

## An Appraisal of Mining Sector Corporate Social Responsibility Processes in Mhondoro-Ngezi, Zimbabwe

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**Abstract :** To-date, the discourse on corporate social responsibility (CSR) has primarily centred on the actions and inactions of corporations; hence, the dominant focus on CSR has been on impacts and outcomes. The obscuring effect of this approach has, arguably, resulted in the emergence of what may be termed a 'Northern' agenda on CSR theory and practice, in contrast to an emergency 'Southern' discourse, which appears to highlight the crucial issues of poverty reduction, infrastructure development and the broader questions of social provisioning and community empowerment. Some scholars have explicitly called for a CSR research agenda that focuses on the 'reciprocal duties' of the stakeholders in the CSR process rather than fixate on the actions and inactions of business. It is against the backdrop of these contestations that this study assesses the reciprocal relationships amongst CSR stakeholders in a Zimbabwean platinum mining town, with a view to demonstrating how such relationships - and the expectations and obligations embedded in them - impact on the success or failure of CSR initiatives. The existence of mutual relations between the corporation and its stakeholders signifies the successes of CSR processes and hence the outcomes. The company is Zimplats Mining Company; the community is Mhondoro-Ngezi, and the stakeholders are clearly identified in the study. The study utilised a triangulated design, with data collected using a mini survey, focus groups, in-depth interview and observation. The key findings are that the CSR process in the study community is dominated by the mining company. Despite the existence of a CSR framework that recognises government, local leaders and community members as legitimate stakeholders, there is little evidence of concrete contributions made by these stakeholders towards the realisation of CSR objectives. As a result, the community development process - in so far as CSR is concerned - fails to address the developmental concerns of the various stakeholders. On the basis of these findings, the study concludes that there is a crisis of reciprocity in the CSR process in Mhondoro-Ngezi, and that a situation where the conceptualisation of local development needs and the deployment of specific development tools seems to be driven by one stakeholder almost to the exclusion of all others, can only present contradictory development outcomes. The significance of this study is that it allows for the development of a more nuanced and robust CSR discourse. Rather than focusing on the corporate and stakeholder perspectives and outcomes of CSR initiatives, this study examines the CSR- development nexus by interrogating the idea of reciprocal responsibility as a *sin qua non* to CSR success. This analytical strategy and focus allow the researcher to gain a clear understanding of how stakeholder relationships and duties influence CSR processes and also the overall outcome. At a more practical level, the findings of the study should help to shape the policy on corporate community relationships with a view to enhancing the role of mining in development.

**Keywords :** community development, processes, reciprocity, stakeholders

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