

## **Community Participation in Corporate Social Responsibility Projects: The Case of Mumias Sugar Company, Kenya**

<sup>1</sup>Calistus Luhombo Adema, <sup>2</sup>Kevin Ogonji Muluka, <sup>3</sup>Evans Biraori Oteki  
<sup>1, 2, 3</sup>PhD Scholar, Jomo Kenyatta university of Agriculture and Technology

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**Abstract:** *This study examined community participation in projects funded by Mumias Sugar Company in Mumias Division under Corporate Social Responsibility. The study objectives were to identify the Corporate Social Responsibility projects funded by Mumias Sugar Company and determine the levels of community participation therein. Research design was descriptive and explanatory case study and considered both primary and secondary data. Interviews were used to collect data and the questions comprised of structured and semi – structured and administered by the researcher. The researcher made physical observations on actual operations of projects funded under CSR. Secondary data was obtained from available official company and government records, both published and unpublished sources. Targeted Population comprises 283 households. Due to homogeneity of community members, 125 households from the target population were sampled using multi-stage sampling. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The levels of community participation were analyzed using a five point scale by use of SPSS and Excel. The results were presented in tables and graphs and the researcher made interpretation, conclusion and finally drew effective recommendations. The study revealed that Mumias Sugar Company (MSC) supported Corporate Social Responsibility as a marketing strategy with low community participation. Also, MSC sponsored what the community needed as philanthropic donations but there was low participation of community members in all stages of such projects' management. The study recommends that MSC should avail information on CSR programmes inclusive of their funding to the community members for effective governance. MSC should establish a research and development section which would be essential in determining the viability, acceptability and participation of community members in the CSR committee, initiatives and projects meant for the community and avoid any form of elite capture.*

**Keywords:** *Community participation, Corporate Social Responsibility, households, Mumias, projects.*

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### **I. Introduction**

The research used CSR as “a concept that provides companies with a strategy for voluntarily mainstreaming social and environmental concerns in their activities and their interaction with stakeholders” (Fuchs and Leonhard, 2007). In this definition, the community is considered a significant stakeholder in CSR and therefore in partnership with companies that have a common premise in relation to the concerns of the former. Although many companies have reports on how they fulfill the principle of CSR, the question of community participation remains the greatest challenge in ensuring that every community project is self-sustaining. The research therefore sheds more light on the nature of community participation. The need to also consider community inputs and views arises from the change of development paradigm from top to bottom approaches to bottom up approaches. Since the change of development approaches, many planners and administrators have prioritized popular participation as the core of community development. Akivaga and Kulundu (1985) state that “the strength and the pride of our society will depend on our ability to build strong institutions at the local level.” The underlying assumption is that the attainment of popular participation in development programmes is a prerequisite factor in the attainment of development goals. Different writers have argued in favour of participatory decision-making. Armstrong (2006), Dwivedi (1988), Ndiko (1999) observe that involving subordinates (and in this respect community members) in decision- making improves the quality of the decision and the effectiveness of the organization which leads to achievement of the organizational goals. Right from planning, implementation and evaluation of development projects, community members are viewed as stakeholders of the bottom-up approach to development. For any development to be sustainable it is important that the community members identify with it and have a sense of ownership (Mwangi, 2004). As Mulwa (2004) has stated, experience has shown that unless people are actors in activities and programmes that affect their lives, the impact of such intervention would either be negative, irrelevant or insignificant in transforming people’s lives. Blau, cited in Chitere (1991), points out that participation in development activities is a goal-oriented phenomenon, which is contingent on the attainment of benefits. People take part in projects that deliver or are likely to deliver direct and immediate benefits to them. This study therefore sought to examine community participation in Corporate Social Responsibility projects funded by Mumias Sugar Company in Mumias Division with a view to finding out whether these projects address the community’s felt

needs. The study sought to find out the levels of community participation; that is, how high or low participation could be ranked and the pattern of community participation meant where most was the community involved in terms of project management.

### **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Community participation in Corporate Social Responsibility programmes is considered to be a right and a need. Notwithstanding the benefits accruing from community participation, its application in Corporate Social Responsibility projects has largely been inadequate and often based on the prerogative of individual corporate institutions. Many companies fund projects in an attempt to ameliorate poverty facing communities and improve their welfare. It is however not clear whether these projects address the felt needs of the target communities. For the projects to succeed, the participation of communities is desirable. Yet there is no clarity about the level or pattern of community participation. It is therefore necessary to examine community participation in Corporate Social Responsibility projects funded by Mumias Sugar Company in Mumias Division with a view to finding out whether these projects address community's felt needs.

### **1.3. Research Objectives**

1. To identify Corporate Social Responsibility projects funded by Mumias Sugar Company.
2. To determine the levels of community participation in the Corporate Social Responsibility projects funded by Mumias Sugar Company.

## **II. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Corporate Social Responsibility**

Corporate Social responsibility concept has been defined differently by different scholars. It is necessary to look at some of the definitions that are related to this study. CSR is "a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis" as they are increasingly aware that responsible behaviour leads to sustainable business success (Commission for European Communities, 2002). The definition looks at CSR as a "voluntary" exercise dependent on the company policies, a definition many corporate institutions still hold (Scenovia, 2009; Nelson and Jenkins, 2007). It can also be looked at as the continuing commitment by business to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as of the local community and society at large. This definition is related to this study as it focuses on the willingness of Mumias Sugar Company to support CSR activities and programmes as a corporate culture.

### **2.2 Community Participation**

Community participation is 'a process by which people are enabled to become actively and genuinely involved in defining the issues of concern to them, in making decisions about factors that affect their lives, in formulating and implementing policies, in planning, developing and delivering services and in taking action to achieve change' (Doherty, 2002). Community participation comprises of degrees of involvement of the local community. Mwangi, (2004) notes that this may range from the contribution in cash and labour to consultation, changes in behaviour, involvement in administration, management and decision-making. This study underscored the fact that community participation does not replace, but enhances, the formal decision-making functions and responsibilities of any organization. Community participation should be in response to community interest, help the organization identify community needs apart from it being a requirement to meet its statutory obligations. Percy-Smith, (2006) recognizes that when limited to consultation, participation, does not address deep-rooted problems concerning the target group.

### **2.3 Community Participation in Corporate Social Responsibility**

A sugar cane farmer baseline survey carried out in Mumias Sugar Zone from the period 15th June to 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2005, indicates that the relationship between farmers and the company is lukewarm and on the decline for the last ten years and among other reasons, there are inadequate communication channels at field levels to MSC since out-growers development services are not effectively on the ground (Wafula and Marete, 2005). Majority of farmers are perpetually short of money for subsistence let alone investment. Inadequate communication channels enlisted from the survey require active involvement of the community in dealing with its problems with the help of formal institutions or business entities. Since MSC under CSR is in a position to assist the community in dealing with its problems this study underscored the fact that the community needs to take an active role in the CSR projects in terms of identification, management and subsequent evaluation.

Since corporate bodies as business draw resources from the society, they have an obligation to take care of the environment. Njoroge et al, (2007) states that there is inter - relationship between the business and

the society; for that matter, businesses have an obligation to utilize their resources in a manner that would be beneficial to both the owner and the society as a whole. Society here includes the immediate community. This study therefore underscored the fact that MSC, just like other businesses, should therefore first and foremost be committed to the welfare of its immediate community. As part of social responsibility and not be instrumental to environmental degradation. Secondly, it should provide positive assistance to the community. Part of positive assistance includes provision of employment to the people from its immediate society and other forms of poverty alleviation and social backwardness. Such assistance requires that the community be actively involved. Mwangi (2004) states that active involvement should be right from planning, implementation and evaluation of development projects and what is vital is that community members are to be viewed as stakeholders of the bottom-up approach to development, an idea shared by NCKK, (2005) on decentralized funds. This study therefore focused on community involvement in all the stages of the projects initiated under CSR by Mumias Sugar Community.

## **2.4 Theoretical Framework**

This research used General Systems Theory to establish the nature of community participation in Corporate Social Responsibility projects funded by Mumias Sugar Company in Mumias Division. Systems Theory views society as functionally integrated system that holds in equilibrium.

### **2.4.1 General Systems Theory**

Systems Theory focuses on society, its structures and their significance for other structures. The society is made up of different parts termed as systems such as economy, education, family, religion, and legal system and each part has its own function. This is a modification of functionalism and structural functionalism (Ritzer, 2003). Biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy originally developed general systems theory in 1936. To him, characteristics of systems included wholeness, differentiation, order, progression and others (Begley, 1982). Bossel (1999) further views the society as a super system made up of three main systems-the human, support and the natural systems, and several subsystems that are interlinked.

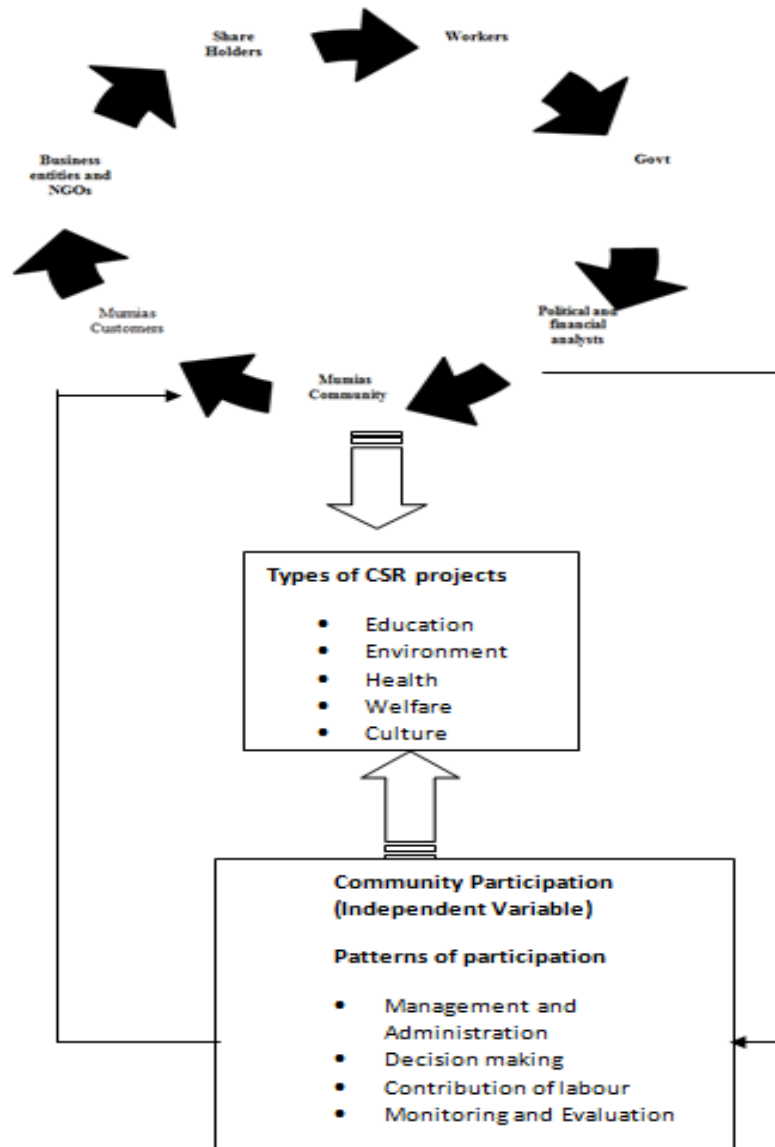
Bossel like other proponents underscores the interdependence of the subsystems i.e. a whole that functions as a whole by interdependence of its parts. Specific functions are attributed to each subsystem and are purposive in nature. Aldrich and Mundlins (1980) asserts that to understand the whole organization, it should be viewed as a system which acquires inputs from the environment and then transforms them into something of value that can be discharged back into the environment (community). He further argues that this interrelationship between the organization and its environment reflects on an organization's dependency on the environment.

The theory helps us to categorize the kind of CSR initiatives made towards the community by companies. It applies to the integration of an internal system with boundaries. It further shows the interactions of the company and the community and how there is a symbiotic relationship between the two. The community is part of the subsystem. Other members of the subsystem include Business entities, share holders workers, government, political and financial analysts, customers among others (see figure2.1). Its limitation is failure to see any change occurring in any particular system externally yet social change can be also effected and affected by external factors such as political factors, associated corporations among others. The limitation are addressed by the stakeholder theory which acknowledges that external factors like CSR approaches companies adopt have a direct influence on the welfare and development of the community.

## **2.5 Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework underscores a symbiotic relationship between the company and the community. The community will have the net effect of the funding as the company gains a milestone in terms of advertisement, marketing among other target interests; a win-win situation (Mellahi and Wood, 2003). The diagram below represents the conceptual framework that the study used to explain the relationship between CSR management and participation of communities in CSR projects funded by MSC. The study envisaged a causal relationship where the kind of management that each corporation adopts will either lead to participation of households in CSR funded projects or not. In this case the corporation chooses to include the community as one of its stakeholders. In the framework, community participation is the independent variable while MSC's CSR is dependent variable and the age, sex, socio-economic status of the community members will be intervening variable. This perception is best reflected in figure 2.1 below.

**Figure 2. 1 Conceptual Framework  
Mumias Sugar Company's CSR (corporate body) - dependent variable**



Source: modified from Business in Society (Mallen, 2006)

### III. Methodology

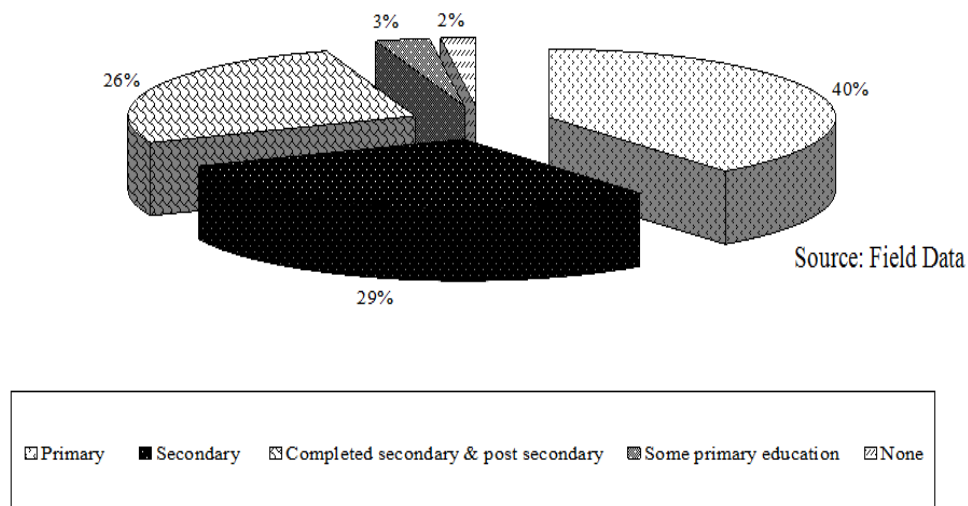
Research design was descriptive and explanatory case study and considered both primary and secondary data. Interviews were used to collect data and the questions comprised of structured and semi – structured and administered by the researcher. The researcher made physical observations on actual operations of projects funded under CSR. Secondary data was obtained from available official company and government records, both published and unpublished sources. Targeted Population comprises 283 households. Due to homogeneity of community members, 125 households from the target population were sampled using multi-stage sampling. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The levels of community participation were analyzed using a five point scale by use of SPSS and Excel. The results were presented in tables and graphs and the researcher made interpretation, conclusion and finally drew effective recommendations.

### IV. Results And Discussion

#### 4.1 Level of Education

Information on the level of education of the respondents was sought by the researcher to identify the credibility of the community's capacity building and prior information in the area of CSR. The results are as indicated in figure 4.1.

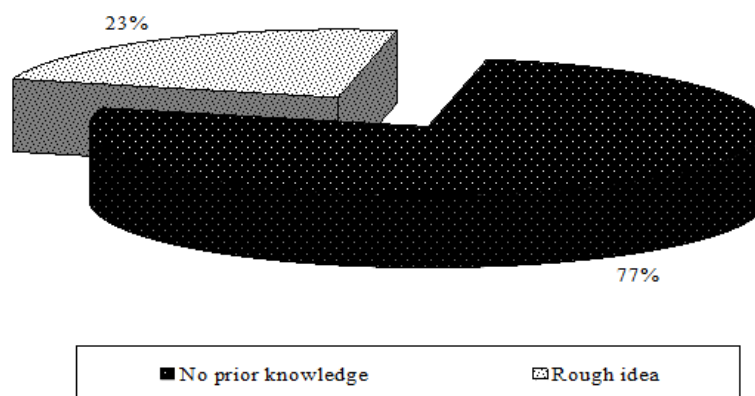
**Figure 4.1:** Respondents Level of Education



As majority of the respondents (40%) had primary level of education; those with some secondary education were 29% of the respondents. Those who had completed secondary education and those who had completed post secondary education shared the percentages (26%). Few respondents (3%) had some primary education while 2% did not have any education. The information was relevant in finding out if the residents would access any form of training if given an opportunity. It further qualifies the language used in accessing information on community participation in CSR projects.

Indeed, majority of the respondents (76.8%) had no prior knowledge of what CSR means in relation to the 23.2% who had a rough idea of what CSR is just as shown in figure 4.2. The researcher was then able to explain to them what CSR is in order to get information on the respondents' participation. The information was further linked to whether there were trainings in the area of CSR. Since many of the respondents had no prior knowledge of what CSR was, this was an indicator that there was training needed in specifically this area.

**Figure 4.2:** Respondents Knowledge of What CSR is



**4.1.2 Projects funded under CSR by Mumias Sugar Company**

The study sought to find out the types of CSR projects that were initiated by Mumias Sugar Company. Respondents identified the categories of projects or initiatives they had seen and /or participated in. Key informants listed projects supported by the company under CSR in Mumias division and the costs incurred. Respondents mentioned various projects that were documented after the establishment of the CSR section at MSC as from 2005. They reported that there was improper documentation of the projects initiated by the company right from its establishment in 1973. Implementation was mainly done by sections and hence lack of proper coordination. The categories identified, matched with the list of categories documented in MSC's CSR policy are shown in table 4.1. Observation was used to cross check the verbal data that was collected through interview schedules and in-depth interviews. Those projects identified in the interview schedules and could not be found on the ground or be confirmed to have been sponsored by the MSC management, would be struck off from the list.

**Table 4.1** Categories Identified by the Respondents

Category of projects initiated under CSR	Percentages
Offering scholarship/bursaries/research grants to the needy in the society ( Education)	90.4
Contribution to schools other than bursaries and scholarships (Education)	95.2
Construction of roads for the community ( Not listed)	89.6
Environmental conservation (Environment)	96.8
Providing health clinics and health facilities ( Health)	88.8
Donation to games and/sports and entertainment (National Emergencies)	87.2
Supporting any charitable institution like children's homes ( National Emergency )	90.4
Donation to institutions & other needy cases ( National Emergencies)	90.4
Sponsoring community welfare associations or organizations ( National Emergencies)	83.2
Contribution to crime prevention ( National Emergencies)	80.8
Assistance in overcoming problems related to drug abuse and alcoholism in the community ( Health)	83.2
Making parks ( Environment)	90.4
Response to community complaints on CSR that need urgent attention ( National Emergencies)	85.6
Contribution for public amenities (e.g. bus stops, street lights, and shades) (Not listed)	88.6
Construction of cultural centers ( Not listed)	75.2

Source: Field Data

As shown in table 4.1, most of the respondents (90.4%) identified projects that MSC had funded under offering bursaries and scholarship. MSC's effort to support the schools in the division was noted with respondents naming several schools they could remember. This category as noted in the study had majority of projects that MSC had supported under CSR since its establishment; it was therefore necessary to elaborate on it. MSC had a company school assistance programme with an annual budget of Kshs100 million to support three estate schools i.e. Booker Academy, Mumias Sugar Central and Complex Primary Schools and other needy educational institutions within the Mumias Sugar Zone. Respondents reported that Mumias Sugar Company's Corporate Social Responsibility runs back in 1975 when the company established Mumias Complex Primary School to meet the then demand for elementary schooling of children in the region. Later on, it established Mumias Central Primary School in 1988 at a cost of two million shillings to meet the rising number of students. Booker Academy was fully sponsored by the company to cut out the status niche demanded by the management employees of the company. Since then, MSC maintains the three schools' respective facilities and provides for accommodation of staff brought in by the Government (Teachers Service Commission). The company spends sixty three million shilling to sponsor all the programmes of Booker Academy including maintenance of the facilities and payment of teachers.

A policy was introduced to further support schools lying eight kilometer radius from MSC in Mumias Sugar Zone in 1988. This saw the support of eight schools namely; Makunda Muslim primary, Shibale primary, Mwitoti primary, Eluche primary, Lureko primary, Matawa primary, Matungu primary and Kholera primary schools. Each of all these schools had class one to eight classes constructed, a science room and a laboratory constructed. The company also equipped the facilities it constructed. Donations expanded to all schools in the forty kilometer radius. An indicator of community involvement was that a facility earmarked for funding should have been started. The company would give sixty percent assistance while the community provided for the remaining forty percent. This saw support to other primary and secondary schools like Mumias Township primary, Ematete primary, St Mathias Mwitoti Secondary, Butula Boys, Lung'anyiro secondary. An additional list of schools that were supported by MSC is in the appendix vii of this report; the support for schools goes beyond the area selected for this study. The chief further mentioned support made by the company towards payment of five adult education teachers. This was an honorarium towards their efforts in making the adult generation access education.

Still under the category of support for education; Mumias Sugar Company at the time of this study had a bursary scheme whose list dates back to the year 1992 that benefited 10 top KCPE candidates every year. Initially, bursary for the first 10 students who had excelled in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education, K.C.P.E was given, cheques payable to the schools these students were called to. The students were awarded a full four-year bursary to pursue secondary education. This was later revised to 20 students, ten for those belonging to company workers' children and the remaining 10 for contracted farmers in Mumias sugar zone. As a condition the students were to report to Booker Academy for their Secondary education; a step aimed at making Booker Academy autonomous.

Out of all those asked, 63.2% of the respondents noted that MSC funds projects meant to support charitable institutions. This ranged from support for those afflicted with clashes to those with individual needs though this was then contrary to CSR charter. The chief reported sponsorship of a self help group (Kshs 280,000) to help get electricity in Mumias Township sub location, but he was pessimistic that such an amount would not be beneficial to the group as they would not raise the remaining over 1million that Kenya Power and Lighting Company had quoted.

All the respondents identified MSC's support for games and sports with them citing the annual inter estate games, support for local council competitions and secondary school games through provision of gifts and playing grounds. Initially MSC supported Mumias Sugar Football Club but later withdrew its sponsorship and focused on local sports support upon request.

Respondents further reported that MSC supported locally based health institutions through provision of material and financial assistance. St Mary's hospital in Mumias Division is a major beneficiary of Kshs 1,000,000 annually going towards improvement of infrastructure and facilities. MSC further supported eye-clinic camps and blood donation initiatives other than donations of hospital equipment to Mumias Dispensary at Mumias. The company further provided a water kiosk at a cost of Kshs 741,618.75 at Shibale Market with Kshs 200,000 given to support wages for its attendant for a year. This was as a result of the residents being forced to walk to the factory premises in search of clean water and this posed a risk to the factory's security since some hooligans took advantage to get access to the company on pretext of looking for water. Water borne diseases at Shibale also precipitated the support of this initiative by MSC.

Respondents acknowledged MSC's support for the construction of roads and bridges. The company maintained 4,800 kms of the road network within the Mumias Sugar Zone at an average cost of KShs100 million with another Kshs.30 million towards the maintenance of bridges. In Mumias Division specifically, Mumias Sugar Company maintained 1,000 kms of the road network. Mumias Sugar constructed Matawa Bridge across River Nzoia which connects Matawa village in Mumias Division and Indangalasia village in Matungu Division at a cost of Kshs 63 million. The bridge was to help cut down transport costs by nearly 40 kms for farmers who bring in their cane from certain parts of Busia and Siaya Districts. Construction of three other bridges namely Walatsi, Sio and Namisi was also completed at a total cost of Kshs 86.2 million.

All the respondents reported that MSC had assisted the community in the construction of feeder roads and maintenance of the roads network in the division. Provision of health clinics and health facilities was identified by few respondents (12%) who were recipients of the health facility offered to company employees and their siblings. Majority (88%) noted that other than provide for the health facilities, MSC opted to open one of their health facilities, MCH dispensary to community members neighbouring the company premises. Nearly half of the respondents (44%) identified MSC's support for welfare associations and organizations. Majority of the respondents (99.2%) reported that MSC was involved in the construction of public amenities like bus stops, street lights and shades along the Mumias - Bungoma route while 67.2% of the respondents had knowledge of the company's effort of reduction of crime in the region.

Majority of the respondents (85.6%) acknowledged the company's efforts in environmental conservation. Every year the company distributes nearly six million tree seedlings to local cane farmers, women and youth groups, schools, churches, mosques and other public institutions for planting. At the time of research Mumias Sugar Company was a corporate partner of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and part of its conservation effort was to join other partners in conserving the Mau Forest.

Respondents (64.8% of those interviewed) reported that the company did not respond to community complaints that needed urgent attention. Though it had began programmes on local radio stations, 'Mulembe FM' and 'West FM' for farmers to air their views, respondents noted that issues of CSR were not tackled in the programmes and were otherwise referred to the public relations offices. Respondents noted that CSR initiatives had been taken to be 'philanthropically' given and as such it would be queer to question modalities of their management and administration.

Unanimously, respondents (99.2%) acknowledged MSC's effort in establishment of a cultural centre, namely Eshembekho at Matungu where Nabongo Mumia was buried at a cost of Kshs 15 million. Other than the categories identified by the respondents, the D.O's office reported to have received assistance especially in support of public functions where the company would provide for venues to such functions and approximately Kshs 50,000 to facilitate the buying of refreshments. With the establishment of a Mumias district, the office was assisted to house every member of department in the company estates at a subsidized rate. Furthermore, the company employed two workers to work on the planting of flower gardens around it. The Human Resources Manager also indicated that they had reached an agreement to support the establishment of Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology's (Mumias Campus) to the tune of Kshs 10,000,000.

CSR projects or initiatives had not been systematically documented because some were pledges from the top management that did not go through the CSR department. They would be accommodated later as a directive or acknowledgement. For instance, the D.O's office had information of the funding of public holidays and other meetings that the Corporate Information Officer (CIO) had no information about. He further mentioned support of Shianda town electrification by the company and proposed establishment of a D.O's office at Shianda that the CIO had no information of. The chief had information on the honorarium given to adult education teachers in the location were given, which the Corporate Information Officer had no knowledge of.

Some respondents noted that specifically village heads and the sub-chief all from nucleus sub-location were on the company payroll, Kshs 3000 per month to help in mitigating arson fires around their areas of

jurisdiction. This however was not known by other respondents.

Respondents further gave projects that were not in good condition or were not running as expected. Those included infrastructure in schools, trees planted under environmental conservation, community policing and bus top shades. They also reported that there are projects that were initiated that were not in good condition. That included the bus parks that were on the main highways, feeder roads which had previously been maintained by MSC, farmer's advance scheme and public toilets at Shibale market.

Respondents were further asked on the periods of initiation where 60% of the respondents reported that most of the projects initiated under CSR were in the period 1984 - 1994 while 40% of the respondents reported the period 1995 - 2005. The periods lay in the era before the company became privatized. The information on the period of initiation was to find out if privatization of the MSC had any direct influence on the funding of projects

The researcher sought to look at a period when the company sought to assist many institutions while still a public entity and when such initiatives were under the general management. It is also worth noting that many of the initiatives were not documented because each section would run its endeavour separately. According to the Human Resources Manager, the company later after privatization saw the need to document and systematize the allocation and disbursement of funds and established the CSR section. To add on that the company came up with the CSR policy and company charter to be used as a tool of running the CSR activities. The company also noted that it was spending a lot of money on infrastructure, which proved to be expensive and had to look for other forms that would also involve the wider community more at the same time improve on the corporate image of the company. Appendix ix consists of a list of schools and colleges assisted by MSC as from 1988 to 1993; a period that respondents noted that many initiatives and projects were funded.

As mentioned before, the research focused on projects initiated as from 2005 after the establishment of the CSR section. The research also restricted itself to projects initiated in Mumias Division. The following is a summary of Mumias Sugar Company monthly CSR initiatives/ programmes undertaken since 2005 as reported by the respondents and as documented by the in-house journals; *Natural Sweetness*. The initiatives fall in the period when MSC had a CSR charter and a CSR policy guiding the running of CSR initiatives. Some of the projects documented included the following:

In 2005, MSC participated in the provision of sports gear to Mumias municipal team at inter-municipal games. It also made a donation of books to Koyonzo Primary (Kshs 30,000)

An individual donation of 50 bags of cement each to Nambale and Mundika secondary schools was made. MSC also participated in the 1<sup>st</sup> phase of establishment of green revolution project- planting of indigenous trees worth Kshs 330,000. MSC is also known to have done the lighting of Kakamega town and generally participated in Shibale clean up exercise

In 2006, MSC sponsored the improvement of burial site of the Luhya Legendary leader- Nabongo Mumia ( eshiembekho) at a cost of Kshs 15,000,000; officially opened in 2008. It also made support for Shibale Environmental Programme (SEP) in establishment of multi- seedlings tree nursery- provision of land and water. It also hosted National Environmental Tree Planting Day- Matawa- provided trees and staff. There was individual donation of iron sheets to Mzee George Mahero

In 2007, MSC recarpeted of Shibale to Mumias Sugar road at a cost of Kshs 30,000,000. There were also Shibale clean-up exercises where MSC participated through provision of staff, water and equipment. MSC also supported the Inter-church Competitions in the same year. MSC also co- sponsored eye camp clinic in consultation with Sabatia Eye Hospital, Lions Club of Equator and Friends church at a cost of Kshs 200,000. In August, it facilitated blood donation in consultation with Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital. It is also known for Supporting Community Action on AIDS through provision of fertilizer and Maize seed lings for Lung'anyiro AIDS group. In December, MSC organized an Annual Inter Estates Sports Competitions through provision of venue, equipment, t-shirts and prizes (Kshs 30,000)

In 2008, MSC made donation of food stuffs to people afflicted in Mt. Elgon with the help of Mumias youth through provision of t-shirts and food stuff. It also made an aid for internally displaced persons at Kakamega (Kshs 300,000). MSC also participated in Kakamega Provincial Hospital clean up exercise with the help of Kenya Institute of Management through provision of equipment and staff. It also made donation of a fridge to St. Mary's hospital, Mumias. MSC also organized for an eye camp clinic in consultation with Sabatia Eye Hospital, Lions Club of Equator and Friends church at a cost of Kshs 200,000. It is also known to have sponsored the lighting of Mumias town with a pledge of maintenance of the lights and electricity payment for 1year. MSC also participated in the earmarking of the proposed Masinde Muliro University, Mumias Campus with a pledge to support its establishment.

The researcher sought to find out the nature of funding the CSR categories of projects by MSC. Nature of funding had two aspects, the manner in which the CSR projects were funded i.e. fully, partially and so on and the other aspect consisted of the time frame of sponsorship i.e. annually, weekly, perennially etc. All the respondents reported that offering scholarship/bursaries/research grants to the needy was done annually.



Respondents (83.3%) also reported that MSC released executive or managers in the field to go and assist in specific community projects once in a while 16.7% did not know. Respondents (83.3%) also reported that funding of games and sports and entertainment was done annually while others (16.7%) reported that it was once in a while. Contribution to schools other than bursaries and scholarships by the company was reported to be funded annually by 91.7% of the respondents while 8.3% did not know. Minority (33.2%) of the respondents reported that support for construction of roads was done annually while 41.7% of the respondents reported that it was done once in a while. 25.0% reported that funding was done periodically.

All the respondents reported that making parks was done once in a while, while 66.7% of the respondents reported that provision of health support to the community was done periodically while 33.3% thought that it was done once in a while. Majority of the respondents (83.3%) reported that sponsoring community welfare associations or organizations was done once in a while, while others (16.7%) reported that they did not know. Majority of the respondents (91.7%) reported that Contribution for public amenities (e.g. bus stops and shades) was done periodically while 8.3% reported that they did not know

Respondents (91.7%) reported that contribution to crime prevention was done annually while 8.3% reported that they did not know. Majority (83.3%) reported that assistance in overcoming problems related to drug abuse and alcoholism in the community was done periodically, while others (16.7%) reported that they did not know. All the respondents reported that both environmental conservation and construction of cultural centers were done once in a while. Finally, respondents (91.7%) reported that response to community complaints on CSR that need urgent attention was done once in a while 8.3% reported that they did not know.

The researcher made physical observations on actual operations of projects funded under CSR. A transect walk through the entire study area was conducted by the researcher to observe specific company funded projects under CSR in the study area and the use of these projects upon successful completion. The categories identified are shown in table 4.2. Also, the categories are matched with the list of specific projects the author saw on the ground/ given documentation as proof of CSR initiatives.

**Table 4.2** Observation List for Projects Identified in Mumias Division

Category of projects initiated under CSR	Projects in Mumias Division
Offering scholarship/bursaries/research grants to the needy in the society	Support for 45 students at Booker Academy through bursaries
Contribution to schools other than bursaries and scholarships	Constructed Classrooms at: Mwitoti Pri, Ichinga Pri, Matawa Pri, Lureko Pri, Eluche Pri and Sec. Mumias Muslim Girls Sec, Mumias Complex Pri, Mumias Central Pri, Booker Academy, Shibale Pri and Lureko Sec.
Construction of roads and bridges for the community	Feeder roads in the division, 'Kidero' Avenue, Matawa bridge
Environmental conservation	MSC tree nursery, SEP Nursery and land, Planted trees along Nzoia river
Providing health clinics and health facilities	Mumias MCH/FP center Refrigerator, Mortuary, Private wing -St. Marys hospital
Donation to games and/sports and entertainment	December inter- estates games, sponsored advert for golf tournament sponsorship.
Contribution to crime prevention	Mumias Police Post
Constructing parks	Kipyator Park, Oketch park
Response to community complaints on CSR	Presence of Public Relations Office.Sponsored interactive Programmes- Mulembe FM
Contribution for public amenities	Bus shades, street lights and dustbins with MSC logo at Mumias town, Water Kiosk at Shibale Market

Source: Field Data

Observation was used to cross check the verbal data that was collected through interview schedules and in-depth interviews.

#### 4.1.3 Extent of Community participation in CSR projects funded by MSC

In the interview schedules, respondents were asked to state the extent to which they were involved right from the identification to the monitoring and evaluation of the projects initiated by MSC. The responses were put on a five point rating scale. The results are illustrated in table 4.3. The results are presented according to the different areas of project running that is; identification and selection, planning, management and monitoring and evaluation.

**Table 4.3** Extent of Community Participation

Stages of Participation( Average)		FIVE POINT SCALE (RESPONSES)(PERCENTAGES)				
		Never involved	Rarely involved	Occasionally involved	Often involved	Always involved
i	Identification and Selection	67.47	29.0	4.0	-	-
ii	Planning	59.36	33.44	12.0	-	-

iii	Management	14.4	59.33	26.27	-	-
iv	Monitoring and evaluation	25.6	58.4	16.0	-	-

Source: Field Data

‘Never involved’ was allocated 20% of community participation, ‘rarely involved’ 40% of community participation. ‘Occasionally involved’ was allocated 60% of community participation while ‘often involved’ and ‘always involved’ accounted for 80% and 100% participation of the community members respectively. Given this type of interpretation respondents indicated that they are never involved in the identification selection and planning stages, and rarely involved in the management, monitoring and evaluation stages. The respondents therefore indicated that they were not involved fully and showed dissatisfaction in their involvement in the CSR projects and initiatives of MSC to the community. Only at the management and administration, and monitoring and evaluation were they averagely involved.

On average, those who reported that they were never involved during the identification and selection stages were 67.47% of the respondents. Specifically, 29.0% reported that they were rarely involved while 4.0% of the respondents indicated that they were occasionally involved. Respondents (59.36%) also reported that they were never involved during the planning process, 33.4% of the respondents reported that they were rarely involved while 12.0% indicated that they were occasionally involved. Specifically, 14.4% of the respondents indicated that they were never involved, 59.33% of them said that they were rarely involve while 26.27% reported that they were occasionally involved. When asked, 16.0% of the respondents reported that they were occasionally involved during Monitoring and evaluation while 58.4% reported that they were rarely involved. Specifically, 25.6 % of the respondents reported that they were never involved.

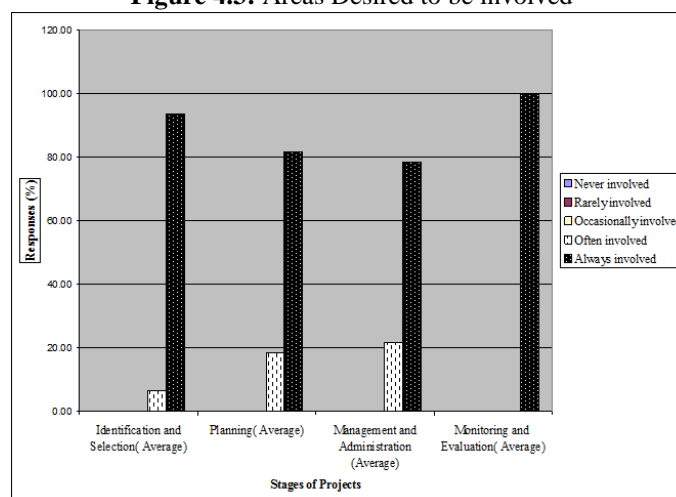
Most of the respondents (74.4%) reported that they were never involved in the selection of the workforce, followed by those who thought that they were not involved in the selection of leaders of the CSR projects initiated. Of those asked, 59.2% of the respondents reported that they were not involved in the selection of community development programmes.

Most of those who thought that they were never involved picked out the area of resolution of problems arising from CSR projects and determination of the size of CSR committees formed i.e. 74.4% and 71.2% respectively. A near average percentage of the respondents (44.8%) recorded that they were rarely involved in the creation of rules and regulations governing the CSR projects. This indicates that indeed there was minimal involvement of the community at the planning stage.

Most of the respondents (73%) reported that they were rarely involved in the determination of roles, tasks and duties of those in CSR projects. A similar percentage also noted that they were also rarely involved in the delegation and assigning of duties in CSR projects while 72% of the respondents reported that they were rarely involved when it came to implementation of these projects. As noted there was an improved scale of involvement compared to the planning stage where most of the respondents were never involved. Respondents reported that they were rarely involved in the determination of the management and evaluation. Those who reported that they were occasionally involved were 16% of the respondents.

Respondents were asked on their extent to which they would like to be involved in community development projects or initiatives supported by MSC. As illustrated in figure 4.9 below, respondents’ desire was to be involved in all the areas of community development initiatives that the company considered under the CSR umbrella.

Figure 4.3: Areas Desired to be involved



Source: Field Data

Specifically, 93.6% of the respondents reported that they desire to be always involved during identification and selection of the CSR projects and initiatives while 6.4% of the respondents chose to be often involved at the same level. Of those asked, 81.6% of the respondents reported their desire to be always involved during the planning stage while 18.4% chose to be often involved. In particular, 78.4% of the respondents reported that they would desire to be involved at the management and administration while 21.6% of them chose to be often involved. All the respondents asked reported that they should be involved during the monitoring and evaluation of these projects. It is worth indicating that responses given show a high interest of the respondents in participating in all areas of project management.

When key informants from MSC were asked if there were projects initiated by MSC that do not involve the community's participation, they indicated that they had tried their level best to involve the community. The Corporate Affairs Manager reported that "it would not be possible to bring the politicians and other stake holders on the CSR board as this would hamper the process of implementation and would politicize the company operations." When asked what should be done to enhance community participation, they gave various suggestions for improving community participation. Among them was "there needs to be capacity building of the community members and acceptability of the projects by the community members." Though MSC had not addressed these challenges, she indicated that plans were "underway to educate the community as is required." This corresponds with the question household respondents were asked on the need for training in the area of CSR and all the respondents (100%) asked reported that they needed training on CSR.

As regards what hinders community participation in the company funded projects under CSR was asked and all the key informants gave responses. First; political interference was a major hindrance Corporate Information Officer gave a case where the company sought to inform member of parliament for Butula constituency on what MSC had intended to sponsor in the constituency (supporting a health center or health facility). "It did not go down well with her, she spent time informing me of how the constituency needed support on poverty eradication initiatives and talked for a long time about mushroom growing." This example indicated that indeed what MSC intended to sponsor fell out of the plan the M.P had for her constituents. The D.O's office indicated that "initially MSC had wanted to sponsor the construction of a divisional office at Shianda and partially support rural electrification but this was hampered by politics on the ground and the projects then did not take off."

Secondly; some respondents noted that attitude formed by the community on any of the company's initiatives was another hindrance. They always believed that the company is there to provide for finances and any project initiated has a connotation of continued support from the company. The Head of Human Resources noted that CSR department "plays both a reactive role and a proactive one that is; it will be flexible to attend to immediate needs or ad hoc requests the community require and at the same time have projects in mind that are planned for the community." The Head of Human Resources noted that they also "seek for the initiatives that would in turn be beneficial both to the company and the community."

The third reason for low participation as noted by the respondents was the norms of making requests. The C I O reported that the company would request for bills of quantities for any construction and provide support but sometimes the workmanship would be compromised. "An approximation of a good classroom for instance is Kshs 500,000 but from the community's perception, three classrooms can be made out of this and this compromises the standards. We therefore mainly use our experts from the building section to implement the project. There are many proposals that are not well coordinated when they are coming from the community through the secretariat yet some became difficult to implement because of the institution's capability at the time. Those projects for religious institutions and individual initiated projects are always brought to the fore and are eliminated because they do not fall in the categories of sponsorship." Corporate Information Officer reported that at times, "the committee goes an extra mile in helping the community identify its immediate needs especially if on reconnaissance visits, the committee identifies this need, an example of a school requesting for a dormitory, yet it has been given 50 computers and has no computer lab. In this case, the committee would help the school see the need to prioritize a computer lab."

Fourth, monitoring and evaluation of projects after handing over had been a problem. Many of these projects were not in good condition as a result of this. There was mismanagement from the administration that was supposed to cater for these projects. The key informants also noted the danger of duplication of support of common initiatives with the government, CDF proposals, LATF and other community NGOs proposals. He said that "there needs to be a data base information center where issues of the district can be retrieved for action."

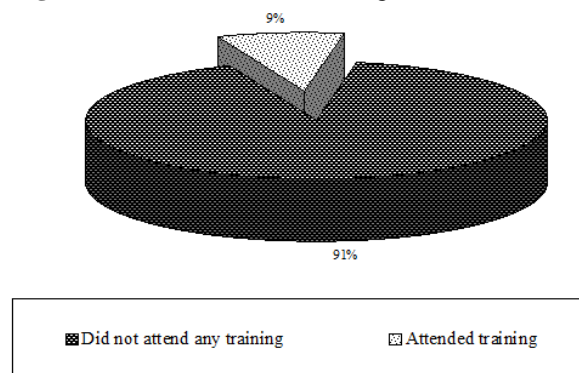
Fifth, bureaucracy like in the case of Shibale water project was another problem MSC was facing. The Corporate Affairs Manager noted that MSC "needs to assist the local community and this has been interpreted differently; to mean avenues of making money yet that is against the charter." Some community representatives noted that though the in-house journal, Natural Sweetness provided an avenue of informing the community about the community projects or initiatives under CSR, still, the community had no sufficient knowledge in this

area because of illiteracy of the community members and its distribution. Journals were mainly produced for the workers of MSC.

The community representatives were asked what hindered MSC from fully involving the community in the CSR projects or initiatives. They cited the following obstacles in order of priority: Political interference, corporate barrier, finance turn over of the company, societal expectations of MSC, succession planning and lack of knowledge for the community members.

Respondents were asked if they ever attended a general training on leadership, advocacy or general running of community projects funded by MSC under CSR. As shown in figure 4.5, 91.2% of the respondents reported that they had not attended any of the trainings while 8.8% reported to have attended.

**Figure 4.5:** Attendance in Training of CSR initiatives

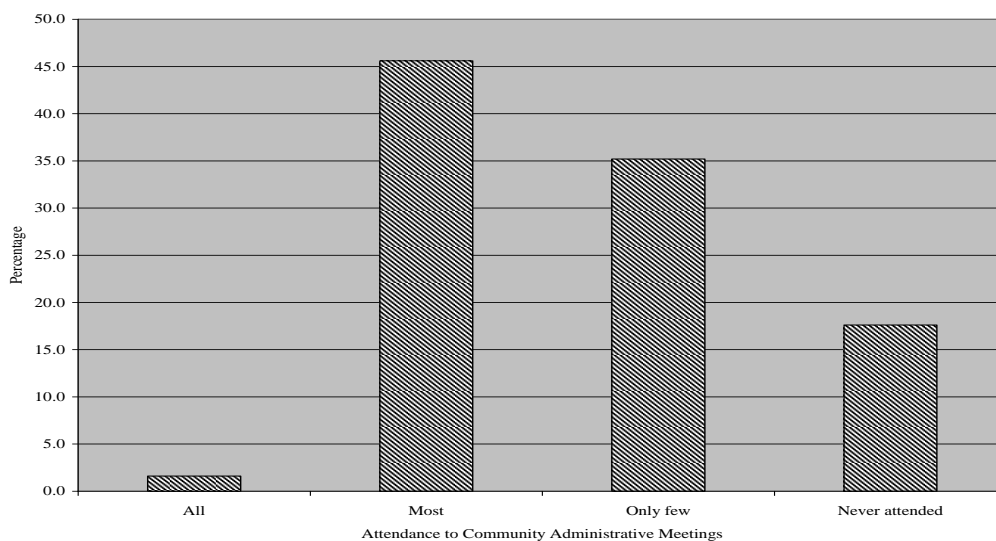


Source: Field Data

The minority however noted that they had a general training of running projects and not specifically in the area of CSR. This is an indicator that the community’s full participation in CSR initiatives is hindered by its technical capacity and MSC on its part had not played a role in training them.

**Attendance in Community Administrative Meetings**

Responses on attendance in community administrative meetings (Barazas) were an indicator on whether such a forum would be effective in disseminating information on CSR and subsequent running of CSR activities. Figure 4.6 shows attendance of respondents to community administrative meetings.

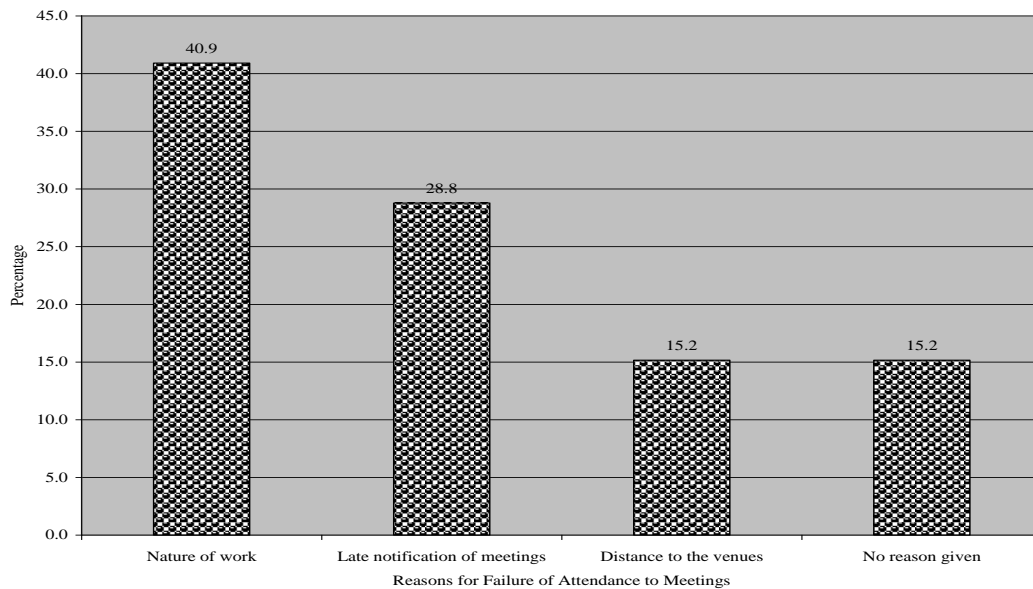


Source: Field Data

Figure 4.6 shows that a very low proportion of the respondents (1.6%) reported to have attended all community Barazas, 45.6% of the respondents attended most, while 35.2% attended few of these meetings. The rest 17.6% of the respondents had never attended any of them. This is an indicator of the ways and means of community involvement; community Barazas would if used form an avenue of access to community members and their involvement in the development process.

### Reasons for Not Attending All or Most Meetings

Reasons for not attending all or most meetings were given by respondents as shown in figure 4.7 below



Source: Field Data

As shown in figure 4.7, 52.8% of the respondents gave reasons of not attending all or most community meetings. The reasons were: Nature of their work, late notification of meetings and distance to the venues for those who were residents of Lureko sub location. The reasons given are based on logistics of meetings facilitation which are dependent on the convener of the meeting.

## V. Discussion

### 4.2.2 Types of Corporate Social Responsibility Programmes Initiated By MSC

Identification of projects' categories initiated by Mumias Sugar under Corporate Social Responsibility was identified by all the respondents. The problem lies in identification of the individual projects so far initiated under these categories. Whereas the community representatives can list many of these projects, it can be reliably reported that respondents are not able to identify all projects initiated in the community. This can be supported by the argument raised by the company representatives that even though the company is on record to have spent millions on projects under CSR, many of these projects have not been documented. It can be argued that the community members need not to remember the individual projects. On the contrary their knowledge of particular projects validates the argument that they have owned the projects to the extent that they can single out those supported by MSC in their location.

Perhaps this raises the pertinent question of whether the community would own what they cannot identify, some of the projects being in the custody of the community representatives, for example community policing where some village heads were on payroll while others were not. The respondents that reported that they did not know some of the projects have the right of knowledge for them to participate in the development process. Knowledge of the types of projects initiated by MSC under CSR is further hampered by the channels used in informing the community. Averagely, respondents attend community public administration meetings (Barazas) yet they have insufficient knowledge because majority of the information is relayed through the company journals. This is further compounded by the illiteracy of the community members who cannot access information relayed through these journals.

This therefore exposes a gap in terms of adjudication of the CSR initiatives. It is then evident that some projects are directly funded from the CEO's office without passing through the CSR section. That further explains undisclosed CSR initiatives that the community is not aware of. As such, the initiatives can be susceptible to elite capture.

The financial results for the half- year ended December 2008 shows waning profitability. MSC reported a drop in pre tax profit over the same period in 2007. The management attributes this to low sugar cane out put, a strike by cane transporters resulting to factory closures as well as routine maintenance during which operations which were suspended. This has an indirect implication on the types of CSR projects the company has engaged in bearing in mind that the types are pegged on profits made in a particular financial year. However, it can be reported that community engagement before the company became privatized was more with

the education sector alone comprising of assistance of approximately 90 schools as compared to current state where the initiatives are varied but limited to few areas. Community members then feel that there is little that the company is doing to improve their welfare upon its privatization. That further explains the lukewarm relationship MSC has with its major stakeholders, the farmers as explained and supported by a baseline survey made from the period 15<sup>th</sup> June to 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2005 (Wafula and Marete, 2005). Percy – Smith, (2006) recognizes that when limited to consultation, participation does not address deep-rooted problems concerning the target group. That not with standing, with the many projects the company has established, there needs to be a mechanism of streamlining the operations to emanate from the CSR department. Categories identified and given priority by the community members focus on empowerment, a factor to consider what is of priority to the community. Community members stress the philosophy of not giving people fish but rather teaching them how to fish. Despite all the rhetoric on gender equity over the past two decades or so, women all over Africa continue to face economic, socio-cultural and legal barriers that constrain their capacity to participate in decisions that hinge on farming and natural resource management, a situation that affects their ability to generate enough incomes that would go towards improvement of standard of living of their households (Boserup, 1970). Provision of funds to self help groups, whose majority members are women, is an avenue of women empowerment. Save for money generating initiatives, support for youth groups would enhance transition in development from generation to another. That goes for support for the education infrastructure and provision of bursaries. Allocation of bursaries for top twenty students would not suffice to be the best policy. This is because beneficiaries would not necessarily come from the region. The quota system as suggested by the community representatives would ensure that students from areas with limited would have equal access to education. That therefore means that every location for instance would benefit from bursary allocation unlike the previous arrangement which saw many students benefit most from nucleus and Mumias township sub locations.

#### **4.2.3 Levels of Community Participation**

Respondents indicated that they are never involved in the identification selection and planning stages, and rarely involved in the management, monitoring and evaluation stages. The respondents therefore give a position that they are not involved fully and showed dissatisfaction in their involvement in the CSR projects and initiatives of MSC to the community. Only at the management and administration, and monitoring and evaluation are they averagely involved. Explanations as to why MSC does not fully involve the community fully in the CSR projects and initiatives include political interference from its voted leaders, Corporate being a barrier especially after MSC became a private company, finance turn over of the company, societal expectations of MSC which is essentially rural based, succession planning on the part of the company and lack of knowledge for the community members. Mwangi, (2004) asserts that community management is desirable to all. This is because of a number of reasons. First is ideological in that men and women take decisions regarding their own life, and most directly regarding issues that affect their daily life. The second, more practical reason is that the service will be more efficient and effective if it is in line with the local needs and conditions, and with the priorities and capacities of men and women concerned. Thirdly, the services will cover a larger population, if community, private as well as public resources are well mobilized. Contrary to this stance, the results in this report indicate that the benefits of community engagement are far from being reached.

The CSR charter and CSR policy the company has put in place are but a public relations package aimed at indicating high levels of community engagement yet this is not on the ground as stated. Previously, the criterion used by the firm to select projects was based on demonstrated initiative, enthusiasm, and accessibility, extent of need and availability of funds. According to the CSR secretariat, demonstrated initiative was shown by institutions or groups that showed efforts towards needy projects such as where the work was in progress through community effort but funds were insufficient to complete them. Such groups were required to apply for financial assistance using the formal procedure. The secretariat was expected in turn to assess the extent of need of the individual groups and based on the community's' demonstrated initiative provide for funding. The procedure in itself isolates the role of the community in identification and selection of projects to be funded and MSC is comfortable dealing with groups other than communities. The procedure further inclines support to elite capture because those who call for help might be aware of the procedures at the expense of the rest of the community.

## **VI. Summary, Conclusions And Recommendations**

### **5.1 Summary**

The study further revealed that MSC had projects located in all the districts in the wider Mumias Sugar Zone but there was no specific criterion that allocated the specific number of projects to specific areas. The initiatives were partially sponsored by the company with most of the projects being supported once in a while. Finally, the study results show that MSC as a parastatal involved the community more in the establishment of the initiatives as compared to the current status as a private company.

The study detailed questions seeking to find out the levels of community participation in the CSR projects funded by MSC. The responses confirmed that the community was not involved at the identification and selection stages, and at the planning stage. Majority of the respondents indicated that they were never involved at these stages. According to the rating the quantification is equivalent to 20% involvement at the identification and selection stages.

Respondents though gave responses that showed that the levels of involvement at management, monitoring and evaluation of the projects increased. The general responses indicated that they were rarely involved, an equivalent of 40% involvement.

## **5.2 Conclusions**

It is in the interest of corporate organizations to demonstrate to the world that they recognize that their responsibility to their citizens go beyond paying taxes to the government, maximizing wealth and turning profits for its stakeholders. Mumias Sugar Company has led in the allocation of financial resources to social responsibility so as to benefit the community members. It further systematized these initiatives with the establishment of the CSR charter and the CSR policy. There is sufficient evidence that MSC has done so much for the community, an indicator that MSC has seen CSR as a sustainable growth strategy. CSR charter and policy also offer a possibility of MSC exploring CSR investment and linking it to social outcomes amongst mainstream business apart from linking CSR to its performance. In the conceptual framework, Mallen, (2006) states that most companies look to the outer circle - what the company has actually done, good or bad, in terms of its products and services, in terms of its impact on the environment and on local communities, or in how it treats and develops its workforce. Out of the various stakeholders, it is financial analysts who are predominantly focused - as well as past financial performance - on quality of management as an indicator of likely future performance. Thus, CSR for MSC remains to be a yardstick for future performance. It was also noted that the overall participation of community members in CSR funded projects was low. There have been valid concerns on their management and the inability of the target community to monitor and evaluate the funds. In particular, there is extremely low public awareness on the mandate, purpose, scope, functions and operational procedures of the CSR initiatives and approaches. In many cases communities are not involved in investment identification processes and even less so in decision making processes and monitoring. As a result projects have been implemented that do not meet community priorities and they only serve the interests of the companies that initiate them. For those who are brought on board to represent the community interests, they end up meeting their own needs like political patronage and subsequently elite capture in these projects. There is therefore the need to identify and develop community members through capacity building to empower them with knowledge and skills of involvement in the CSR projects for sustainability. Lastly, there is also poor coordination of projects to be initiated resulting in many cases of duplication of effort and inefficiency. Investment decisions in these projects are frequently made without regard to wider development plans where these exist such as local authority strategic plans, regional physical development plans, and national development strategies. Community felt needs that have been captured in the development plans may not necessarily be met under Corporate Social Responsibility because private firms do these projects as part of corporate image if not as a marketing strategy.

## **5.3 Recommendations for Policy, Practice and Further Research**

### **5.3.1 Recommendations for Policy and Practice**

It is evident that the more advanced view of CSR demands significant long-term commitment, and definition (or re-definition) of corporate values. It can also require wholesale changes to the ways companies operate.

This study found out that community members were not fully integrated in the committees formed to look into the initiation, planning and management of CSR initiatives in the community. The study therefore recommends integration of the community representatives in the CSR committee like community based organizations, non governmental organizations and public officers particularly the chiefs and sub chiefs; who would disseminate information to the grass routes and avoid any form of elite capture. These representatives would organize and mobilize the local community in the best manner of participation. There needs to be a way in which the community should feel part and parcel of the development process that will in the long run affect them.

### **5.3.2 Recommendations for Further Research**

There should be further research on the impact of CSR practices in enhancing the corporate image of an organization. This study focused on community participation in CSR projects and initiatives. CSR approaches are looked at as part of marketing strategies and as such strategic in nature. A research in how CSR practices enhance the corporate image would widen the scope of the CSR practices.

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