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# Exploring corporate social responsibility initiatives in South Africa : the case of the TISO Foundation in Johannesburg.

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## Abstract

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) continues to gain attention amongst corporate bodies and is the medium through which the private sector contributes to development. The last decade has seen a significant growth in CSR initiative in South Africa, partly due to the implementation of public polices such as the Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) Code of Good Practice and the various industry charters that obligate corporate institutions to contribute towards the reconstruction efforts of the nation. As a result many organizations have adopted strategies that include social development projects as part of their core business objectives, thus the initiation of certain projects and programmes as part of their CSR contributions to the reconstruction efforts. Although CSR has roots in philanthropic activities, it has become evident that when CSR initiatives are designed strategically to embody the holistic views of business goals towards profit making as well as community goals that promote positive development. Anecdotal evidence suggests that projects collapse after corporations discontinue funding due to lack of community involvement which renders CSR initiatives unresponsive to the developmental needs of communities. The study sought to explore the extent to which corporate social responsibility initiatives were responsive to the educational needs of beneficiaries in Johannesburg. It also explored beneficiary perceptions on how CSR initiatives can be sustained. The study population was drawn from Tiso Foundation and three partnering organisations. A qualitative case study design was utilised in the study to obtain in depth information from the research participants concerning the CSR initiatives of Tiso Foundation. Semi-structured interview schedules were used to conduct interviews with both beneficiaries of the CSR initiatives and key informants. The research sample consisted of 16 beneficiaries of Tiso Foundation's CSR initiatives and 6 key informants that were drawn from Tiso Foundation and partnering organizations.

The findings revealed that the CSR initiatives were responsive to the needs of the beneficiaries by providing them access to education and skills development. The findings also established the nature of beneficiary participation in CSR initiatives as partially participatory. The study recommended that CSR initiatives should take a developmental approach towards programme executions to ensure full participation of beneficiaries in order to ensure sustainability of the programmes even after funding is discontinued. The study also

suggests the collaborative partnership of government and the private sector towards sustainable development by enhancing and complimenting each other's efforts.

**Key words**

Corporate social responsibility, sustainability, corporate responsiveness, community development, initiative