

Corporate Social Responsibility In Cameroon: The Case Of Mobile Telephone Network (MTN)*

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Abstract: As a self-regulating business model, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) also known as corporate citizenship is concerned about growing a business and giving back to the society. As important as CSR is for the society, that is, consumers and the local community, so it is for a company as it helps it to be socially accountable to itself, its stakeholders, and the public. It can equally help to forge a stronger bond between employees and corporations. In spite of the importance of this concept, little is known about it in Cameroon and the Mobile Telephone Network (MTN)-Cameroon in particular. Having said this, the paper seeks to explore the extent to which MTN Cameroon has embraced and implemented the concept of CSR. In so doing, the paper will provide an understanding of the concept of CSR and its implementation by MTN Cameroon. This is followed by an examination of the challenges faced by MTN in implementing the concept and ends with proposals for reform. To attain these, the paper uses the exploratory research method to gain understanding of the concept of CSR; to investigate the extent and the challenges faced by MTN Cameroon in implementing the concept. Considering that the concept of CSR is obscure to many in the country, this contribution will go a long way to provide the needed academic input for understanding the concept of CSR and its implementation by MTN in Cameroon. Again, it would contribute to the growing academic literature on CSR and its findings and recommendations will be useful to MTN and other mobile network companies to have a rethink of their CSR policies.

I. INTRODUCTION

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is concerned about growing a business and giving back to the society. This is with the aim to contribute to societal goals by engaging in the education of youths, support of volunteer works and donating of goods like backpacks, shoes, books and school supplies to those in need.¹ But despite the blessings of CSR coupled with the high profits margin made by MTN Cameroon, little is known about the concept and its implementation by MTN. The practice of CSR is critical for the growth of every company and development of a country. Considering the benefits of CSR, the paper seeks therefore to explore the extent to which MTN Cameroon has embraced and implemented CSR initiatives. In so doing, the paper will provide an understanding of the concept of CSR and its

implementation by MTN Cameroon. Again, the paper would examine the challenges faced by MTN in implementing the concept and ends with proposals for reform. To attain these, the paper uses the exploratory research method to gain understanding of the concept of CSR; to investigate the extent and the challenges faced by MTN Cameroon in implementing the concept. It is without doubts that this contribution will go a long way to provide the needed academic input for understanding the concept of CSR and its implementation by MTN in Cameroon. Again, it would contribute to the growing academic literature on CSR and its findings and recommendations will be useful to MTN and other mobile network companies to have a rethink of their CSR policies.

II. THE CONCEPT OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION BY MTN-CAMEROON

2.1. Understanding the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) defined CSR as “a management concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and interactions with their stakeholders”.² For Jason, CSR “is a self-regulating business model that helps a company to be socially accountable –to itself, its stakeholders, and the public”.³ By CSR, companies are required to do more than profit maximization (shareholder approach) by being socially responsible (stakeholder approach) which at its core occurs when a company engages in philanthropic activities or volunteerism.⁴ Cameroon like the rest of the Organisation for the Harmonization of Business Law in Africa (OHADA) member states adopted the concept of *intérêt corporel* (corporate interest).⁵ An understanding of this vision includes the interest of the owners, the corporation as a whole, and third parties who contract with the corporation. In view of the minority views, corporate interest is nothing more than the individual and common interest of

² UNIDO “What is CSR?” (2021) available at: www.unido.org; accessed 3 March 2021.

³ Jason F “Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)” 2021 available at: www.investopedia.com; accessed 4 March 2021.

⁴ Kimberlee L. (2019). “Four Types of corporate Social Responsibility” available at: smallbusiness.chron.com; accessed 4 March 2021. Kimberlee identified four types of CSR which are: philanthropic efforts, environment conservation diversity, labour practices and volunteerism.

⁵ The OHADA Uniform Act on Commercial Companies and Economic Interest Groups of 1st January 1999 as amended in 2015.

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¹Rhonda B. (2018). “5 Inspirational Examples of Corporate Social Responsibility in Marketing” available at: www.givingcompass.org; accessed 2 March 2021.

owners (shareholder approach). At the maximum, the concept embraces all interests with the state interest inclusive. These include the owners, the community at large, suppliers, employees, and clients (stakeholder approach). The implementation of the stakeholder concept would indicate whether OHADA is flexible and protects property rights. Unfortunately, insufficient depositions have been developed to reveal whether OHADA corporate entities embrace these interests.

CSR is relatively new in Cameroon that is why a majority of the large companies do not have either CSR policies in place or a team that deals with CSR issues. This is so because there is no strategic framework of legislation governing CSR in the country. However, a number of related issues are addressed in laws.⁶ It should be recalled that the development of the CSR landscape in Cameroon is still embryonic and dialogue about CSR has not yet really begun in the country. Even though the concept of CSR is perceived as something quite new, Ngobe believes that “it is as old as trade and business itself”.⁷ Most CSR activities are conducted in the form of philanthropy with companies performing discretionary acts of charity, sometimes delivered by multinationals under the aegis of foundations. For some people, CSR is useless since companies should only care about what they are supposed to do which is to maximize their profits. Some companies clearly see it as the governments measure to ensure the communities’ welfare through laws. Companies should follow these laws, but not do more by themselves, since this would be harmful to their business.⁸ For others, corporations are using CSR as a lift to persuade people of their good action, but that they are not actually fully following their stated commitment.⁹ Many entities like Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), governments, and corporations see CSR as a useful tool to make the world a more fair and livable haven.¹⁰ Although this view recognizes the importance of corporations on the growth of the world economy and improving the living standards of people around the world, more focus is on the importance of respecting human rights and the environment.

These conflicting views on CSR have made it to be a highly debated topic during the recent years in most developed and developing countries. Whether in the developed or

developing world, there are two major approaches to CSR and they are: the Stakeholder approach and the shareholder approach. According to proponents¹¹ of shareholder approach, the purpose of a company is to make profits for the shareholders who own the company. This statement ties with Milton Friedman’s view that “managers should only focus on working the company's interests”.¹² That is, businesses should focus on maximizing profits for the benefits of its shareholders. Therefore any resources ‘wasted’ on social responsibility is basically an act of robbery from the shareholders’ wealth.¹³ If each individual shareholder wants, he or she can contribute voluntarily towards any philanthropic cause, but the money should not be taken away from the collective resources belonging to the shareholders.¹⁴ The shareholder approach is narrow.¹⁵ This is because its identify shareholders as the only interest group of a corporate entity necessitating further exploration.

By expanding the field of interested parties,¹⁶ proponents of the stakeholder approach argue that a corporate entity invariably seeks to provide a balance between the interests of its diverse stakeholders in order to ensure that each interest receives some degree of satisfaction. Elkington¹⁷ believes that the stakeholder approach is better in explaining the role of corporate governance than the agency theory because it highlights the various interests: employees, banks, governance, relevant stakeholders. Stakeholder approach has become more prominent because many researchers have recognized that the activities of a corporate entity impact on the external environment requiring accountability of the organization to a wider audience. In this regard, Savage, Nix, Whitehead and Blair¹⁸ proposed that companies are no longer the instrument of shareholder alone but exist within society and therefore, have responsibilities to that society. One must however point out that large recognition of this fact has rather been a recent phenomenon. Based on the explanations offered by the frameworks, it became pertinent that management of

⁶Demunjnck, G. and Ngnodjom, H. (2013). “Responsibility and Informal Corporate social responsibility in Cameroon.” *Journal of Business Ethics* 112. For example the workplace is governed by the Cameroonian Labour Code of 1992.

⁷Ngobe, J. (2018). Corporate social responsibility in Cameroon: Mobile Telephone Network’s Self Presentation. Master’s Programme in Global and Transnational Sociology, 7.

⁸Friedman, Milton. (2007). “The Social Responsibility of Business Is to Increase Its Profits.” In *Corporate Ethics and Corporate Governance*, edited by W. C. Zimmerli, M. Holzinger, and K. Richter, 173–78. Springer Berlin Heidelberg.

⁹Carroll, A. (2008). “A History of Corporate Social Responsibility: Concepts and Practices.” *The Oxford Handbook of Corporate Social Responsibility* 19–46

¹⁰Freeman, R. Edward. (2004). “The Stakeholder Approach Revisited.” *ZeitschriftFürWirtschafts-Und Unternehmensethik* 5 (3): 228.

¹¹The outstanding proponent of this school of thought is Milton Friedman, a free market icon, highly regarded economist and Nobel Prize winner. He was an unwavering supporter of ‘Laissez faire’ capitalism, that is, freedom from intervention of any sort in commerce and industry except occasional intervention, with force, in times of dire necessity in order to preserve the very freedom of trade.

¹²Friedman, M. (2007). “The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase its Profits.” In *Corporate Ethics and Corporate Governance*, edited by W. C. Zimmerli, M. Holzinger, and K. Richter, 173–78. Springer Berlin Heidelberg.

¹³Mitchell, R.K., Agle, B.R & Wood, D.J. (1997). “Towards a Theory of Stakeholder Identification and Salience Defining the Principle of Who and What Really Counts” 22 *Academy of Management Review*, 853-886.

¹⁴Achua, J. K. (2008). “Corporate Social Responsibility in Nigerian Banking Sector” 3 *Society and Business Review* 23.

¹⁵Donaldson, T. and Preston, L. (1995). “The Stakeholder Theory of the Corporation: Concepts, Evidence, and Implications” 20 *Academy of Management Review* 65-91.

¹⁶Mitchell, R.K., Agle, B.R&Wood, D.J. (1997) (n 13) above.

¹⁷Clarkson M. (1995). “A Stakeholder framework for Analyzing and Evaluating Corporate Social Performance” 20 *Academy of Management Review* 92-117

¹⁸Savage, G.T., Nix, T.W., Whitehead, C.J & Blair, J.D. (1991). “Strategies for Assessing and Managing Organizational Stakeholders” 5 *Academy of Management Executive* 61-75.

corporate entity should at all time put in measures to ensure quality standards in all aspects of management process to enable stakeholders to keep the benefit of their investment. In view of the above, one may conclude that the stakeholder approach does not only look at the interest of its shareholders which is profit maximization, but the society at large including the consumers, employers, the government and the environment.

2.2. Mobile Telephone Network Cameroon and its Implementation of CSR

First and foremost, MTN is a multinational telecommunication company created in 1994 and based in South Africa. In 1997, it began international expansion and today is one of the telecommunication network leaders operating in Africa where it operates in over 16 countries, but also has ties with few countries in Europe and Asia. In 2001, MTN South Africa created the MTN foundation, which is a CSR management structure present in some of its subsidiaries such as MTN Cameroon, Nigeria and Ghana.¹⁹ Indeed, MTN like most of the large companies in Africa has subsidiaries spanning across multiple countries. The subsidiaries, including the Cameroonian company, have to comply with the same commitments as the parent company based in South-Africa. In its letter of commitment in 2012, MTN agreed to fully assume its social responsibility for sustainable development. This commitment involves the respect of the United Nations Global Compact member (UNGC) principles, failing which it can lead to sanctions. MTN Cameroon, a subsidiary supports service and a member of UNGC since 2006, was expelled in January 2011 due to “failure to communicate progress,” which is required from all members on a yearly basis while the parent company, a UNGC member since 2012 is still listed as active.

In 2005, MTN created the first corporate foundation in Cameroon. This foundation supports equal opportunities in a constantly changing world that involves both opportunities and unfair conditions, like giving people who face major difficulties the means to access education, employment and culture.²⁰ MTN has made humanitarian solidarity the guiding principle of their philanthropic actions in every country where they are established. MTN Foundation in Cameroon is acting to improve the living conditions of people by facilitating access to education and to disadvantaged populations, wherefore the importance of an international support and recognition. MTN has been recognized by various NGOs and governments for various social responsibility actions over the years. In 2015, MTN Cameroon was recognized by

the organization Malaria No More as winner of the 21 Days of Y’ello care for their aid in ridding Cameroon of malaria.²¹

Within the framework of their annual voluntary programme known as the 21 Days of Y’ello care, MTN employees contribute in the implementation of the company’s CSR policy by participating in social projects engaged in favour of Communities like the “One Staff, One Tree” planting of *Prunus Africana* in Bwassa. Through this project, MTN staff, partners and the beneficiary community planted 2100 trees. Symbolically, 100 trees were planted every day during the program.

Figure 1: Planting *Prunus Africana* in Bwassa, South West Region (June 2011)



Source: MTN office Buea

²¹ The 21 Days of Y’ello Care program is a complement to MTN’s social investment policy embodied by the MTN Foundation. Unlike the Foundation whose projects are funded by the company and achieved over time, the 21 Days of Y’ello Care program is supported by employee efforts. In each of the MTN Group’s subsidiaries, the employees themselves define the social actions they intend to take and invest materially and personally in carrying them out. The 2012, 2013 and 2015 editions of the 21 Days of Y’ello Care were won by MTN Cameroon.

¹⁹ “The Events That Shaped Us - MTN Group History” 2017.

²⁰ See A Foundation for Life-MTN Cameroon; available at: mtn.cm/our-history/a-foundation; accessed 7 March 2021.

Secondly, the company in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment, "Association Mieux Vivre", an environmental NGO and the Cameroonian garbage disposal company, HYSACAM organized an awareness campaign for the residents of certain neighborhoods in Douala on the importance of the preservation of the River Kondi which is used as garbage dumps. The environmental objective of the program was to preserve River Wouri from pollution of non-renewable substances such as plastic bottles. Beyond this aspect, the cleaning of the River prevents stagnant water which causes malaria and also prevents floods neighborhood during the rainy season. Many youths of the neighborhood

spontaneously joined the project team and actively took part in the work for a healthier environment in Kondi. HYSACAM also recycled 4 tons of collected garbage and provided the equipment used. The work done by MTN staff, partners and the community consisted of: Removing weeds on a distance of 200m along the River, on each side; cleaning the River and disposing of all garbage that had been dumped in it including thousands of plastic bottles; putting in place a net of 80m on the width of the River to collect upstream bottles easily and prevent them from falling in the Wouri River and the planting of 65 trees on both sides of the River to make the area more welcoming.

Figure 2: Cleaning the Kondi River in Douala, Littoral Region (June 2011)



Source: MTN office Douala

Philanthropically MTN has been active in the areas of basic education, digital school, communication-related disability health, vocational training and culture. Since its launch, the MTN Foundation has already built 54 classrooms in 15 primary schools in seven regions including: Adamawa, Center, East, Far-North, Littoral, North and South west. Through the "Y'ello Schools" program, the MTN Foundation is committed to support the government in its desire to offer young Cameroonians a quality education in a modern setting.²² This initiative appears to help to support our country in achieving the 4th Sustainable Development Goal, which aims to "ensure access for all to quality education on an equal footing, and to promote lifelong learning opportunities of life".²³ The 21 Days of Y'ello Care program is supported by the efforts of employees. In each of the MTN Group's 22 subsidiaries, the employees themselves define the social actions they intend to take and invest materially and personally in carrying them out. The 2012, 2013 and 2015 editions of the 21 Days of Y'ello Care were won by MTN Cameroon.

In addition, the Foundation has already built 46 points of access to drinking water which benefit nearly 170,000 people across the country. These points of access to drinking water are deployed primarily in rural areas

where access to drinking water still constitutes for populations exposed to waterborne diseases, a huge challenge.²⁴ In the areas of health, apart from their fight against malaria or HIV, the Foundation in 2015 initiated a partnership agreement with the Ministry of Public Health in Cameroon to launch the MTN Health platform. It will enable the population to benefit from online medical assistance. This is to help solve the problem posed by the deficiency of doctors. In Cameroon, most especially in its northern region, the doctor/population ratio is probably one doctor to 30,000 inhabitants or so".²⁵ In that context, the use of mobile phones to allow Cameroonians to consult a practitioner when needed appears to be a great opportunity. With the launching of the MTN health platform, there has been a tremendous improvement in the health of the population like an average of 1 doctor per 10,000 inhabitants, while 90% of its population has access to mobile telephones.²⁶ It also enables users/patients to reach doctors on-line and in a secured manner, with respect for the protection of privacy,²⁷ freedom of expression and the gender equality policy where

²⁴ MTN joins (SR Report s , "MTN Foundation | MTN the national and international community to celebrate World Water Day on March 22, 2018.

²⁵ Futrih, N.R. (2012). "The Need Is so Great." D+C Development and Cooperation. Available at: <https://www.dandc.eu/en/article/cameroon-too-many-nurses-and-doctors-lack-perspective>; accessed 13th in October 2019.

²⁶ "OMS | Cameroun" 2018; "MTN Group Limited Integrated Report 2015"

²⁷ This is in close collaboration with the National Order of Doctors of Cameroon and other actors of the public health sector.

²² "MTN Foundation | MTN Cameroon." (2018). Available at: <https://www.mtncameroon.net/fr/mtn-foundation/>; accessed 12th in October 2019.

²³ Ibid

the parity between men and women is still far to be established as a law even in people's mentality.

III. CHALLENGES FACED BY MTN IN ITS IMPLEMENTATION OF CSR POLICY

According to the United Nations and the European Commission,²⁸ CSR leads to triple bottom line-approach,²⁹ profits, protection of environment and fight for social justice. It is expected that Civil society, activist groups, Government and corporate sectors should work together to create appropriate means and avenues for the marginalized and bring them to the mainstream. During the last decades, the role of businesses and their position within society has changed; the society seems to expect more and more social responsibility participation. Companies have to look beyond self-interest and face other complex responsibilities such as environmental responsibility, respect of human rights, and also social activism³⁰. In order to move from theory to concrete action, many challenges need to be overcome. These challenges are as follows:

3.1. Inadequate support from the government

There is variance between practice and implementation of the components of CSR. It is not only companies that have abandoned their responsibilities as governments too have failed in its responsibility to provide a legal framework within which companies can effectively meet their obligations or be made to do so. Since the emergence of CSR in Cameroon, there is no law put in place by the Cameroonian Government in the area of CSR. CSR is still at the discretion of the companies in the country. Companies alone cannot be said to be responsible for social responsibilities to the communities in the Country. The Government should traditionally be responsible for the welfare of its citizens. These include ensuring law and order, security, provision of public infrastructure and other basic amenities. Whereas, MTN and other companies have a social responsibility to the communities they operate in, the framework within which this is to effectively work have to be provided by the government. It is thus the responsibility of the government to ensure that adequate regulatory and enforcement framework exists which ensures that companies carry out their operations in an environmentally responsible manner and in the event of non-compliance, that the laws are enforced in this respect, the Cameroonian government has failed in its social responsibility to its citizens.

²⁸European Commission (2006). Communication from the Commission concerning Corporate Social Responsibility: A Business Contribution to Sustainable Development, July 2, 2006. http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2006/february/tradoc_127374.pdf; accessed 12th December 2019.

²⁹ Triple-Bottom-Line- Approach, means CSR is generally understood as being the way through which a company achieves a balance of economic, environmental and social imperatives, while at the same time addressing the expectations of shareholders and stakeholders.

³⁰Carroll, A. (2008). "A History of Corporate Social Responsibility: Concepts and Practices." In *The Oxford Handbook of Corporate Social Responsibility*, 19-46

3.2. Lack of Expertise

The lack of expertise, including human capital and knowledge has been reported to be a common challenge to MTN Cameroon CSR implementation. In fact, for the effective implementation of CSR in the Telecommunication sector, large amount of resources are required.³¹ However, budgets for implementing CSR are often inadequate and outcompeted by other projects which guarantee higher return on investments.³² In addition, MTN Cameroon like most Telecommunication companies does not have a dedicated department that manages CSR. In many cases, the responsibility to manage CSR is assigned to other departments whose performances are appraised based on their original scope of duties. Finally, a profession on CSR is relatively new in the Telecommunications sector and requires its practitioners to be multi-disciplinary. The shortage of qualified candidates with the relevant knowledge and experience adds to the problem of implementing CSR.³³

3.3. Lack of Strategic Vision

The lack of strategic vision is often attributed to the lack of top management commitment of MTN Cameroon. It is argued that CSR must be led, formalized, and introduced from the top of the organization chart. One way to express commitment towards CSR is by incorporating it into a company's mission, vision, objectives, and goals.³⁴ However, this has not been widely observed by MTN Cameroon. It has also been found that MTN Cameroon is only addressing CSR at the operational level and has not integrated them in their vision and strategic objectives. Another cause for the lack of strategic vision in MTN Cameroon is their orientation towards short-term goals and profits. Unfortunately, MTN Cameroon CSR often entails short-term costs and only pays-off in the long-run. As a result, CSR may be ignored by myopic top management whose goal is to maximize short-term profits. Another reason that causes the lack of strategic vision is the weak empirical support for the relationship between CSR and financial performance.

3.4. Lack of Measurement Systems

Measurement systems are required to quantify the benefits for implementing CSR. Subsequently, they serve as a useful tool for the evaluation and control of MTN Cameroon CSR

³¹Lam, J.S.L. and Lim, J.M. (2016). "Incorporating Corporate Social Responsibility in Strategic Planning: Case of Ship-operating Companies", Vol.8, No.3 *International Journal of Shipping and Transport Logistics*, 273-293.

³²Faisal, M.N. (2010). "Analysing the Barriers to Corporate Social Responsibility in Supply Chains: An Interpretive Structural Modeling Approach", Vol.13, No.3, *International Journal of Logistics: Research and Applications*, 179-195.

³³Dixton, T., Colantonio, A., Shiers, D., Reed, R., Wilkinson, S and Gallimore, P. (2008). "A Green Profession? A Global Survey of RICS Members and their Engagement with the Sustainability Agenda", Vol.26, No.6, *Journal of Property Investment & Finance*, 460-481.

³⁴Husted, B.W. (2003). "Governance Choices for Corporate Social Responsibility: To Contribute, Collaborate or Internalize?" Vol.36, No.5, *Long Range Planning*, 481-498.

performances, and as a basis for rewards. However, CSR is a fuzzy (hairy) terminology and is understood to contain different meaning by managers.³⁵ It is often used interchangeably with concepts relating to sustainability, corporate governance, business ethics, and corporate citizenship. Consequently, different views on CSR may pose challenges for managers to derive concrete management actions on implementing CSR. At present, there are limited social and environmental indicators that are universally accepted or endorsed by business organisations.³⁶ Although MTN Foundation was created in 2005 in Cameroon, dedicated to the company's philanthropy and which provides directions for the practice of CSR, it has not been well-received by some localities like Isangele, KomboItidi, Toko and Akwa and no real measurement or benchmarking techniques have been introduced. Furthermore, the indicators which are disclosed in the financial reports of MTN Cameroon often lack standardization and offer little comparability.³⁷ Moreover, while there is available information on benchmarking standards on business practices relating to quality management and supply chain management, benchmarking standards for CSR in telecommunication are still at its infancy stage.

3.5 Increases in Cost of Production

The most common challenge that companies especially MTN Cameroon encounter is strong competitive pressure. If a company is operating in a market where the competition is very fierce, profit margins of that company will tend to be low. As a result, companies have less financial ability to make CSR-related investments from which the revenues only accrue in the long run³⁸ Thus if these CSR programs lead to an extra cost to MTN-Cameroon, the increment in cost will equally force the company to increase the basic price of the product, which is ultimately paid by the customer. This is an extra burden on the company, which is being imposed to customers. MTN- Cameroon and other big companies or business leaders can easily afford such increased costs and may not increase the prices of their products. However, the small players are forced to increase the prices, as they simply cannot afford this increased cost. They are already struggling to fight against the big players in the market and these increased prices make it even more difficult for them. Most suppliers see CSR as a

burden, which does not help to obtain or keep contracts with buyers or to make more profits.³⁹

3.6. Lack of Community Participation in CSR Activities

CSR is a combination of Corporate and societies responsibility. However, there is a lack of interest of the local community in participating and contributing to CSR activities of the MTN-Cameroon companies. This is largely attributable to the fact that there exists little or no knowledge about CSR within the local communities as no serious efforts have been made to spread awareness about CSR and instill confidence in the local communities about such initiatives. The situation is further aggravated by a lack of communication between the company and the community at the grassroots. It should be noted that partnerships between all stakeholders including the private sector, employees, local communities, the Government and society in general are either not effective or not effectively operational at the grassroots level in the CSR domain.⁴⁰ This scenario often creates barriers in implementing CSR initiatives. Appropriate steps should be undertaken to address the issue of building effective bridges amongst all important stakeholders for the successful implementation of CSR initiatives.

3.7. Customer Conviction

At the start, people had good impression about these MTN CSR programs. They also tend to be more inclined towards MTN-Cameroon that has CSR programs. But as time went-by, most communities have become more impatient and start to expect instant results out of such programs. When they could not notice instant results or instant impact on the society then they start to feel CSR programs as mere publicity stunts. For enterprises, it becomes really hard to make customers understand that such programs take time to show results. It is important for the company to have patience and trust of the customers while the company continues the programs with dedication and conviction.

IV. PROPOSALS FOR REFORM

While this paper will acknowledge the fact that MTN Foundation (the driver of all MTN CSR initiatives) has made a significant footprint in several areas of CSR investments in Cameroon, there is still the need for more to be done. This is so because the magnitude of wealth it generates from Cameroon does not have corresponding relationship with the level of CSR investment activities in Cameroon. The company should reinforce its CSR obligations to reach out to interior areas⁴¹ where there are potential consumers of their services.

³⁵ Murillo, D., and Lozano, J.M. (2006). "SMEs and CSR: An Approach to CSR in their own Words", 67(3), *Journal of Business Ethics*, 227-240.

³⁶ Jenkins, H., and Yakovleva, N. (2006). "Corporate Social Responsibility in the Mining Industry: Exploring Trends in Social and Environmental Disclosure", Vol.14, No.3, *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 271-284.

³⁷ "MTN Group UN Global Reporting Initiative Report 2016." Available at: https://www.unglobalcompact.org/system/attachments/cop_2017/379441/original/MTN_Group_UN_GRI_Report_2016.pdf?1493383461; accessed 30th November 2019.

³⁸ Campbell, J.L. (2007). 'Why would Corporations behave in Socially Responsible Ways? An Institutional Theory of Corporate Social Responsibility', *Academy of Management Review*, 32:3, 946-967.

³⁹ Lai, Q. (2006). 'Corporate Social Responsibility of SMEs in China: Challenges and Outlooks.' Available at: <http://www.iwim.uni-bremen.de/publikationen/pdf/c018.pdf>; accessed 6th April 2020.

⁴⁰ Faisal (n 33) above.

⁴¹ Like the Bakassi zone which receives only signals from the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the Toko sub - Division all of the south West Regions of Cameroon

In this light we would bring out recommendations that will be very helpful.

Firstly, the government should pass into law legislation that would promote the interest of the government in the various regions and make companies to pay heavy penalties if they failed to respect the CSR program. Such penalties should be paid to a Developmental Fund that would accrue to the regions and not the Government. Again, it should create a national watchdog for social and environmental business practices, similar to the Corporate Social Responsibility Observatory (ORSE) in France (multi-stakeholder governance). In addition, the CSR policy and strategies needs to be evaluated after implementation by the government so as to ascertain whether desired results are achieved.⁴² With this, there is a need to train organizations to develop effective CSR performance indicators which can be used to evaluate CSR performance and review CSR policy and strategies for future. There is equally the need for awareness creation about CSR amongst the general public to make CSR initiatives more effective. This awareness generation can be taken up by various stakeholders including the media to highlight the good work done by corporations in this area. This will bring about effective changes in the approach and attitude of the public towards CSR initiatives undertaken by MTN-Cameroon and other companies'.⁴³ This effort will also motivate other companies to join the league and play an effective role in addressing issues such as access to education, health care and livelihood opportunities for a large number of people. Thus, the social justice agenda of the day would be fulfilled more meaningfully.

Furthermore, the government should ensure that CSR as a subject or discipline should be made compulsory at business school curriculum, colleges and in universities to sensitize students about social and development issues. Such an approach will encourage and motivate young minds, prepare them face future development challenges and help them work towards finding more innovative solutions to the concerns of the needy and the poor. The involvement of professionals from the corporate sector, non-governmental organizations and business schools would be key to ensuring youth participation in civic issues. Initiating multi-stakeholder dialogue on CSR for example, an annual forum with action plans developed through participation and evaluated on the basis of selected indicators. CSR should be seen by MTN-Cameroon and other companies as social obligations business concerns owe their shareholders, the host community, general public, customers, employees and government in the course of operating their legitimate business, such that CSR should be included in the law and enforced on the firm accordingly.

⁴² Ibid

⁴³ Adams, W. M. (2006). The Future of Sustainability: Re-thinking Environment and Development in the Twenty-first Century. Report of the IUCN Renowned Thinkers Meeting, 29–31 January 2006.

It is advised that MTN-Cameroon communicate their CSR programs through periodic social, accounting and environmental reporting using communication channels like newspapers, radio, TV, websites, annual reports and other promotional media so as to facilitate access to the company's activities by researchers via this medium.⁴⁴ In a nutshell, in order to crystal gaze the future of MTN CSR in Cameroon, the recommendations of this study are firm indications of the existing state of affairs in the CSR domain; they correspondingly call for necessary and appropriate steps to be initiated to put CSR on firmer ground. Keeping in view the broad results of the study, the following recommendations are listed for serious consideration by all concerned stakeholders for their effective operationalization to deepen MTN CSR in the company's core business and to build collaborative relationships and effective networks with all involved.

V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, an avalanche capacity building is required for corporations and their employees, NGOs and other stakeholders involved in CSR activities so that the intent of an excellent legislation is achieved and thus bridging the gap between the privileged and poorer sections of the society. Also, there is a need for capacity building of the local non-governmental organizations as there is serious shortage of trained and efficient organizations that can effectively contribute to the ongoing CSR activities initiated by companies.

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