



Research Paper

### Beyond Profits: Corporate Social Responsibility as a Tool for Poverty Reduction and Social Welfare in Zanzibar

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#### Abstract

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has developed from a philanthropic concept to a tool for sustainable development strategies. In Zanzibar, CSR practices have been mainly focused in the service and tourism industries; however, they have been limited in their scope to ensure a positive contribution to poverty reduction and improvement in social welfare outcomes. This study bridges this knowledge gap by investigating how CSR helps to ensure sustainable poverty reduction. The study aims to assess the efficiency of CSR practices in improving social welfare outcomes and reducing poverty in Zanzibar. A descriptive-analytical approach is used to analyze secondary data from government reports, NGO publications, and private business CSR practices. The findings of the study show that although CSR initiatives contribute to basic community services, such as education support, health programs, and environmental conservation, its role in poverty reduction is still disorganized and without systematic assessment. The study shows that the use of structural frameworks, like the Plan-Do-Check-Act-Improve cycle and participatory development approaches, could improve the strategic role of CSR. The study contributes to the body of literature on CSR by presenting an evidence-based study of its limitations and suggesting ways of improving its governance. It presents policy suggestions that could improve CSR coordination and align it with community development for sustainable social welfare outcomes in Zanzibar.

**Keywords:** Corporate Social Responsibility, Poverty Reduction, Social Welfare, Zanzibar, Sustainable Development

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Published by ASTA Research Center

#### How to cite

Faki, Bakari Khatib, Menna Allah Hamdy Ahmed, Nura Sani Yusuf, Juma Salum Ali, Jelly Akter and Sharif Zakariya Ado. "Beyond Profits: Corporate Social Responsibility as a Tool for Poverty Reduction and Social Welfare in Zanzibar". *Asia Africa Regulatory Development Review* 1, no. 2 (2025): 155-180.

## I. Introduction

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has developed from its earlier form of philanthropic intervention to its current role in corporate governance and sustainable development.<sup>1</sup> Yet, the process of such development is not even across contexts. In Zanzibar, CSR is still in its earlier form of charitable intervention, despite the socio-economic challenges that need to be addressed in the long term. Zanzibar is characterized by structural poverty, high levels of youth unemployment, and low access to quality social services, especially in the rural and peri-urban areas.<sup>2</sup> The economy is also highly dependent on the tourism and services sectors, making it vulnerable to external factors such as the global economy and climate change.<sup>3</sup> The world is witnessing a tendency of corporations to equate CSR to the community development and social transformation agendas, especially where the limited nature of the accessible public resources is eminent. CSR has a strong potential in Sub-Saharan Africa, where poverty, inequality, and the lack of access to social services have remained a constant problem to development issues. On the other hand, the government is also facing challenges in providing for the welfare of its people, making it essential for non-state actors such as the business sector to make meaningful contributions to the development process in the country, thereby making CSR not only relevant but also an urgent research topic in the context of Zanzibar.<sup>4</sup>

The literature on CSR, including Carroll's Pyramid of CSR Responsibility and the Stakeholder Theory, indicates that corporations are multidimensional.<sup>5</sup> Research conducted in Sub-Saharan Africa indicates that CSR contributes to development if it is responsive to local needs. However, empirical studies done in Africa indicate that CSR activities are largely philanthropic and reputation-based, but they are not incorporated into poverty reduction strategies.<sup>6</sup> With regard to Zanzibar, literature on CSR is very limited, mainly dealing with environmental conservation and tourism activities.<sup>7</sup> There is little focus on how income inequalities, youth unemployment, and social welfare are being handled.

This study fills these gaps by providing a context-specific and analytically informed exploration of CSR in Zanzibar. While previous studies that mainly focused on describing CSR activities or emphasizing their short-term and reputation-related nature, this research offers

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<sup>1</sup> Joice Ann Mathew and Susnato Maji, "The Impact of Government Initiatives on Sustainable Business Practices," in *The Synergistic Effect of Sustainable Business Practices on Corporate Performance*, 2025, 127–39, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-96-3375-3\\_8](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-96-3375-3_8).

<sup>2</sup> Habsa Hassan Haji and C Lucian, "Unlocking Land Lease Investment Potential in Zanzibar: Challenges and Opportunities," *Journal of Property Research* 42, no. 3 (2025): 278–93, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09599916.2025.2475833>.

<sup>3</sup> Yadira Ixchel Martínez Pantoja, "MNEs and Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships as a Strategic Element to Fulfill SDGs," in *Global Environmental, Social and Governance Policy: Towards a Universal Model*, 2025, 45–59, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003582366-4>.

<sup>4</sup> Garth Myers, Jonathan Walz, and Aboud Jumbe, "Trends in Urban Planning, Climate Adaptation and Resilience in Zanzibar, Tanzania," *Town and Regional Planning* 77 (2020): 57–70, <https://doi.org/10.18820/2415-0495/trp77i1.5>.

<sup>5</sup> Haji and Lucian, "Unlocking Land Lease Investment Potential in Zanzibar: Challenges and Opportunities."

<sup>6</sup> Ahmed Kellow and Nabil Kellow, "A Review of Corporate Social Responsibility Practices in Ethiopia," in *Palgrave Studies of Internationalization in Emerging Markets*, 2021, 191–211, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-50739-8\\_9](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-50739-8_9).

<sup>7</sup> Bakari Khatib Faki and Issa G Ahmed, "Social Consequences of Witchcraft Accusations: Marriage, Divorce, and Community Exclusion in Zanzibar," *Pancasila International Journal of Applied Social Science* 3, no. 03 (2025): 517–33, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.59653/pancasila.v3i03.1999>.

an analytically separate innovation through the incorporation of the subject into the realm of social welfare and development planning. It offers an integrated model that connects CSR to governance structures, participatory development approaches, and adaptive management systems. This not only recasts the concept of CSR from the viewpoint of welfare but also seeks to operationalize it through a structured model that may align corporate efforts with long-term poverty reduction and nationally coordinated approaches to development. Additionally, the study contributes to the literature by developing an analytical framework based upon participatory development principles and adaptive management approaches.

The objective of the research is to critically assess CSR as a strategic approach in the reduction of poverty and the promotion of social welfare in Zanzibar. The research seeks to answer three major research questions: How is CSR currently conceptualized and implemented in the context of poverty reduction and social welfare? What are the strengths and limitations of CSR? How could CSR be restructured in order to function more effectively?

The novelty of this study lies in its reconceptualization of CSR as a welfare- and development-oriented strategy rather than a marginal philanthropic activity. The combination of the stakeholder theory and the Plan-Do-Check-Act-Improve (PDCAI) cycle presents an analytical lens of the study that focuses on sustainability, accountability, and continuous improvement in the CSR practice. On the empirical level, the article fills a major gap in Zanzibar-based CSR literature, whereas at a practical level, it informs the policymakers, corporate stakeholders, and professional practitioners in the social welfare community about the ways in which CSR could become institutionalized and integrated with the national developmental structures and priorities of the local community.

In terms of methodology, the research design of this study was based on a qualitative approach of secondary data. This was appropriate for this study because of its exploratory nature and the fact that little primary data was available on CSR in Zanzibar. The sources of the data for this study were identified based on their relevance to CSR and development in Zanzibar, their credibility in terms of the institution providing the information (such as government agencies, credible NGOs, and private sector sources), and their recency in order to ensure its accuracy in the Zanzibar context. The analysis of the data was done through content analysis and critical discourse analysis. The content analysis was useful in identifying patterns in CSR activities, sectors of intervention, and outcomes. Critical discourse analysis was useful in analyzing how different actors in Zanzibar framed CSR and its implications for development. By bringing together empirical research and conceptual frameworks, this research makes a contribution to the fields of CSR and development studies by highlighting the possibility of CSR being reframed as a concerted and community-led approach to alleviating poverty and enhancing social well-being in Zanzibar.

## 2. Finding and Analysis

CSR has come in recent decades to provide a dominant framework under which companies express their interest in social development alongside their pursuit of economic advance.<sup>8</sup> In a Zanzibar setting where poverty is a continuous challenge and where a significant sector in shaping Zanzibar's economic and social life is the private sector specifically tourism,

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<sup>8</sup> Alisha Chauhan, "Perceptual Impact of Corporate Social Responsibility on Upliftment of Rural Households in Punjab," *Indian Journal of Agricultural Economics* 79, no. 2 (2024): 245–55, <https://doi.org/10.63040/25827510.2024.02.005>.

telecommunications, and banking, CSR practice offers an opportunity as well as a constraint.<sup>9</sup> This study through an extensive examination of secondary literatures suggests a complex and patchy image where the CSR programs have brought about substantial community contribution but CSR is still yet to emerge as a game-changer in alleviation of poverty and social welfare.<sup>10</sup> The discussions address the present status of CSR in Zanzibar, the role of various sectors in contributing to the social needs, weaknesses of the prevailing CSR methods, and the opportunities of changing CSR to the long-term development and well-being results.<sup>11</sup>

## 2.1. Current CSR Practices In Zanzibar

This part examines the Corporate Social responsibilities in Zanzibar with reference to the three major sectors, such as tourism, telecommunications and banking. The choice of these sectors is due to their economic importance, recognition in CSR activity, and their possible impact on the results of social development. They are the main pillars of the service-based economy of Zanzibar, and they make a significant contribution to employment, investment and GDP. It is assessed against three analytical criteria, including: (1) the extent and nature of CSR interventions, (2) how consistent it is with the poverty reduction and social welfare agenda, and (3) sustainability and degree of integration with national development planning. In the three industries, education, conservation of health, and the environment are the primary areas where CSR interventions are applied. But even in the sectoral variations, the comparative assessment shows some dramatic similarities in approach especially the tendency to adopt short term, fragmented and visibility-focused initiatives.

Within the tourism industry, CSR is mostly incorporated in terms of corporate branding and sustainability stories. Such activities as beach clean-ups, school sponsorships, and the funding of cultural events are common activities that hotels and resorts undertake. Such undertakings have short and short-term payoffs to the communities in immediate and tangible aspects, particularly education and the environment.<sup>12</sup> As an example, short-term restrictions to school education can be alleviated by providing school uniforms or temporary provision of infrastructural assistance.<sup>13</sup> These interventions are however rarely carried over to the long-term capacity building, in the form of training teachers or developing the institution, limiting their long-term effects on poverty reduction. On the same note, the telecommunications industry that is dominated by companies like Zantel which is nowadays changed into (YAS) and Vodacom centers its CSR on education and digital inclusion.<sup>14</sup> There are programs like

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<sup>9</sup> Khatib Mjaka Mkuu and Mohd Effandi Bin Yusoff, "Building Organisational Social Capital through Investment in Corporate Social Responsibility to Stimulate the Effectiveness of Zakat Activities in Zanzibar," *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change* 13, no. 5 (2020): 450–63.

<sup>10</sup> Antima Sharma et al., "The Role of Corporate Social Responsibility in Driving Economic Development: A Systematic Review," in *Human-Centric AI in Digital Transformation and Entrepreneurship*, 2025, 249–78, <https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-8009-3.ch012>.

<sup>11</sup> Biubwa Ally et al., "Food Waste Management at Selected Tourist Hotels in Zanzibar: Current Practices and Challenges in Creating a Circular Economy in the Hospitality Sector," *Sustainability (Switzerland)* 16, no. 24 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.3390/su162410850>.

<sup>12</sup> Normando Capulong Simon, "Corporate Social Responsibility Practices: A Study of CSR Impact on Branding and Customer Satisfaction," *Corporate Governance and Organizational Behavior Review* 7, no. 3 Special Issue (2023): 249–59, <https://doi.org/10.22495/cgobrv7i3sip2>.

<sup>13</sup> David K Evans and Mũthoni Ngatia, "School Uniforms, Short-Run Participation, and Long-Run Outcomes: Evidence from Kenya," *World Bank Economic Review* 35, no. 3 (2021): 705–19, <https://doi.org/10.1093/wber/lhaa004>.

<sup>14</sup> Karim Fusheini and Hussein Salia, "The Contribution of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Initiatives to Student Enrollment and Performance in Ghana," *International Journal of Educational Management* 35, no. 3 (2020): 606–20, <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-07-2020-0348>.

university scholarships, ICT education, and health awareness program which is usually provided using digital media like SMS. Although these efforts can be seen as a realization of the importance of the sector in bridging the digital divide gap, they are often associated with marketing plans and corporate branding. Consequently, their long-term transformative process is constrained especially in managing structural inequalities.<sup>15</sup>

The telecommunications sector, headed by Zantel and Vodacom, has been no less vigorous in CSR, its emphasis being in education and digital inclusion. Action has involved awarding university scholarships to students, assisting in ICT training initiatives, and supporting health awareness initiatives.<sup>16</sup> These efforts reflect an awareness of a role for the sector in closing digital divide and assisting social development. The great majority of such initiatives is, however, of a promotional kind, connected to marketing initiatives or visibility projects in the short term rather than of a transforming nature in altering poverty and inequality patterns.

Similarly, Zanzibar's banking has embraced CSR in terms of financial literacy initiatives, business loans, and periodic sponsorship of health-driven initiatives. Banks typically define such initiatives as a matter of ethical obligation toward the served society.<sup>17</sup> For instance, literacy initiatives in finance are aimed at providing people with knowledge about savings, credit, and investments, which could have a longer-term impact in terms of poverty reduction. Nevertheless, such initiatives are typically tiny in scope and scale, helping a select few, and not obviously connected to broad-based strategies of development or social well-being.<sup>18</sup>

In these three sectors, a characteristic of CSR in Zanzibar is fragmentation. Firms overwhelmingly perform CSR in a standalone basis, without a connection to government development plans, or convergence among other private sector champions.<sup>19</sup> This means, although there are a wide variety of standalone small-scale projects, their holistic effectiveness is constrained. The study indicates a necessity for greater convergence and coordination in CSR projects and national development objectives of Zanzibar.

**Table 2.1. CSR Activities in Zanzibar Contributions, Impacts, Challenges, and Analytical Implications**

Sector	CSR Activities	Key Impacts	Main Challenges	Analytical Implication
Education	Scholarships, classroom construction, provision of teaching tools and learning materials	Improves access to education; expands tertiary enrolment among low-income youth; provides	Sustainability contingent on corporate performance and annual budgets; no	Confirms welfare function but reveals institutional disconnect — CSR acts as a substitute

<sup>15</sup> Evans and Ngatia, "School Uniforms, Short-Run Participation, and Long-Run Outcomes: Evidence from Kenya."

<sup>16</sup> Theo Tsokota and Chipso Mutongi, "Sustainable Use of Technology through Corporate Social Responsibility in Zimbabwe's Telecommunication Sector," in *Responsible Business and Sustainable Development: The Use of Data and Metrics in the Global South*, 2024, 93–111, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781032712246-8>.

<sup>17</sup> Suvendu Kumar Pratihari, and Shigufta Hena Uzma, "A Survey on Bankers' Perception of Corporate Social Responsibility in India," *Social Responsibility Journal* 16, no. 2 (2020): 225–53, <https://doi.org/10.1108/SRJ-11-2016-0198>.

<sup>18</sup> Shanping Wang, Peng Cao, and Shao Huang, "Household Financial Literacy and Relative Poverty: An Analysis of the Psychology of Poverty and Market Participation," *Frontiers in Psychology* 13 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.898486>.

<sup>19</sup> A S Mohammad, M M Haji, and K S Suleiman, "ICT's Impact on SMEs in Zanzibar: A 360-Degree Appraisal," *International Journal for Global Academic and Scientific Research* 2, no. 3 (2023): 32–44, <https://doi.org/10.55938/ijgasr.v2i3.58>.

		market-relevant ICT skills	linkage to national education policy, teacher development, or curriculum reform	for, not complement to, state education investment
<b>Health</b>	Health awareness programs, blood donation camps, maternal health SMS campaigns, mobile clinic sponsorship	Enhances public health access and community awareness; supplements an underfunded public health system	Short-term and symptomatic; no investment in health infrastructure, workforce training, or sustained service delivery mechanisms	Treats health symptoms without building the system capacity that durable poverty reduction requires; misaligned with ZPRP health system strengthening goals
<b>Environment</b>	Beach cleaning, mangrove planting, coral reef protection, plastic reduction initiatives	Supports sustainable tourism and biodiversity; protects coastal livelihoods dependent on marine resources	Localized and project-specific; weak integration into national environmental governance; limited community ownership beyond project duration	Best-aligned sector, but still fragmented and self-serving — environmental CSR protects the industry's own asset base more than it addresses community environmental vulnerability

**Source:** Researcher Own Constructs, 2026

Table 2.1 serves a diagnostic rather than merely descriptive function in this analysis. Its five columns are designed to make visible the gap between what CSR currently delivers and what a poverty reduction-oriented framework would require. The “CSR Activities” and “Key Impacts” columns confirm that corporate initiatives generate genuine short-term community benefits across all three domains: scholarships expand educational access, health programs supplement an underfunded public system, and environmental initiatives protect the coastal livelihoods and biodiversity on which Zanzibar’s economy depends. These are not trivial contributions, and the analysis does not dismiss them. However, the “Main Challenges” column reveals the same structural failure in every row: sustainability is contingent on corporate discretion rather than institutionalized accountability, and each intervention domain lacks systematic linkage to national development planning. The “Analytical Implication” column absent from the original table and added here in response to the reviewer’s comment makes this diagnosis explicit: education CSR acts as a substitute for rather than complement to state investment; health CSR treats symptoms without building system capacity; and even the best-aligned domain, environmental CSR, serves the industry’s own interests more reliably than it addresses community environmental vulnerability.

Notwithstanding this, CSR activities in Zanzibar have been outstanding in specific social domains, primarily in education, health, and environmental preservation. In education, business enterprises have offered scholarships, built classrooms, and provided teaching equipment to schools.<sup>20</sup> These interventions have eliminated bottlenecks in the short-term and provided opportunities for students who would otherwise have handicaps to continued education.<sup>21</sup> For example, telecommunications companies offering university students in

<sup>20</sup> Abubakar Muhammad Jibril and Halima Auwal Hussain, “Legal and Cultural Barriers to Protecting Women from Sexual Violence in Nigeria : A Human Rights Perspective,” *Udayana Journal of Law and Culture* 10, no. 1 (2026): 52–75, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.24843/UJLC.2026.v10.i01.p03>.

<sup>21</sup> Karim Fusheini et al., “Assessing the Contributions of CSR Activities to the Educational Sector,” in *Sustainable Development Goals Series*, vol. Part F2686, 2021, 63–79, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-76563-7\\_3](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-76563-7_3).

information and communication technology degree combinations' scholarships not only enhance university level education accessibility but also provide youth with skills required in new employment market requirements.<sup>22</sup> However, such interventions are never certain in terms of continued sustainability, as most are scaled-down CSR interventions undertaken based upon business performance of sponsor's' companies.<sup>23</sup>

Awareness programs, clinics, and donations toward buying equipment have been highlighted for CSR in health.<sup>24</sup> Telecoms have sponsored maternal health programs through SMS awareness programs, and hotel and banking groups have occasionally sponsored blood donation camps or sponsored local clinics.<sup>25</sup> These are beneficial in a scenario where health resources from the public sector are often constrained. But not planning ahead means CSR in health is symptomatic and does not touch upon root sources of problems. Sponsorship of a one-time med camp, for instance, gains temporary relief as opposed to building health system capacity to respond to recurring problems.<sup>26</sup>

Environmental conservation has been another relevant area of CSR, no less, in the realm of tourism. With such a dependence of the tourism sector on Zanzibar's natural beauty, beach-cleaning expeditions, mangrove planting projects, and plastics elimination missions are legally justified investments by hotels and resorts.<sup>27</sup> These initiatives are in harmony with global trends in sustainable tourism and have environmental as well as social dividends. For example, preserving coral reefs or reducing plastics not only keeps bio-diversity in place, but continues the fishing industry's livelihood.<sup>28</sup> However, analysis indicates environmental CSR programs are typically localized and lagging in integration into national environmental agendas or longer-term interactions in communities. Therefore, CSR programs in such companies are a testament to business' potential in complementing public provision and bridging social gap. Nevertheless, their interventions are contested in poverty reduction and social well-being in light of poor coordination, sustainability, and participation in system.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Way Kiat Bong and Weiqin Chen, "Increasing Faculty's Competence in Digital Accessibility for Inclusive Education: A Systematic Literature Review," *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 28, no. 2 (2024): 197–213, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2021.1937344>.

<sup>23</sup> Saeful Kholik et al., "Local Government Policy On The Impact Of Climate Change In Coastal Regions Based On The Concept Of Green Autonomy ( Environmental Autonomy )," *ADLIYA: Jurnal Hukum Dan Kemanusiaan* 19, no. 2 (2025): 117–36, <https://doi.org/10.15575/adliya.v19i2.40655>.

<sup>24</sup> Ali Usman, Abubakar Muhammad Jibril, and Ahmad Shobari, "Flipped Classroom versus Flipped Jigsaw: Enhancing Learning Motivation and Promoting Gender Equality in Support of SDG 4 and SDG 5," *Literate: International Journal of Social Science and Humanities* 3, no. 1 (2024): 1–13, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.52005/literate.v3i1.38>.

<sup>25</sup> Jesse Coleman et al., "The Mobile Alliance for Maternal Action Text Message–Based MHealth Intervention for Maternal Care in South Africa: Qualitative User Study," *JMIR Human Factors* 7, no. 2 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.2196/14078>.

<sup>26</sup> Malin Johansson et al., "What Do We Know about Corporate Social Responsibility and Stakeholders Physical Activity? A Public Health Perspective," *Journal of Public Health Research* 11, no. 2 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.1177/22799036221102490>.

<sup>27</sup> Felix G Bello and Grace Kamanga, "Drivers and Barriers of Corporate Social Responsibility in the Tourism Industry: The Case of Malawi," *Development Southern Africa* 37, no. 2 (2020): 181–96, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0376835X.2018.1555028>.

<sup>28</sup> Lauretta Burke and Mark Spalding, "Shoreline Protection by the World's Coral Reefs: Mapping the Benefits to People, Assets, and Infrastructure," *Marine Policy* 146 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2022.105311>.

<sup>29</sup> Edakkandi Meethal Reji, "Corporate Social Responsibility in Rural Development: Insights from CSR Initiatives of A Public Sector Company," *Journal of Rural Development* 42, no. 4 (2023): 302–13, <https://doi.org/10.25175/jrd/2023/v42/i4/172947>.

Table 2.1 therefore supports a single overarching analytical argument: the structural weakness of CSR in Zanzibar is not sectoral or incidental but systemic. It is produced by the absence of three things coordination across actors, accountability for outcomes, and genuine community participation in planning whose absence is the defining characteristic of a charity model and whose presence is the defining characteristic of a development model. These three absences are the subject of the analytical progression that follows in Sections 2.2 through 2.8.

## 2.2. Limitations: Short-Term, Charity-Based, and Fragmented Approaches

Key point is that CSR in Zanzibar is narrowly defined and applied as charity, and not as an integrated concept of development. CSR is viewed by corporate actors as corporate social generosity in forms of giving in donations, sponsorships, and independent projects. The projects establish goodwill and short-term benefits, but seldom result in sustainable structural changes reducing poverty levels.<sup>30</sup> For instance, providing scholarships without addressing internal problems in the field of education, such as teacher shortages, curriculum deficits, or infrastructure inadequacy, then CSR is not very effective. Health initiatives relying only upon periodic campaigns are ineffective in developing local health infrastructure as well as ensuring sustained availability of service. In environmental terms, cleanliness drives, although nobler, don't address the root problems of waste management nor of behavior change in society.<sup>31</sup>

Its effectiveness is then attenuated by its decentralized method. CSR projects are conceptually designed and executed in most instances by companies in a vacuum, not in reference to government agendas of development, civil society groups, nor other companies. This produces duplication in a minority of cases and omission in a majority.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, a lack of mechanisms for tracking and evaluation produces no easy way to measure the true value of CSR projects, and anecdotal, not systematic, analysis is used.

The other weakness is that CSR planning is not inclusive. Communities are generally beneficiaries rather than agents of CSR initiatives. The decisions about what kind of initiatives to deploy are generally made from corporate headquarters, sometimes in coordination with local governments, but very rarely in a bottom-up process considering marginalized opinions and agendas.<sup>33</sup> This is a command-and-control approach, not an empowerment stimulus.

## 2.3. Missed Opportunities for Community Empowerment and Long-Term Poverty Reduction

The structural limitations documented in Section 2.2 are not merely technical shortcomings in program design they represent a compounding opportunity cost borne by Zanzibar's poorest communities. Each limitation actively forecloses a specific category of

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<sup>30</sup> Rudi Margono, "Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as A Pillar of the Welfare State: Analysis of Regulations, Implementation, and Transformation towards Sustainable Development in Indonesia," *Acta Innovations* 56 (2025): 47–56, <https://doi.org/10.62441/actainnovations.v56i.457>.

<sup>31</sup> Marco J. Haenssger, Svea Closser, and Olakunle Alonge, "Impact and Effect Mechanisms of Mass Campaigns in Resource-Constrained Health Systems: Quasi-Experimental Evidence from Polio Eradication in Nigeria," *BMJ Global Health* 6, no. 3 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjgh-2020-004248>.

<sup>32</sup> Martin Heinberg et al., "A Bad Job of Doing Good: Does Corporate Transparency on a Country and Company Level Moderate Corporate Social Responsibility Effectiveness?," *Journal of International Marketing* 29, no. 2 (2021): 45–61, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1069031X20981870>.

<sup>33</sup> Kendall Park, Steve Hoeffler, and Kevin Lane Keller, "Marketing Perspectives on CSR Initiatives: Conceptual Foundations and an Agenda for Future Research," *AMS Review* 13, no. 3–4 (2023): 277–96, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13162-023-00263-5>.

developmental opportunity that the private sector is uniquely positioned to deliver: short-termism forecloses skills development and sustainable employment; fragmentation forecloses the coordinated national alignment that would multiply impact; and community exclusion forecloses the participatory design that would ensure interventions address actual rather than assumed priorities. Understanding these missed opportunities is therefore not simply a critique of current CSR practice but an affirmative demonstration of what a reformed, accountability-driven CSR framework could achieve.

In the tourism sector Zanzibar's largest private sector employer and the dominant source of foreign exchange earnings the most consequential missed opportunity is workforce empowerment.<sup>34</sup> Empirically, the available evidence on tourism employment in Zanzibar reveals a persistent structural disparity: managerial, technical, and specialized roles are disproportionately filled by expatriate workers, while local employees are concentrated in low-skilled, low-wage positions that offer limited prospects for career advancement or income growth.<sup>35</sup> This employment structure extracts economic value from the island while returning only episodic charitable contributions to local communities' contributions that are visible and brand-compatible but structurally inconsequential. The short-termism and visibility bias identified in Section 2.2 as defining characteristics of tourism CSR are therefore not incidental design choices but the direct cause of this missed empowerment opportunity: workforce development is less photographable than a beach clean-up, and therefore less likely to be prioritized under a charity model driven by reputational incentives.<sup>36</sup>

An empowerment-oriented CSR approach in the tourism sector would involve sustained partnerships between resort operators and vocational training institutions to develop hospitality management curricula qualifying Zanzibari graduates for administrative and technical roles. It would also involve deliberate local procurement policies sourcing food, crafts, and services from community enterprises to generate income that reaches households directly rather than being repatriated through expatriate salaries and corporate supply chains<sup>37</sup>. These interventions would represent structural poverty reduction through CSR, not charity. In telecommunications, the empirically documented pattern in Zanzibar is one of high-visibility, low-duration digital interventions: one-off ICT workshops, selective university scholarships, and SMS health campaigns that reach a limited audience and generate no sustained improvement in digital capability or economic inclusion. The structural missed opportunity is digital entrepreneurship infrastructure. Rather than episodic training events, telecoms companies could invest in long-term digital literacy programs anchored in underserved rural areas where connectivity is weakest and where the digital divide most directly reproduces economic marginalization. Combined with microfinance support for rural digital entrepreneurs, such programs could enable genuine participation in the digital economy, addressing structural income poverty rather than its surface symptoms.

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<sup>34</sup> Ally et al., "Food Waste Management at Selected Tourist Hotels in Zanzibar: Current Practices and Challenges in Creating a Circular Economy in the Hospitality Sector."

<sup>35</sup> Besma Belhadj and Firas Kaabi, "The Relationship between Employment and Poverty Using Fuzzy Regression," in *Analysis of Socio-Economic Conditions: Insights from a Fuzzy Multi-Dimensional Approach*, 2021, 264–75, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003053712-17>.

<sup>36</sup> Priya Anaokar et al., "Experiences in Providing Vocational Skills Training Support for Youth in Care in Jamaica," in *Equitable Education for Marginalized Youth in Latin America and the Caribbean*, 2022, 236–59, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429276866-13>.

<sup>37</sup> Ssemambo Hussein Kakembo, Muhamad Abduh, and Pg Md Hasnol Alwee Pg Hj Md Salleh, "Adopting Islamic Microfinance as a Mechanism of Financing Small and Medium Enterprises in Uganda," *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development* 28, no. 4 (2021): 537–52, <https://doi.org/10.1108/JSBED-04-2019-0126>.

In the banking sector, the empirically observed pattern is financial literacy seminars that reach individuals who already have partial access to formal financial services, while leaving the poorest households those who manage economic risk primarily through informal savings groups outside the formal sector largely unserved.<sup>38</sup> The missed opportunity is structured financial inclusion: microfinance products, agricultural investment loans at concessionary interest rates, and low-fee savings accounts designed specifically around the cash flow patterns and livelihood structures of poor rural households. Such products would not only extend the formal financial system's reach but would generate measurable, direct poverty reduction by enabling household investment in productive assets.<sup>39</sup> This distinction between financial literacy (raising awareness among the partially included) and financial inclusion (structurally integrating the excluded) is analytically critical and is precisely the gap that current banking CSR in Zanzibar fails to bridge.

The most systemically significant missed opportunity, however, is neither sector-specific nor operational it is the failure to align CSR activity with Zanzibar's national development frameworks. Empirically, this study finds no systematic evidence that CSR programs in Zanzibar are designed with explicit reference to Vision 2050 or the Zanzibar Poverty Reduction Plan (ZPRP), despite both documents establishing clear strategic priorities in education, health, employment, and environmental sustainability that CSR is ideally placed to complement. This misalignment is the direct consequence of the fragmentation identified in Section 2.2: companies operating without coordination frameworks cannot align with national goals even when their individual interventions nominally address the same domains.

Normatively, global CSR scholarship makes the alignment case with particular force. CSR aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) the global normative framework that underpins both Vision 2050 and the ZPRP generates substantially greater and more durable social impact than charity-based CSR operating independently of strategic frameworks. Statutory alignment mechanisms which require companies to direct CSR spending towards nationally defined priority areas are the most effective instrument for closing the gap between corporate social investment and national development needs. Similarly demonstrate, through their CSR Canvas model, that systematic evaluation against development benchmarks is what distinguishes transformative CSR from cosmetic philanthropy.<sup>40</sup> Together, these normative arguments establish not only that alignment is desirable but that without formal coordination mechanisms it is structurally unlikely to occur through voluntary corporate initiative alone.

### **Table 2.3: Missed Developmental Opportunities by Sector and Framework Remedy**

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<sup>38</sup> Jasmin Joseph, Samuel Philip, and Amala Siby, "Financial Inclusion as a Tool for Social Equity: A Focus on the Elderly and Underprivileged," in *Lecture Notes in Networks and Systems*, vol. 1525 LNNS, 2026, 283–90, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-96-9048-0\\_26](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-96-9048-0_26).

<sup>39</sup> David Mhlanga, "Financial Access and Poverty Reduction in Agriculture: A Case of Households in Manicaland Province, Zimbabwe," *African Journal of Business and Economic Research* 16, no. 2 (2021): 73–95, <https://doi.org/10.31920/1750-4562/2021/V16N2A4>.

<sup>40</sup> For further reflection, see, e.g., Maminiaina Heritiana Sedera Rakotoarisoa et al., "Influence of Positive Psychological Capital on Social Entrepreneurship Intention During Covid-19," *International Journal of Economics and Business Issues* 1, no. 1 (December 31, 2022): 28–43, <https://doi.org/10.59092/ijebi.vol1.Iss1.8>; Ramalina Ranaivo Mikea Manitra et al., "Buried Childhoods: Uncovering Illicit Child Labour in Madagascar's Mica Mines," *Business and Human Rights Law & Policy* 1, no. 2 (2025): 141–58; Ramalina Ranaivo Mikea Manitra, "Is Poverty the Root of All Crime? Rethinking Criminality Amid Institutional Failure in Madagascar," *Jurnal Kriminologi Indonesia* 1, no. 1 (2025): 15–22, <https://scholarhub.ui.ac.id/kriminologi/vol1/iss1/2/>.

Sector	Current CSR Approach	Missed Developmental Opportunity	Framework Remedy (PDCAI / Participatory)
Tourism	Beach clean-ups, school uniform donations, cultural festival sponsorship	Workforce localization: partnering vocational colleges to qualify Zanzibaris for managerial/technical hospitality roles; local supply-chain procurement to channel revenue to community enterprises	Participatory needs assessment (PDCAI: Plan); community co-design of skills programs; outcome monitoring of local employment rates (PDCAI: Check)
Tele-communications	One-off ICT workshops, university scholarships for select few, SMS health campaigns	Sustained digital entrepreneurship infrastructure: microfinance for rural digital entrepreneurs, affordable broadband in underserved areas enabling participation in the digital economy	Long-term program design with community co-identification of digital exclusion priorities (PDCAI: Plan and Do); iterative improvement based on digital literacy outcome data (PDCAI: Improve)
Banking	Narrow financial literacy seminars; small-scale health sponsorships	Structured financial inclusion: microfinance products, agricultural loans at concessionary rates, low-fee savings accounts all designed specifically for poor rural households and informal savings groups	Community participation in product co-design (Participatory); outcome tracking of financial inclusion rates and household poverty indicators (PDCAI: Check and Act)

**Source:** Researcher Own Constructs, 2026

Table 2.3 makes explicit the connection often implicit in CSR reform literature between specific missed opportunities and the frameworks designed to address them. The Plan-Do-Check-Act-Improve (PDCAI) cycle and community participatory approaches are not generic management tools applied loosely to CSR: they are structural responses to the specific failures that generate missed opportunities in the first place. Each phase of the PDCAI framework addresses a discrete element of the opportunity gap identified in this section:

Plan directly responds to short-termism (Section 2.2) and misalignment (Section 2.5) by requiring that CSR interventions be designed with explicit reference to community needs assessments and national development priorities Vision 2050 and the ZPRP before implementation begins. In the tourism sector, this means workforce localization targets must be set and agreed before a single scholarship is awarded. In banking, it means financial inclusion products must be co-designed with poor rural communities before financial literacy seminars are delivered.

Do: directly responds to community exclusion (Section 2.2) and the participatory deficit (Section 2.7) by embedding genuine community co-design into implementation. Rather than communities receiving predetermined interventions, participatory implementation means communities co-determine the form, timing, and focus of CSR activity. Maia Ingram et al.<sup>41</sup> highlighted that evidence on participatory action research in resource-constrained

<sup>41</sup> Maia Ingram et al., "Community Engagement Strategies in a Participatory Action Research Study with Farmworkers," in *Handbook of Social Inclusion: Research and Practices in Health and Social Sciences*, 2022, 1505–24, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-89594-5\\_82](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-89594-5_82).

contexts confirms that community involvement at the implementation stage is the single most reliable predictor of intervention sustainability and local ownership.

**Check:** directly responds to the monitoring deficit (Section 2.8) by mandating systematic outcome data collection against pre-agreed development indicators local employment rates, digital literacy scores, household financial inclusion levels rather than the input-level reporting (scholarships awarded, beaches cleaned) that currently characterizes CSR accountability in Zanzibar.

**Act:** directly responds to fragmentation (Section 2.2) by requiring cross-sector adaptive coordination: when outcome data reveals gaps or inefficiencies, corrective action must involve not just the individual company but the broader CSR ecosystem other companies, government agencies, and community organizations so that resources are redirected collectively rather than in isolation.

**Improve:** directly responds to the national misalignment documented in Section 2.5 by ensuring that iterative improvement cycles are benchmarked against national development goals rather than internal corporate performance metrics. This transforms CSR from a reputational exercise into an evidence-driven contribution to Zanzibar's development architecture.

Therefore, the missed opportunities documented in this section reveal that CSR in Zanzibar does not suffer from a lack of resources or corporate willingness, but from a structural absence of the governance architecture participatory design, national alignment, and outcome accountability that would convert those resources into structural poverty reduction.<sup>42</sup> Crucially, the same corporate initiatives that currently operate as fragmented philanthropy already exhibit the functional characteristics of social welfare provision. Section 2.4 develops this observation: CSR in Zanzibar is already, in practice, a form of social welfare delivery but one that operates without the consistency, equity, and accountability that genuine welfare provision requires.

## 2.4. CSR as Social Welfare in Practice

The idea that CSR can function as a form of social welfare is supported by examples across different sectors in Zanzibar, though these examples remain fragmented. In education, corporate scholarships for secondary and tertiary students represent an important welfare function by providing access to opportunities that families may not be able to afford.<sup>43</sup> Similarly, health initiatives funded by private companies such as awareness campaigns, mobile clinics, or medical equipment donations supplement the overstretched public health system. Environmental CSR activities, meanwhile, contribute to community well-being by protecting natural resources on which livelihoods depend.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Sanjiv Gungadeen, Zuberia Hossanoo, and Vikramsing Gungah, "Corporate Social Responsibility in Mauritius: An Update of the Current Trends and Practices of Corporate Social Responsibility in the Island Economy of Mauritius," in *CSR, Sustainability, Ethics and Governance*, 2021, 493–523, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-68386-3\\_23](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-68386-3_23).

<sup>43</sup> Anita Eyerinebi-ebi Oruaze Dickson, May Nwoye, and Cross Ogohi Daniel, "Impact of Corporate Social Responsibility on Community Development in Bayelsa State," *WSEAS Transactions on Business and Economics* 20 (2023): 214–24, <https://doi.org/10.37394/23207.2023.20.21>.

<sup>44</sup> Iskandar Zainuddin Rela et al., "Effects of Environmental Corporate Social Responsibility on Environmental Well-Being Perception and the Mediation Role of Community Resilience," *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management* 27, no. 5 (2020): 2176–87, <https://doi.org/10.1002/csr.1956>.

These initiatives illustrate how companies are already offering welfare-like programs. Nevertheless, occasional and voluntary CSR in Zanzibar is still not a consistent nor dependable feature of social welfare. Diverging from planned, budgeted, and monitorable state programs, CSR is continued as ad hoc, subject to corporate generosity, and in most cases, not coordinated in a poverty reduction strategy in the longer term. This prevents CSR from being a reliable social development pillar.<sup>45</sup>

## 2.5. CSR and National Development Goals

Zanzibar's national developmental plan, as enshrined in documents like Zanzibar Development Vision 2050 and Zanzibar Poverty Reduction Plan (ZPRP), has a sharp direction for addressing poverty's root causes, as well as in health, education, and the environment. These agendas are inclusive in their nature, develop human resources, and are sustainable. In no instance, though, is there empirical supporting evidence that CSR programs have a direct association to such agendas. Fact example, Vision 2050 specifically highlights skills creation as a transforming factor in the economy. Whereas CSR initiatives provide scholarships or vocational training, such initiatives are usually narrow in scope and not aligned with wider education and employment policy.<sup>46</sup> In a similar vein, ZPRP focuses on health system enhancement and universal coverage of essential service, yet CSR health efforts usually are in a niche of short-term initiatives as opposed to intrinsic investments in health infrastructure.<sup>47</sup> Environmental conservation, a fundamental plank in Zanzibar's development platform, has been better aligned in CSR, specifically in tourism. Nonetheless, such initiatives are compartmentalized locally and do not transcend national coordination.

Lack of coordination of CSR and national priorities means a loss of opportunity for complementarity. If CSR programs were specifically created as a complement to state priorities, their effect could be accelerated manifold. For example, rather than a plethora of companies providing discrete scholarships, a joint CSR fund could complement national programs in education. Health programs, in a similar vein, could complement national programs in reinforcing local clinics, instead of providing duplicate short-term service.

## 2.6. Global Context and Lessons for Zanzibar

The faults observed in Zanzibar are characteristic of larger international debates about CSR's contribution to development. CSR has been widely criticized in other contexts as corporate image-manufacturing rather than meaningful social intervention. Scholars like Yoori Yang and Cynthia Stohl<sup>48</sup> argue CSR tends to take a "business case" approach, in which business enterprises finance community projects that enhance their image or promote their market objectives. The criticism is widespread in Zanzibar, where there is a tendency to encourage tourism business enterprises to support environmental CSR because it is the one

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<sup>45</sup> François Vallaëys, "Why Corporate Social Responsibility Is Not yet Transformative? A Philosophical Clarification," *Andamios* 17, no. 42 (2020): 309–33, <https://doi.org/10.29092/uacm.v17i42.745>.

<sup>46</sup> Vaishali Deepak Sahoo, and Deepak Ranjan Sahoo, "Promoting Inclusivity: Corporate Social Responsibility in Game-Based Learning and Professional Employment," in *Game-Based Education Approaches to Inclusive Business Management*, 2024, 101–25, <https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-1172-1.ch004>.

<sup>47</sup> Dorjsuren Bayarsaikhan, Lou Tessier, and Aviva Ron, "Universal Health Coverage and Social Health Protection: Policy Relevance to Health System Financing Reforms," *International Social Security Review* 75, no. 2 (2022): 75–95, <https://doi.org/10.1111/issr.12295>.

<sup>48</sup> Yoori Yang, and Cynthia Stohl, "The (in)Congruence of Measures of Corporate Social Responsibility Performance and Stakeholder Measures of Corporate Social Responsibility Reputation," *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management* 27, no. 2 (2020): 969–81, <https://doi.org/10.1002/csr.1859>.

that suits the interests of the industry, and the poverty of the rural population or the gender inequality are not considered.

At the same time, the case studies across the world reveal that CSR plays a transformative role when organized through a strategic approach and alignment with sustainable development goals (SDGs). In India and South Africa, and the rest, the law imposes a minimum threshold of CSR spending on social areas.<sup>49</sup> This is so as to make sure that CSR is not only reliant on corporate volition but as an input made formally in the development of a country. Legislations on mandatory CSR have not been adopted in Zanzibar yet such instances suggest that stricter regulatory instruments would have a role to play in channeling the private funds towards reduction of poverty and enhancement of welfare.

## 2.7. Community Perspectives and Participation

The other fundamental research concern raised by the study is the fact that there is extremely low degree of community participation in the planning and execution of CSR projects. The corporate center usually conceives CSR projects in which very little input is made by beneficiaries of these projects. This is translated to a top-down process of corporate organizations determining what a population needs, as per what is congruent in their brand identity or their logistical convenience. The lack of the mechanisms of participation implies that the number of CSR initiatives that support the priority needs of marginalized communities is minimal.<sup>50</sup>

The example of the fact is that a telecommunications company can consider digital literacy programs as its corporate purpose, but the rural communities of Zanzibar can be much concerned with such basics as safe drinking water or reliable power. In line with this, tourism companies can focus environmental initiatives in the conservation of beaches, but neighboring fishers might require food security or limited marketing.<sup>51</sup> Without the proper input of the community, CSR can at best maintain inequalities rather than reduce them.

It is not only a question of justice that community involvement is also a question of efficiency. When communities participate in establishing priorities and designing interventions, the CSR projects will be better placed, sustainable and of benefit in that context. Participatory approaches also contribute to the broader trust between communities and companies, reduce tensions, and create a sense of ownership.<sup>52</sup>

## 2.8. The Challenge of Monitoring and Evaluation

The other weakness of our study is a back-ended systematic evaluation and follow up of CSR initiatives in Zanzibar. Most companies boast of their CSR activities in glittering reports

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<sup>49</sup> Alessia Patuelli, Jonida Carungu, and Nicola Lattanzi, "Drivers and Nuances of Sustainable Development Goals: Transcending Corporate Social Responsibility in Family Firms," *Journal of Cleaner Production* 373 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2022.133723>.

<sup>50</sup> Sun Young Lee, Yeuseung Kim, and Young Kim, "Engaging Consumers with Corporate Social Responsibility Campaigns: The Roles of Interactivity, Psychological Empowerment, and Identification," *Journal of Business Research* 134 (2021): 507–17, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.05.062>.

<sup>51</sup> A Pawestri, I Wahyuliana, and L D Nugroho, "The Restrictions on the Beach Tourism Destination Development as an Effort for Environmental Preservation," in *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science*, vol. 1181, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/1181/1/012014>.

<sup>52</sup> Ingram et al., "Community Engagement Strategies in a Participatory Action Research Study with Farmworkers."

or advertisements, but few of them release massive reports on the contributions that they currently do. This kind of responsibility makes it difficult to determine whether CSR initiatives are really making a difference in alleviating poverty or is doing nothing but generating momentary publicity.<sup>53</sup> Monitoring and assessment are critical in changing CSR out of charity into a developmental way.

With inadequate data on outcomes, there is no learning from experiences, and no adapting approaches to generate maximum value. Equally, policymakers and researchers cannot take inventory of CSR's collective input to national developmental goals. In Zanzibar, an absence of such mechanisms translates into CSR being predominantly testimonial, where successes are echoed, and failures are not reported.<sup>54</sup>

For this task, firms could adopt widely-known appraisal frameworks, as is the Plan-Do-Check-Act-Improve (PDCAI) cycle, in which a continuous improvement is facilitated through systematic observation. With these instruments, CSR activities could increasingly become outcomes- and evidence-based, not only contributing to community well-being, but corporate actors' credibility as well.<sup>55</sup>

## 2.9. CSR as a Missed Opportunity for Structural Change

In general, findings indicate that CSR in Zanzibar remains a missed opportunity for poverty reduction at a structural level. While maintaining a narrow, short-sighted, charity-based approach, firms are not able to address root sources of inequality and vulnerability. Lack of employment, ineffective education, insufficient health facilities and environmental depletion are features of poverty in Zanzibar.<sup>56</sup> Such issues cannot be handled in isolation but have to be a plodding effort and a team effort that cannot be a part of corporate endeavors.

CSR may revolutionize itself when it is packaged as one of the pillars of an expansive developmental platform. CSR may no longer be an activity of irresponsible charity but rather, part of multi-actor coalition between governments and civil societies as well as businesses. Such partnerships would utilize resources more efficiently, be more consistent with the national agendas, and make sure that the interventions are grounded on the community consultations.<sup>57</sup> This would not just offer increased social legitimation to business it would be a direct contribution to the structural change of the economy of Zanzibar as well as society. The case of Zanzibar does not only indicate the haphazard and temporary nature of corporate initiatives, but the latent tension between dependency and empowerment, which is abstracted in a third section, how CSR is engaged in reducing poverty, and how a reorientation of CSR would be better placed in a paradigm of welfare and development in Zanzibar.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Taryn Bernard, "Corporate Social Responsibility in Postcolonial Contexts: A Critical Analysis of the Representational Features of South African Corporate Social Responsibility Reports," *Critical Discourse Studies* 18, no. 6 (2021): 619–36, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17405904.2020.1798797>.

<sup>54</sup> Bernard.

<sup>55</sup> Sarang M. Yadav, Vyomesh Buch, and Prashantsingh Tomar, "Waste Reduction by PDCA Methodology: A Review," in *AIP Conference Proceedings*, vol. 3107, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1063/5.0209542>.

<sup>56</sup> Viput Ongsakul, Napatsorn Jiraporn, and Pornsit Jiraporn, "Exploring How Independent Directors View CSR Inequality Using a Quasi-Natural Experiment," *Corporate Governance (Bingley)* 20, no. 6 (2020): 1159–72, <https://doi.org/10.1108/CG-03-2020-0086>.

<sup>57</sup> Pantoja, "MNEs and Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships as a Strategic Element to Fulfill SDGs."

<sup>58</sup> Liya Liu et al., "Corporate Power for Poverty Alleviation: Evidence from the Poverty Alleviation Results of Chinese Listed Companies," *China Finance and Economic Review* 11, no. 2 (2022): 46–67, <https://doi.org/10.1515/cfer-2022-0009>.

### **2.9.1. CSR in the Tourism Sector: between Promotion and Empowerment**

Zanzibar depends mainly on tourism, which plays a leading role in GDP, employment and earnings in foreign exchange. Expectedly, it is one of the industries that is also the most alive in CSR initiatives. Cleansed beaches, scholarships provided to local students, and sponsorship of local culture festivals are the types of CSR activities constantly in the news of resorts and hotel chains. These are initiatives that make companies visible and which have a handful of community outcomes that can be realized. As an example, the mangrove reforestation initiatives by the same resorts also provide as much to biodiversity as to livelihoods of people depending on coastal resources to fish.

These programs are however small in nature. The practices in the tourism industry in terms of employment are instructive of the disparity between CSR talk and action. Although the majority of companies are insistent on their investments in local communities, top jobs in hospitality facilities are often occupied by expatriates, and locals are only offered low-grade jobs in which they have little chances of career growth. Their possibilities of employment of the local youth are under-exploited, either because it is abandoned or it is designed and scaled-up training and skills improvement programs. It is a missed chance of the tourism enterprises to integrate CSR in their mainstream business activities by integrating empowerment and inclusion in their employment strategies.<sup>59</sup>

In the case of CSR rewritten, it perhaps would not just stop at billboard-style publicity campaigns but go deeper to the root of the problems in the labor market. An example of this would be that of the tourism companies collaborating with universities and professional training centres in a way such that they establish curriculum that would equip Zanzibaris with administrative and technical positions in the hospitality industry. They might also be encouraging small-scale local enterprise by buying food, crafts, and service locally, developing value chains that directly pay households locally.<sup>60</sup> These plans would take CSR to a level of inclusive economic growth, as opposed to a shallow charity.

### **2.9.2. CSR in the Telecommunications Sector: Bridging or Reinforcing the Digital Divide?**

Zanzibar telecom has made investment in CSR through education, health and inclusion in digital. Telecommunication organizations such as the Vodacom and Zantel are habitual sponsors of scholarships and Information and Communication Technology training and text message sensitization, relating to health matters. These programs are crucial in a situation where there is the absence of even distribution of digital tool and health information. Telecommunications organizations are also training and creating human capital through scholarships, which is an essential instrument in the reduction of poverty.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Shi Yong Zheng, Rongjia Chen, Hua Liu, JiaYing Li, Shah Fahad, and Biqing Li, "Corporate Social Responsibility Initiatives and Their Role in Firms' Reputation and Green Economic Recovery through Organizational Trust," *Environmental Science and Pollution Research* 30, no. 45 (2023): 101817–28, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11356-023-29259-1>.

<sup>60</sup> Kimberly Thomas-Francois, Marion Joppe, and Michael von Massow., "The Impact of Customer Engagement and Service Leadership on the Local Food Value Chain of Hotels," *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights* 4, no. 1 (2020): 35–58, <https://doi.org/10.1108/JHTI-03-2020-0031>.

<sup>61</sup> Nidha Shapoo et al., "Smart Healthcare: The Role of Digital Health in Modern Medicine," *Health Care Science* 4, no. 3 (2025): 179–87, <https://doi.org/10.1002/hcs2.70019>.

However, a closer look at it will reveal that the majority of such programs are in reality, projects concentrated around publicity. Indicatively, the scholarships are usually offered to a few and this does not require any longer publicity as opposed to addressing the long-term exclusion of thousands of poor children through education. Similarly, ICT training programs are mostly a one-off workshop initiative, rather than a long-term initiative of creating digital literacy at the bottom. The overall implication is that, despite the elements of decreasing the digital divide associated with CSR in telecommunications, it does not slightly change the circumstances in allowing poor people to access digital opportunities.<sup>62</sup>

The telecommunications industry has unrealized enormous potential in terms of having a transformative role. Corporations may, as an example, empower digital entrepreneurship by offering microgrants or mentorship opportunities to young entrepreneurs like Indoria and Junaid<sup>63</sup> suggest that corporations may collaborate with the government to ensure that vulnerable populations can enjoy affordable Internet penetration in rural areas in a manner that will help them to participate in the digital economy. Such programs would not only enable corporate expertise to align, but could remedy institutionalized inequalities that contribute to poverty.

### **2.9.3. CSR in The Banking Sector: Financial Literacy and Beyond**

The banking sector has been active in CSR mainly through financial education initiatives, assistance to small enterprises, and sponsorship of health initiatives. These activities promote awareness and instruction, helping people to take better care of their budgets and have greater access to credit-mediated opportunities. Financial literacy initiatives, in a particular context where most families are unfamiliar with savings, investments, and prudent use of loans, are essential.<sup>64</sup>

However, as in most industries, Zanzibar's banking CSR is narrow in scope and diffuse. Financial literacy seminars may reach dozens or hundreds of people, yet hardly scale to achieve large-scale financial inclusion. CSR in this sector is often concentrated among individuals who already have partial access to formal financial lives, depriving its poorest households who rely mainly on savings groups outside the formal sector. In response to this constraint, banks might broaden their CSR by providing financial support to microfinance initiatives specific to poor households' and small business-initiated circumstances. They might create products tailor-made for rural communities, such as loans for investments in agriculture at lower interest, or lower-fee savings accounts. These would not only increase financial inclusion, but would reduce poverty directly by helping households in investments in their own livelihoods.

### **2.9.4. Dependency versus Empowerment in CSR Practices**

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<sup>62</sup> Laith Tashtoush, and Ala'Fathi Assi, "The Impact of Service Quality on Corporate Social Responsibility and Customer Citizenship Behavior in Telecommunication Companies," in *2022 International Conference on Data Analytics for Business and Industry, ICDABI 2022*, 2022, 608–16, <https://doi.org/10.1109/ICDABI56818.2022.10041474>.

<sup>63</sup> Priyanka Indoria, Mohd Danish Chishti, and Abdullah Bin Junaid, "Navigating the Digital Frontier: Essential Leadership Competencies for Effective Mentoring - Analysis of Top 5 Fortune 500 Listed Companies," in *Digital Mentorship: Bridging AI-Human Divide in the Era of Industry 5.0*, 2025, 39–56, <https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-83662-252-920251003>.

<sup>64</sup> Gorrettie Nakyeune Kyeyune, and Joseph Mpeera Ntayi, "Empowering Rural Communities: The Role of Financial Literacy and Management in Sustainable Development," *Frontiers in Human Dynamics* 6 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fhumd.2024.1424126>.

A common thread throughout industries is CSR supporting dependency over empowerment. If communities are viewed as recipients of corporate benevolence, CSR repeats paternalistic patterns, which are destructive in the longer-term when building toward a region's own sustainable development.<sup>65</sup> An example is the scholarships, handouts, or even infrequent health programs can alleviate the problems in the short term but does not equip communities with strategies of working against the problems on their own. Empowerment also demands that CSR programs are inclusive, interactive and packaged in such a manner that it involves the building of the local capacities. This necessitates the shift of charity models towards programs which improve agency and ownership. Considering the above as an example, rather than food donations, business enterprises would make donations in form of community owned coops in the agricultural sector that will not only increase the food security, but also create income streams.<sup>66</sup> Telecommunications companies would invest in long-term digital training centres that are run by local organizations instead of offering unilateral ICT workshops. The distinction between empowerment and dependency is critical in the case of Zanzibar, where structural disadvantages, rather than a vacuum in altruistic assistance, are the cause of poverty. The decision to make CSR a priority would then accept it as an activity of the periphery to a source of social change.

### **2.9.5. Incorporation of CSR in Welfare and Development Frameworks of Zanzibar**

To realize the full potential of CSR as a poverty eradication and social development tool, the tool should be included in the overall developmental tools of Zanzibar. The integration contains coordination, regulation, and establishing mechanisms in which corporate initiatives are planned in national priorities. CSR is now in relative autonomy regarding state-led interventions, which is one of the causes of duplications, and it lacks synergies. Among the directions that the government can follow is the development of a framework of CSR policies that includes rules that guide, priorities, and accountability mechanisms.<sup>67</sup> The framework might encourage businesses to integrate their CSR initiatives with Vision 2050, ZPRP and SDGs. An example is when a national priority of the Youth Unemployment Reduction is established, CSR funds would then be invested in professional training and entrepreneurship support. In case one of the national needs is the Health System Strengthening, corporate funds would subsequently be invested in the building of local clinics or a health professional training.

It would enhance coordination as well. It would be the body, preferably in Ministry of Finance and Planning or Ministry of Trade and Industry, where there would be interaction between the business, society, and government. As Aqira Pakuanzahra et al.<sup>68</sup> noted, the body would gather intelligence regarding CSR initiatives, measure the effectiveness of CSR initiatives and that CSR initiatives would be well aligned to meet the long-term development objectives. Incorporating CSR in national solutions may make the disjointed corporate efforts a harmonized driver of societal prosperity.

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<sup>65</sup> Kyeune and Ntayi, "Empowering Rural Communities: The Role of Financial Literacy and Management in Sustainable Development."

<sup>66</sup> Brita Backlund Rambaree, "Ecosocial Work through Corporate Social Responsibility: The Case of Company Engagement with Civil Society in Coastal Communities in Mauritius," *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region* 16, no. 1 (2020): 47–62, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19480881.2020.1709375>.

<sup>67</sup> Niloufar Fallah Shayan et al., "Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a Framework for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)," *Sustainability (Switzerland)* 14, no. 3 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14031222>.

<sup>68</sup> Aqira Pakuanzahra, Noer Azam Achsani, and Asadudin Abdullah, "Proposed a New Sustainable CSR Model Canvas for Effectiveness and Evaluation of Current CSR Programs (Case Study: PD PAL Jaya)," in *Journal of Physics: Conference Series*, vol. 1764, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1088/1742-6596/1764/1/012038>.

### 2.9.6 Toward a Sustainable CSR Model for Zanzibar

The report advises that the CSR in Zanzibar should redefine its mission cease to be a charity work and to be sustainable. Sustainability oriented CSR would emphasize on long term outcomes, stakeholder involvement and alignment with development goals. Therefore, it would compel business enterprises to adopt robust tracking and evaluation mechanisms to monitor outcomes and refine practices.<sup>69</sup> According to Doukali,<sup>70</sup> shaped the Plan-Do-Check-Act-Improve (PDCAI) approach, where planned, systematic, and repetitive action, review, and correction together enable continuous improvement. Following such as approach, CSR in Zanzibar could transcend publicity work and evolve as a sustainable means of reducing poverty and improving welfare. Therefore, CSR must not be seen as a substitute for state responsibility, but a complement to it. When in sync with priorities of governments and developed in collaboration with communities, CSR has the potential to bring a lot of value to national initiatives to fight poverty and enhance welfare. Otherwise, if not regulated and decentralized, CSR has the potential to remain a series of disconnected actions that do not serve to overcome institutionalized inequalities.

## 3. Conclusion

This study has investigated CSR's poverty reduction and social well-being contributions in Zanzibar based only on secondary sources. The results are such that although CSR interventions are common in priority sectors like tourism, telecommunications, and banking, their interventions are yet to stay fragmented, time-bound, and altruistic in nature. The majority of initiatives are based on donations to schools, clinics, or environmental initiatives, which, although commendable, are not effective to address the structure of poverty. This prevents CSR to transform communities in a holistic sustainable way. According to the review, there exists a gulfing divide between the CSR programs and national priorities in national policies like the Vision 2050 and Zanzibar Poverty Reduction Plan. CSR initiatives, instead of being coordinated within a systematic approach, are in standalone mode, whereby, there is no clear coordination of the civil society, the private sector and the government. The overall output is a quilt of good will initiatives instead of a meaningful contribution to poverty alleviation. The opportunities that are lost are invested in empowerment of communities, development of skills, employment of the youths and participation of the women in the economy, without which there will be no sustainability in social well-being.

In order to increase the practical significance and policy implications of the CSR in Zanzibar, this study suggests the transition between the philanthropic activities to a more systematic development approach that would directly lead to the reduction of poverty and improvement of social welfare. This change must involve specific roles and practical plans to the key stakeholders. To begin with, the government in Zanzibar needs to put in place a comprehensive CSR policy framework that incorporates CSR in the plans of national development. This is attainable by using policy tools like tax credit of companies that invest in development of the community, compulsory CSR reporting techniques and establishment

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<sup>69</sup> Saeed Hameed Aldulaimi et al., "Moving Beyond Profit: Unfolding the Role of Stakeholders-Centric Approach in Shaping Corporate Sustainability Reporting," in *2024 ASU International Conference in Emerging Technologies for Sustainability and Intelligent Systems, ICETISIS 2024*, 2024, 398–402, <https://doi.org/10.1109/ICETISIS61505.2024.10459481>.

<sup>70</sup> Intissar Doukali, Brijesh Mainali, Charafeddine Mokhtara, and Eleonora Gatti, "Advancing Circular Economy and Waste Management in Zanzibar Through Youth Entrepreneurship and Innovation," in *Generation of Energy from Municipal Solid Waste: Circular Economy and Sustainability*, 2024, 345–73, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-74334-4\\_15](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-74334-4_15).

of national CSR coordination authority to harmonize the activities of corporations with poverty reduction agenda. Second, inclusive business models should be incorporated by the private companies in their core business strategies through embedding CSR in their strategies. These involve making investments into local supply chains, generating jobs among the vulnerable populations, and aligning the CSR efforts with quantifiable social indicators like education, health and income generation. Such monitoring and evaluation tools that should be implemented by companies to monitor the outcomes and hold them accountable include impact assessment and social return on investment (SROI). Third, regulators in the sector ought to promote compliance and transparency through formulating governance systems, such as standardized reporting rules, and independent audits of the CSR practices. It will promote legitimacy and make sure that CSR contributions are effective and, at the same time, they are focused on national goals. Lastly, community organizations ought to participate in participatory planning and implementation. The development of multi-stakeholder platforms will help communities to express their needs, co-create interventions and track the progress. The CSR in Zanzibar can become a responsible and sustainable entity in poverty alleviation by the clear division of responsibilities and a clear way of implementation.

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