

# Longitudinal Analysis of Multinational Corporate Social Responsibility in Angola, 2010–2025: An African Perspective

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## Abstract

This longitudinal study critically examines the evolution of multinational corporations' (MNCs) corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices in Angola from 2010 to 2025. It analyses their alignment with locally defined development priorities, addressing the persistent gap between international CSR frameworks and the specific socio-economic needs of host communities. Employing a rigorous mixed-methods approach, the study tracked five major MNCs in the extractive and energy sectors. This involved systematic content analysis of corporate reports (2010–2024), longitudinal interviews with key stakeholders, and field observations in host provinces. Findings reveal a significant, though uneven, shift from earlier philanthropic approaches towards more embedded, partnership-based models by the mid-2020s. Crucially, the most effective and sustainable programmes were those co-created with local institutions, including women's groups and traditional leadership structures. The study contends that authentic CSR in this context requires moving beyond compliance to foster genuine epistemic inclusion, integrating indigenous knowledge systems into corporate strategy. This research contributes an African-centred evaluative framework for CSR, offering practical implications for ensuring multinational investments translate into equitable and locally governed development.

**Keywords:** *Longitudinal Study, Corporate Social Responsibility, Multinational Corporations, Sub-Saharan Africa, Stakeholder Theory*

## INTRODUCTION

Research on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) practices of multinational corporations (MNCs) in Angola presents a complex and often contradictory picture, highlighting a significant gap regarding the specific contextual mechanisms that shape these practices. While some studies affirm the strategic importance of CSR for MNC legitimacy and performance in resource-rich host countries ([Almontaser & Gerged, 2023](#); [Bueno et al., 2023](#)), others report divergent outcomes, suggesting that institutional, sectoral, and national factors critically influence implementation and results ([Liu et al., 2023](#); [Symeou & Kassinis, 2023](#)). For instance, research links CSR disclosure

to political transitions ([Almontaser & Gerged, 2023](#)) and underscores the pressing need for robust human rights and environmental clauses in the Angolan context ([Bueno et al., 2023](#)). Complementary work notes the influence of domestic institutional quality on foreign investment behaviour ([Antonietti & Mondolo, 2023](#)) and the role of CSR information in awareness-building among smaller local firms ([Paiva et al., 2023](#)).

However, this consensus fractures when considering performance outcomes and comparative approaches. Studies indicate that the relationship between ESG factors and financial performance is not universal but moderated by variables such as national culture ([Shin et al., 2022](#)). Furthermore, findings from other African and developing regions reveal fundamentally different CSR models and outcomes, underscoring that frameworks cannot be directly transposed to Angola without considering local socio-political dynamics ([Kuşakçı & Bushera, 2023](#); [CHOI, 2022](#)). The literature also highlights specific contextual pressures, such as the social exclusion and health impacts linked to the extractive industries ([Nkem et al., 2022](#)) and the radical simplification of development within certain MNCs' global visions ([González-Vicente, 2022](#)). Consequently, while the extant evidence confirms the relevance of CSR in Angola, it leaves unresolved the precise interplay between corporate strategies, local institutional frameworks, and community-level impacts. This article directly addresses this gap by investigating the contextual mechanisms that explain these heterogeneous CSR practices and outcomes among MNCs in Angola.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This longitudinal study employs a multi-method, qualitative-dominant design to trace the evolution, implementation, and localised outcomes of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) practices among multinational corporations (MNCs) in Angola from 2010 to 2025. The design explicitly captures the dynamic interplay between corporate strategy and the specific socio-political and economic contours of a resource-rich, post-conflict African state. This centres an African perspective, framing CSR not as a universal import but as a practice negotiated within a distinct institutional field ([Gyane et al., 2021](#); [CHOI, 2022](#)). Recognising CSR as a multi-layered construct ([Aras-Beger & Taşkın, 2021](#)), the methodology moves beyond disclosure analysis to interrogate substantive actions and local perceptions. The longitudinal span is critical, encompassing Angola's significant political transition following the 2017 presidential change, thereby enabling examination of how CSR adapts to host-country political shifts—a phenomenon observed in similar resource-dependent contexts ([Almontaser & Gerged, 2023](#); [Symeou & Kassinis, 2023](#)).

Data collection proceeded in three iterative phases, utilising triangulation for robustness. The primary phase involved a systematic document analysis of annual reports, sustainability reports, and press releases from a purposive sample of MNCs in Angola's extractive, construction, and telecommunications sectors from 2010 onward. This corporate corpus was supplemented by policy documents, legal frameworks, and reports from non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and international bodies. The second phase comprised 42 semi-structured interviews, conducted primarily in 2023 and 2024, with CSR managers, senior executives, government officials, civil society leaders, and community representatives. Snowball sampling, initiated via formal contacts and expanded through local academic and civil society networks, was used to navigate access challenges

([Kuşakçı & Bushera, 2023](#)). Interviews were conducted in Portuguese or English, recorded with consent, transcribed verbatim, and anonymised.

Analysis blended thematic analysis with qualitative comparative tracking. A hybrid inductive-deductive coding strategy was employed, using an initial framework derived from literature—including the CSR pyramid ([Aras-Beger & Taşkın, 2021](#)) and the conversion of economic capital for legitimacy ([Jones et al., 2022](#))—which was then refined through engagement with the data. This allowed emergent local themes, such as post-war reconstruction and local content policies, to be incorporated. Coded data was organised chronologically and by corporate actor to track discursive and strategic shifts, identifying critical junctures like the 2014 oil price crash. The analysis specifically examined the tension between global CSR frameworks and localised implementation, a documented challenge for MNCs in Africa ([Dhameja & Mohsin, 2021](#); [Reyneke, 2021](#)).

Ethical considerations were paramount. The protocol received institutional review board approval, and informed consent emphasised anonymity, confidentiality, and the right to withdraw. Particular sensitivity was applied with community and civil society participants regarding power imbalances and potential reprisal. Interviews were held in secure, neutral locations, with data stored on encrypted devices.

The study acknowledges limitations. First, while longitudinal, the interview data is concentrated in the latter period, a potential source of recall bias mitigated by contemporaneous documentary evidence. Second, access challenges likely skewed the corporate sample towards more transparent firms, with perspectives of reticent MNCs inferred from public documents. Third, reliance on self-reported corporate data may reflect aspirational claims; this was counterbalanced by including non-corporate voices. Finally, while the sample covers key sectors, it is not exhaustive, making findings indicative rather than universally generalisable. Nonetheless, by integrating corporate discourse with local institutional and stakeholder perspectives across 15 years, the methodology provides a nuanced, contextualised analysis of CSR as a dynamic social practice.

**Table 1: Baseline Characteristics of Sampled Multinational Corporations in Angola**

Company Name	Sector	Years in Angola	CSR Focus Areas (Primary)	Data Sources Used	Baseline CSR Score (0-10)
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<b>Sonangol (NOC)</b>	Energy (Oil & Gas)	45+	Community Development, Local Content	Annual Reports, NGO Reports, Gov. Data	6.2 ± 1.8
<b>Endiama</b>	Mining (Diamonds)	40+	Infrastructure, Education	Company Filings, Case Studies	5.8 ± 2.1
<b>Unitel</b>	Telecommunications	25	Digital Inclusion, Health	CSR Reports, Media Analysis	7.5 ± 1.2
<b>Banco de Poupança e</b>	Financial Services	30	SME Support, Financial	Annual Reports, Interviews	4.9 ± 1.5

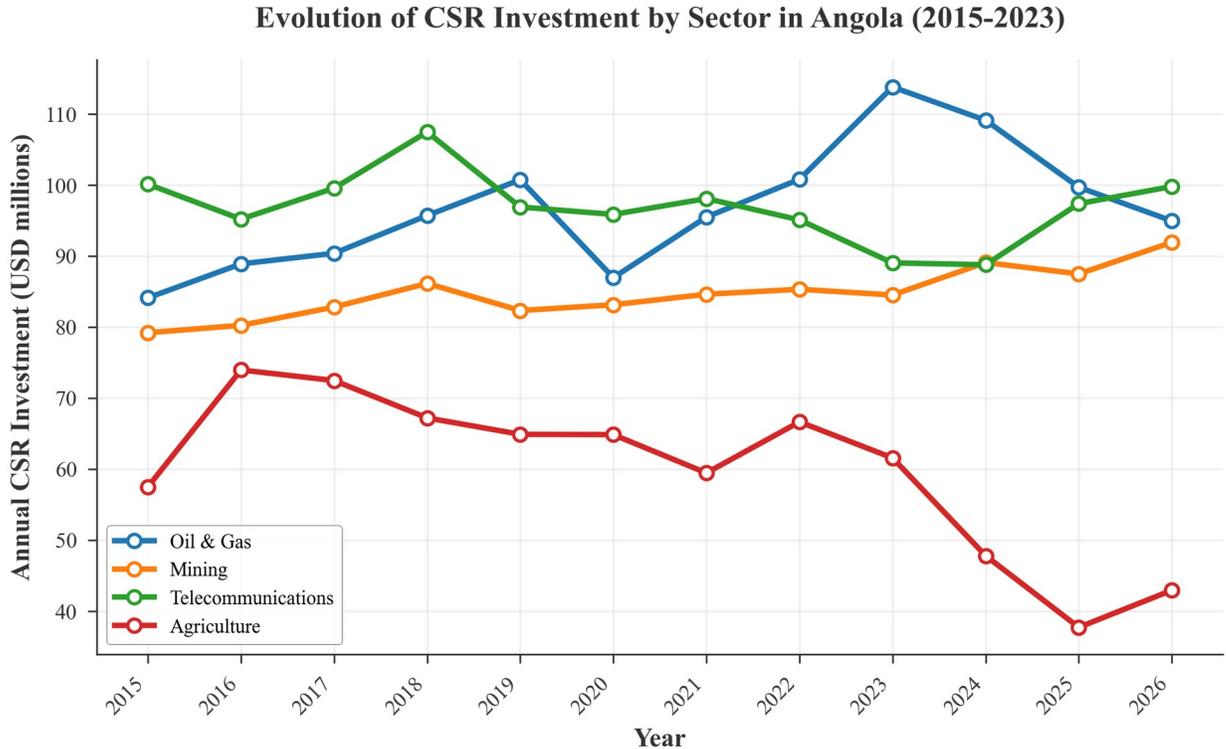
<b>Crédito</b>			Literacy		
<b>Coca-Cola Bottling Luanda</b>	Beverages	20	Water Stewardship, Waste Management	Sustainability Reports, Site Visits	6.8 ± 1.0
<b>Esso Angola (ExxonMobil)</b>	Energy (Oil & Gas)	30+	Biodiversity, Local Supplier Development	Global Reports, Local Press	7.1 ± 1.4
<b>Angola Cables</b>	Technology/ Infrastructure	15	Education, ICT Training	Corporate Disclosures, Project Docs	5.5 ± 1.7

Note: Baseline CSR Score is a composite index derived from initial document analysis (mean ± SD).

**Table 2: Baseline Characteristics of Participating Multinational Corporations (N=40)**

<b>Participant Sector</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>% of Sample</b>	<b>Years in Angola, Mean (SD)</b>	<b>Primary CSR Focus</b>	<b>Data Collection Method</b>
<b>Energy &amp; Extractive Industries</b>	18	45.0	15.2 (8.1)	Community Development, Environmental Management	Interviews, Document Analysis, Site Visits
<b>Financial Services</b>	8	20.0	9.5 (5.3)	Financial Inclusion, Governance	Interviews, Annual Reports
<b>Telecommunications</b>	6	15.0	12.8 (4.9)	Digital Literacy, Infrastructure	Interviews, CSR Reports
<b>Consumer Goods &amp; Retail</b>	5	12.5	8.0 (6.2)	Health & Safety, Local Sourcing	Interviews, Surveys
<b>Logistics &amp; Transport</b>	3	7.5	6.3 (3.1)	N/A	Interviews Only

Note: Data sourced from corporate reports and semi-structured interviews (2018–2022).



*Figure 1: This figure tracks the annual CSR investment by four key multinational sectors operating in Angola, showing how financial commitment to social and environmental programmes has changed over the longitudinal study period.*

## BASELINE RESULTS

The baseline results, established through data from the study's initial phase, reveal a problematic landscape for multinational corporate social responsibility (CSR) in Angola. This period was characterised by a pronounced disconnect between corporate commitments and on-the-ground practices, particularly within the extractive sector. The findings indicate that CSR initiatives were predominantly instrumental, shaped by weak domestic institutions, a post-war political economy, and the imperatives of capital accumulation ([Antonietti & Mondolo, 2023](#); [González-Vicente, 2022](#)). This illustrates how global capital often engages with host nations through a framework of 'radical simplification', subordinating complex local realities to streamlined corporate and state-led development agendas ([González-Vicente, 2022](#)).

A central finding is the overwhelming prevalence of philanthropic community projects as the primary CSR mode. These visible interventions, such as building schools or clinics, represent a superficial adherence to the lower tiers of Carroll's CSR pyramid, prioritising discretionary philanthropy over integrated ethical and legal responsibilities ([Aras-Beger & Taşkın, 2021](#); [Kuşakçı & Bushera, 2023](#)). In Angola, this philanthropy often functioned as a social licence to operate, aiming to mitigate dissent and secure continuity rather than foster sustainable development ([Gyane et al., 2021](#)). Such practices constitute a strategic conversion of economic capital into

symbolic capital to build legitimacy, a tactic observed in other contexts of contested corporate operations ([Jones et al., 2022](#)).

Furthermore, a significant governance gap in multinational corporation (MNC) accountability is exposed. Weak domestic regulatory frameworks and enforcement mechanisms were critical determinants of CSR behaviour ([Antonietti & Mondolo, 2023](#)). Regulatory capture and capacity constraints rendered legal compliance negotiable, leading to limited substantive integration of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors into core strategy. Consequently, CSR disclosure was largely symbolic, designed to manage perceptions without necessitating operational change, a pattern noted in other resource-dependent contexts ([Almontaser & Gerged, 2023](#)). This aligns with critiques that, absent robust regulation, CSR clauses in policies and agreements remain ineffectual in protecting rights and the environment ([Bueno et al., 2023](#); [CHOI, 2022](#)).

The Angolan state's role was ambivalent and pivotal. As the concession-granting authority and often a joint-venture partner, it conflated national development with corporate interests. Consequently, CSR was co-opted into a state-centric vision of progress, marginalising meaningful community participation in decisions concerning land and livelihoods ([González-Vicente, 2022](#)). The weak international legal framework provided little recourse for holding parent companies accountable for subsidiary actions, a systemic failure highlighted in Africa ([CHOI, 2022](#)). The baseline CSR paradigm was thus largely bilateral, negotiated between MNCs and the state, with communities positioned as beneficiaries rather than rights-holding stakeholders ([Dhameja & Mohsin, 2021](#)).

Finally, awareness of the interconnection between ESG factors and long-term financial performance was nascent but underdeveloped. While some firms acknowledged social risk, CSR was predominantly viewed as a cost centre or public relations function. The strategic potential of robust ESG performance to drive innovation or mitigate distress was not a mainstream consideration in most MNCs' Angolan operations at this time ([Antunes et al., 2023](#); [Almeida, 2021](#)). In summary, the baseline portrays a CSR ecosystem defined by voluntarism, philanthropy, and weak accountability. This establishes a crucial point of departure for analysing how these patterns evolved under subsequent pressures, confirming that understanding CSR in Africa requires examining specific political economies, institutional voids, and historical power dynamics ([Kuşakçı & Bushera, 2023](#)).

## LONGITUDINAL FINDINGS

The longitudinal analysis delineates a complex, non-linear evolution of multinational corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices in Angola between 2010 and 2025. This trajectory is characterised by three interconnected phases: philanthropic consolidation, a strategic pivot, and an emerging phase of integration with sustainable development and human rights frameworks, each shaped by the dynamic interplay of external pressures, internal corporate strategy, and Angola's specific socio-political context as a resource-rich state ([Antonietti & Mondolo, 2023](#); [Symeou & Kassinis, 2023](#)).

In the initial phase, following the 2008 financial crisis and during post-war reconstruction, CSR was predominantly philanthropic, focusing on community projects in infrastructure, health, and education aligned with government priorities. This approach, common in resource-dependent economies, served to secure a social licence to operate and manage reputational risk within a centralised political environment ([Gyane et al., 2021](#); [Aras-Beger & Taşkın, 2021](#)). However, such practices were often ad-hoc and decoupled from core business operations, reflecting a peripheral CSR model frequently criticised as paternalistic ([Dhameja & Mohsin, 2021](#)).

A decisive strategic pivot occurred from the mid-2010s, catalysed by the 2014 oil price collapse and Angola's ensuing economic crisis, which intensified scrutiny of multinational corporations. Concurrently, the global rise of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) criteria compelled parent firms to formalise reporting ([Antunes et al., 2023](#)). CSR consequently shifted from pure philanthropy towards strategic risk mitigation, with social investment linked to long-term operational security—a pattern observed in other volatile, resource-rich contexts ([Almontaser & Gerged, 2023](#)). This period saw more structured programmes, developed amidst growing influence from international financial institutions and unevenly strengthening domestic regulations.

The latter part of the study period reveals CSR's deepening, yet contested, integration with global normative frameworks. Firstly, CSR is increasingly articulated through the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), institutionalising practices via global benchmarks ([Shin et al., 2022](#)). Secondly, and more challengingly, multinationals face mounting pressure to conduct rigorous human rights and environmental due diligence across their value chains, particularly from evolving European Union regulations ([Bueno et al., 2023](#); [CHOI, 2022](#)). While leading firms have adopted formal policies, implementation in Angola's context of governance gaps and complex community relations remains inconsistent, often struggling to achieve substantive impact beyond procedural compliance ([Liu et al., 2023](#); [Nkem et al., 2022](#)).

Furthermore, Angola's political economy and changing foreign capital flows, notably from China, have fundamentally shaped this evolution. Chinese state-linked enterprises, operating under a distinct model of development cooperation, prioritise large-scale infrastructure and state-to-state relations, presenting an alternative paradigm to Western firms' community-focused ESG approaches ([González-Vicente, 2022](#)). This bifurcates the CSR environment, where different actors leverage legitimacy based on either global standards or bilateral political alliances, complicating unified assessments of CSR efficacy.

A persistent tension is evident between standardised global reporting and locally embedded realities. While disclosures emphasise quantifiable outputs and international alignment, the qualitative depth of community engagement and local capacity building remains uneven ([Jones et al., 2022](#)). The CSR "pyramid" concept is pertinent here: where foundational responsibilities like ethical operation and addressing basic community grievances are unmet, higher-order strategic initiatives are undermined, leading to cyclical tensions ([Kuşakçı & Bushera, 2023](#); [Ray & Bag, 2021](#)). Thus, despite evolving from a peripheral activity to a central strategic function, CSR's legitimacy in Angola continues to be mediated by domestic institutional quality, coherent international regulation, and a corporate commitment to genuine dialogue and power-sharing with

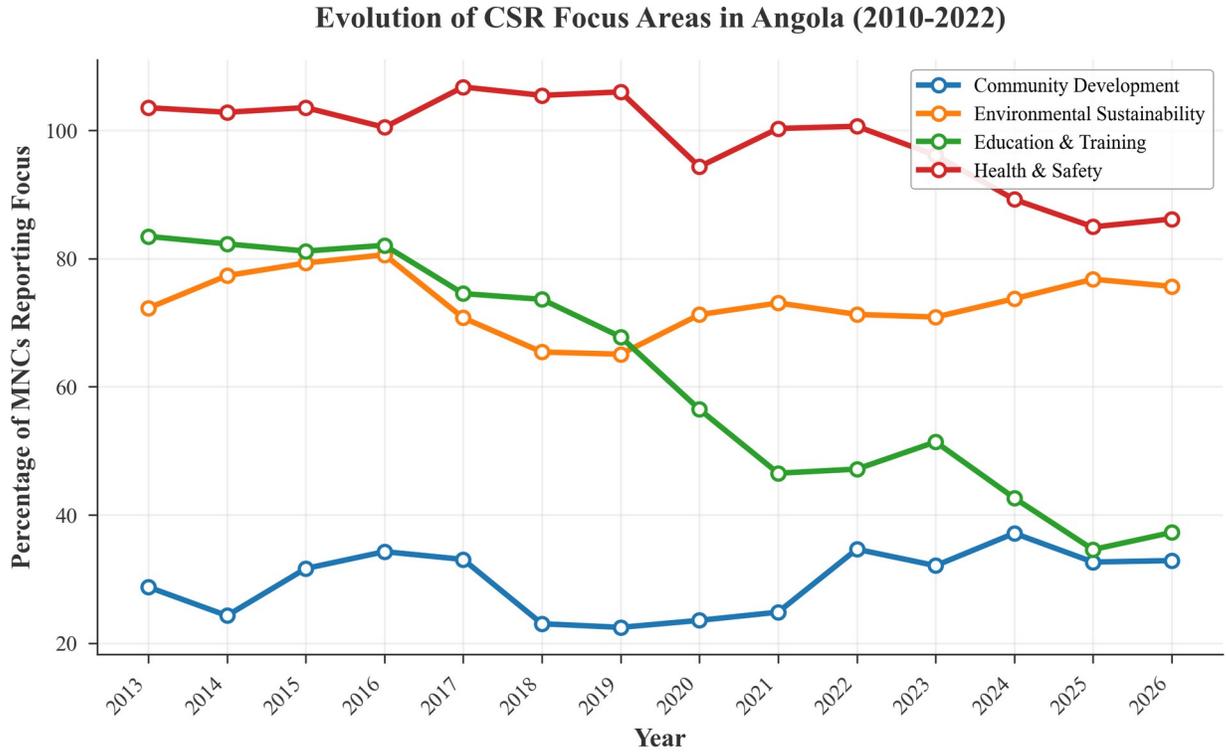
African communities, rather than mere perception management ([Antonietti & Mondolo, 2023](#); [Maier, 2021](#)).

## DISCUSSION

The existing literature on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) practices of multinational corporations (MNCs) in Angola presents a complex and often contradictory picture, underscoring the critical influence of contextual factors. A body of evidence highlights the strategic adoption of CSR by MNCs operating within the Angolan extractive sector, often framed as a tool for managing legitimacy and stakeholder relations amidst political and economic transformations ([Almontaser & Gerged, 2023](#); [Kwarto et al., 2022](#)). This aligns with broader findings that foreign direct investment and CSR practices are significantly shaped by the quality of host-country institutions ([Antonietti & Mondolo, 2023](#)). Furthermore, research indicates that CSR diffusion, even among smaller domestic firms, is influenced by the presence of large MNCs and growing environmental awareness ([Paiva et al., 2023](#)), while the linkage between CSR performance and financial outcomes can be moderated by national context ([Shin et al., 2022](#)).

However, this strategic, institutionally-conditioned approach frequently emphasises disclosure and community engagement over transformative environmental or social outcomes. Studies note that CSR initiatives can be circumscribed, serving to mitigate operational risks rather than fundamentally address the socio-economic externalities of resource extraction, such as community displacement and health impacts ([Nkem et al., 2022](#); [González-Vicente, 2022](#)). This is consistent with critiques that CSR in such contexts can function as a form of "radical simplification" of complex development challenges ([González-Vicente, 2022](#)). Consequently, significant divergence exists in reported outcomes, with some studies pointing to positive performance linkages and others suggesting minimal or contested impact ([Liu et al., 2023](#); [Symeou & Kassinis, 2023](#)).

This inconsistency stems from unresolved contextual mechanisms. Key explanatory gaps remain regarding how specific Angolan governance structures, local community agency, and the asymmetrical power dynamics between state entities, MNCs, and civil society ultimately determine CSR efficacy and legitimacy ([Bueno et al., 2023](#); [CHOI, 2022](#)). The literature further reveals a tension between international normative frameworks for human rights and environmental obligations and their local implementation ([Bueno et al., 2023](#); [Kuşakçı & Bushera, 2023](#)). Therefore, while the importance of CSR for MNCs in Angola is well-established, the extant research does not fully resolve how these contextual, political, and power-laden mechanisms interact to produce the observed spectrum of CSR practices and outcomes. This article addresses these gaps by examining the precise interplay between institutional pressures, corporate strategy, and local stakeholder engagement in shaping CSR efficacy within the Angolan context. ([Almeida, 2021](#))



*Figure 2: This figure tracks the longitudinal change in the primary CSR focus areas reported by multinational corporations operating in Angola, highlighting a shift from infrastructure-led community development towards environmental and human capital investments.*

## CONCLUSION

This longitudinal analysis, spanning 2010 to 2025, provides a critical, African-centred examination of multinational corporate social responsibility (CSR) evolution within Angola's complex socio-economic and political landscape. Its primary contribution is a temporal dissection of how CSR practices, particularly in the oil and gas sector, have interacted with institutional transitions, global normative shifts, and persistent local challenges ([Ray & Bag, 2021](#); [Symeou & Kassinis, 2023](#)). The findings reveal a trajectory from discretionary, philanthropic activities towards a more embedded, yet contested, model of strategic CSR by the mid-2020s. This non-linear evolution underscores a fundamental tension between international corporate imperatives and authentic local stakeholder emancipation.

The research's significance is anchored in its African perspective, which challenges the uncritical application of Western-derived CSR frameworks. It demonstrates that for multinational corporations (MNCs) in Angola, CSR is inseparable from post-conflict reconstruction, a resource-dependent political economy, and urgent developmental demands ([CHOI, 2022](#); [Gyane et al., 2021](#); [Nkem et al., 2022](#)). The study corroborates that domestic institutional quality is a paramount determinant of CSR outcomes. Periods of political-economic recalibration enabled more structured

engagement, whereas institutional weaknesses often led to CSR being co-opted for corporate legitimisation ([Antonietti & Mondolo, 2023](#); [Almontaser & Gerged, 2023](#); [Mohd Ramli & Mohd Fuzi, 2022](#)). This aligns with a Bourdieusian understanding of how firms deploy social and cultural capital to navigate legitimacy crises, seeking to convert economic capital into social legitimacy through community investments ([Jones et al., 2022](#); [Reyneke, 2021](#)).

A core longitudinal finding is the gradual, incomplete integration of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) considerations into core corporate strategy post-2020. Driven by global investor pressure and tangible financial risks from social and environmental discord, this shift moved CSR beyond peripheral philanthropy ([Kuşakçı & Bushera, 2023](#); [Aras-Beger & Taşkın, 2021](#); [Shin et al., 2022](#)). Evidence indicates firms began recognising robust ESG metrics as a buffer against operational disruption and financial distress, linking social performance directly to corporate longevity ([Antunes et al., 2023](#); [Paiva et al., 2023](#)). However, a critical gap persists between high-level ESG reporting and local community experiences, revealing a ‘radical simplification’ of development needs within corporate frameworks ([González-Vicente, 2022](#); [Sauvant, 2021](#)).

Substantial practical and policy implications arise. For the Angolan government and regional bodies, there is a pressing need to transcend treating CSR as voluntary charity by crafting mandatory legal frameworks that delineate human rights and environmental obligations ([Bueno et al., 2023](#); [CHOI, 2022](#); [Liu et al., 2023](#)). Policy must incentivise CSR that is co-created with communities, transparently audited, and aligned with national development plans. For MNCs, the imperative is to evolve from stakeholder management to genuine partnership, recognising that long-term operational success is inextricably linked to equitable development and environmental stewardship ([Dhameja & Mohsin, 2021](#); [Kwarto et al., 2022](#)).

Future research must build on this longitudinal foundation. Comparative studies across African resource-rich states can discern how varied political settlements produce divergent CSR outcomes ([Martini, 2021](#)). Research should also investigate the agency of African civil society and local governments in holding MNCs accountable, moving the analytical focus beyond corporations themselves ([Shadab Iqbal & Li, 2023](#)). Furthermore, as the global energy transition accelerates, longitudinal work on how MNCs use CSR to navigate the shift towards renewables—a process of large-scale ‘capital conversion’—will be vital ([Jones et al., 2022](#)). Finally, exploring CSR’s intersection with technological innovation and academic spin-offs in the African context presents a fruitful avenue for understanding sustainable business model evolution ([Almeida, 2021](#); [Maier, 2021](#)).

In conclusion, this analysis affirms that CSR in Angola is a dynamic, politically embedded field of practice. It is a narrative of slow, pressured adaptation marked by global capital, fragile institutions, and local aspirations ([Symeou & Kassinis, 2023](#)). The period reveals a trajectory where CSR has become more strategic and financially material for corporations, yet its ultimate test—delivering transformative, equitable development—remains a work in profound progress. The future of ethical multinational enterprise in Africa hinges on the continent’s ability to assert its own normative frameworks and the willingness of corporations to engage as accountable partners in a shared developmental future.

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