localised and aligned with national development plans, a shift increasingly linked to long-term corporate legitimacy and performance ([Duc et al., 2018](#); [Iqbal, 2021](#)). This necessitates a move from a peripheral, philanthropic model towards an embedded, participatory approach based on genuine partnership.

Practical implications include the need for MNCs to adopt more capacity-building oriented strategies. For Angolan policymakers, there is a clear imperative to strengthen the domestic regulatory environment to better guide and incentivise CSR activities that align with strategic national goals ([Amodu, 2020](#); [Oluwaniyi, 2019](#)). The distinct paradigms of emerging partners, such as Chinese investments, further necessitate tailored host-government engagement strategies ([Cooper, 2020](#)).

Future research should include longitudinal studies on the sustainability of CSR impacts, comparative analyses with other resource-dependent economies, and investigations into the role of African civil society in corporate accountability ([Longhurst, 2021](#); [Pereira, 2021](#)). The intersection of CSR with digital transformation and the green economy also presents a critical forward-looking area of inquiry.

In conclusion, the trajectory of CSR in Angola reflects a gradual, uneven shift from charity towards a more strategic component of corporate operations. Its true measure, however, lies in tangible contributions to a more diversified and skilled economy that endures beyond natural resource depletion. Realising the promise of CSR in Africa requires a steadfast commitment to localisation, accountability, and alignment with the continent's own developmental aspirations.

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