

**COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES AND COMMUNITY
RELATIONS: A STUDY OF LAFARGE AFRICA PLC IN
MFAMOSING COMMUNITY IN AKAMKPA LOCAL
GOVERNMENT AREA OF CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA.**

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Abstract

This study examined the communication strategies employed by Lafarge Africa Plc in disseminating information about its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities to host communities, with particular focus on Mfamosing community in Akamkpa Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. The study was guided by four research questions which sought to determine the communication media used by the company, the communication challenges encountered in CSR information dissemination, community perceptions of the company's CSR efforts in relation to health and environmental impact, and the communication approaches that could enhance CSR engagement and healthy corporate and community relations. A survey research design was adopted for the study. The population consisted of approximately 5,000 adult residents of Mfamosing community, including youth leaders, elders, women leaders, community-based organization members, local government officials, and selected Lafarge Africa Plc staff involved in CSR and community relations. A sample size of 370 respondents was determined. A stratified random sampling technique was used to ensure representation across key stakeholder groups. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and key informant interviews. The findings revealed that Lafarge Africa Plc employs several communication channels to disseminate CSR information, including town hall meetings, consultations with community leaders, local media platforms, and the use of community liaison officers. However, the study also identified significant communication challenges such as perceived lack of transparency, delays in communicating environmental risks, language barriers, and limited incorporation of community feedback into CSR planning. The study recommended that the company should establish a permanent and accessible CSR communication office which should be established within the host community to improve accessibility, transparency, and responsiveness.

Keywords: Communication, Community, Relations, Strategies, Lafarge Africa Plc

Introduction

In contemporary organizational practice, communication plays a central role in shaping corporate-community relationships. Corporations are increasingly held accountable not just for their financial performance, but also for their social and environmental impact. This accountability is largely communicated through corporate social responsibility (CSR) frameworks, which are strategic tools used by organizations to convey their commitment to the well-being of their stakeholders, especially host communities (Ibrahim & Okon, 2022). Within this communicative framework, community relations is a subfield of public relations which functions as a deliberate effort by organizations to build and sustain mutual understanding and trust with the local populace. (Peter, 2024). These two concepts, CSR and community relations, are intrinsically linked through communication processes that help organizations both inform and engage communities on critical issues affecting them.

Corporate social responsibility is not merely an act of philanthropy or a set of compliance measures; it is a communication strategy through which corporations express their values, social commitments, and environmental consciousness. Effective CSR communication allows companies to manage public perception, address potential conflicts, and promote a socially responsible image (Ezeokoli & Okafor, 2023). For Corporate social responsibility to be meaningful and effective, it must be dialogic, participatory, and community-oriented attributes that fall squarely within the domain of communication and public relations. Poor or top-down CSR communication can lead to distrust, misinformation, and resistance from community members, while well-structured, inclusive, and transparent communication can foster goodwill and cooperation.

Community relations, on the other hand, emphasizes relationship building through open channels of communication between an organization and its host communities. This involves listening to community concerns,

understanding local expectations, and ensuring that the voices of affected residents are heard and considered in decision-making processes. The success of any Corporate social responsibility initiative is therefore contingent on the quality of communication that underpins the community relations strategy of the organization (Ndubisi & Abdulrahman, 2021). These concepts are particularly relevant in industrial contexts where business operations intersect with community health and environmental sustainability. The cement industry, globally and in Nigeria, is associated with substantial environmental concerns due to the emission of dust, noise, and industrial waste. These pollutants pose health risks to the residents of nearby communities and have been linked to respiratory issues, eye irritation, and other environmental hazards (Olalekan & Abosede, 2021). In this context, communication is not only about reporting CSR activities, it is also about educating, warning, consulting, and co-creating solutions with the community to mitigate negative externalities.

Lafarge Cement Company in Cross River State operates one of Nigeria's largest cement plants in the Mfamosing area in Cross River State. This industrial presence has had both positive and adverse effects on the surrounding communities. On one hand, Lafarge has contributed to infrastructure development, local employment, and economic stimulation. On the other, the company's production processes have triggered concerns over dust pollution, land degradation, water safety, and noise pollution among residents. The question, therefore, is not whether Lafarge is contributing economically, it is how effectively the company communicates its responsibilities, risks, and remedial efforts to the host communities.

Lafarge's communication and public relations units are central to this dialogue. They are tasked with not only managing the company's image but also ensuring that community members are adequately informed about environmental risks, safety protocols, and available social amenities. These communication strategies include town hall meetings, environmental

awareness campaigns, grievance redress mechanisms, and collaborative community development programs. However, community reactions vary. While some residents recognize and appreciate these efforts, others perceive them as inadequate or as mere image-laundering tactics. This raises important questions about the effectiveness, clarity, inclusivity, and cultural sensitivity of CSR communication in such industrial contexts.

Furthermore, as the concept of a healthy community has gained prominence in sustainable development discourse, organizations like Lafarge are expected to go beyond compliance and adopt proactive, health-centered corporate social responsibility models. A healthy community is not only free from disease but also equipped with the resources, both informational and infrastructural that support physical, social, and environmental well-being. Communication, again, is at the heart of ensuring that communities are aware of their rights, the risks they face, and the actions being taken to protect them. This study, therefore, seeks to critically examine the role of corporate social responsibility communication in fostering healthy community relations in the context of Lafarge Cement

Company's operations in Cross River State. Specifically, it will assess how the company communicates its CSR initiatives, how it engages the community in dialogue, and how it addresses community grievances related to health and environmental concerns. The research will also explore the challenges faced by the public relations office in bridging the gap between corporate intent and community perception.

Statement of the Problem

In an era where corporate legitimacy and social license to operate are largely influenced by public perception and stakeholder engagement, effective communication of corporate social responsibility (CSR) has become a critical imperative for industrial organizations. The cement manufacturing sector, particularly in developing countries like Nigeria, is often associated with environmental degradation, air and noise pollution, and other health

risks for host communities. Lafarge Cement Company, operating in the Mfamusing area of Cross River State, represents a prominent case where industrial activity intersects with rural and semi-urban community life.

Despite Lafarge's ongoing CSR initiatives such as infrastructure development, environmental mitigation programmes, and healthcare outreach, there remain persistent complaints from residents about air quality deterioration, respiratory problems, and insufficient consultation and transparency from the company. While the company maintains a public relations and community engagement unit to communicate its responsibilities and actions, a noticeable gap exists between corporate messaging and community perception. This communication disconnect raises questions about the clarity, inclusiveness, and cultural appropriateness of CSR communication strategies adopted by the company. Furthermore, the lack of effective two-way communication where community feedback significantly informs corporate decisions suggest a top-down approach to corporate social responsibility. This study is therefore motivated by the need to investigate how well Lafarge Cement Company communicates its policies and practices, how the surrounding communities receive and interpret these messages, and how this communication affects perceptions of health, safety, and corporate responsibility.

Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine how corporate social responsibility (CSR) communication by Lafarge Mfamusing Plant in Cross River State influences healthy community relations. The specific objectives are to:

1. Find out the communication media used by Lafarge Mfamusing Plant Plc to engage host communities on corporate social responsibility initiatives.
2. Assess community perceptions of the company's corporate social responsibility efforts, particularly in relation to health and environmental safety.

3. Determine the challenges faced in communicating corporate social responsibility activities and health-related risks associated with cement production.
4. examine effective communication models for strengthening corporate-community relations in industrial settings.

Research Questions

Based on the objectives of the study, the following research questions were formulated;

1. What communication media does Lafarge Cement Company employ in disseminating information about its corporate social responsibility activities to host communities?
2. What communication challenges exist in the process of informing communities about CSR initiatives and environmental risks?
3. How do members of the host communities perceive the company's corporate social responsibility efforts, particularly in terms of their health and environmental impact?
4. How can communication models or practices improve CSR engagement and healthy community relations in industrial operations?

Literature Review

Concept of Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) refers to the ethical obligation of businesses to contribute to the development and well-being of society beyond the pursuit of profits. It encompasses strategies and practices that reflect a company's commitment to operate in economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable ways. As defined by Okafor (2021), "CSR is the voluntary integration of social and environmental concerns into business operations and interactions with stakeholders." (78) Similarly, Carroll (2021) proposes that "corporate social responsibility encompasses the economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic expectations that society has of organizations

at a given point in time” (p. 42). These dimensions are often represented in Carroll's Pyramid of CSR, where the base represents the economic responsibility to be profitable, followed by legal responsibility to obey the law, ethical responsibility to do what is right and just, and philanthropic responsibility to give back to society.

CSR originates from the broader notion that corporations, as integral members of society, must act responsibly and be accountable for the impact of their decisions and activities. In Freeman's (2021) stakeholder theory, the emphasis is on a business considering the interests of all its stakeholders including employees, customers, suppliers, local communities, and investors rather than focusing solely on shareholder profit. Furthermore, Elkington (2022) introduced the Triple Bottom Line approach, which urges businesses to account for their performance in three areas: people (social equity), planet (environmental stewardship), and profit (economic value). This theory reflects a holistic view of CSR where corporate success is not measured solely by financial performance but also by social and environmental outcomes.

In the Nigerian context, CSR has become increasingly significant due to the socio-economic challenges faced by communities and the imperative for businesses to support national development. Major companies such as Dangote Group and MTN Nigeria exemplify CSR in action. The Dangote Foundation has invested in building hospitals, providing relief during natural disasters, supporting orphanages, and empowering women with micro-grants. In the healthcare sector, for instance, the Foundation constructed the Dangote Kidney Dialysis Centre in Kano State to address kidney-related diseases among underserved populations (Dangote Foundation, 2023). MTN Nigeria, through the MTN Foundation, has focused on improving access to education and healthcare. Their "What Can We Do Together" initiative empowered communities by constructing boreholes, supplying hospital equipment, and funding public schools in various states, including Lagos, Rivers, and Delta (MTN Foundation, 2023).

In Lagos State, the commercial nerve center of Nigeria, CSR activities are particularly robust. The tech industry and multinationals like Nestlé Nigeria and Access Bank have initiated various CSR programs. Nestlé has committed to youth empowerment and clean water provision, while Access Bank has focused on maternal health and environmental sustainability. The city also benefits from private-public collaborations like Wecyclers, which encourages recycling among low-income communities by exchanging waste for rewards an initiative that also tackles the state's persistent waste management problem. In Port Harcourt, the capital of Rivers State and a city burdened by oil pollution and youth unemployment, companies such as Shell Nigeria and Nigeria LNG Ltd. have implemented CSR initiatives focused on community health outreach, educational scholarships, and skill acquisition programs. For example, Nigeria LNG's Bonny Vocational Centre trains local youth in engineering and technical skills, preparing them for gainful employment in the industrial sector (Shell Nigeria, 2022).

Cross River State has leaned heavily on ecotourism as a CSR focal point. Companies that operate in the state have supported environmental sustainability projects such as rainforest preservation and the development of the Obudu Mountain Resort. Public-private initiatives have emphasized preserving biodiversity, supporting local artisans, and funding conservation education. Similarly, in Delta State, which has experienced environmental degradation due to oil exploration, CSR efforts from oil firms like Chevron Nigeria and Seplat Petroleum have revolved around community development, healthcare, and infrastructure. Chevron's Global Memorandum of Understanding (GMoU) framework allows communities to determine their developmental priorities, which Chevron then funds. This participatory approach to CSR ensures local needs are adequately addressed, thus fostering trust and reducing conflict between corporations and host communities.

Beyond Nigeria, CSR is a global phenomenon with various interpretations and implementations. In developed countries like the United

States, United Kingdom, and Germany, CSR is often guided by strict environmental laws, labor regulations, and consumer expectations. Corporations in these countries engage in CSR as a matter of strategic advantage and brand positioning. For example, companies like Apple and Microsoft invest in renewable energy, supplier code of conduct audits, and diversity and inclusion programs. In developing countries such as India and Brazil, CSR tends to address systemic socio-economic issues such as poverty, unemployment, and access to education. In India, the Companies Act of 2013 mandates that certain firms allocate at least 2% of their profits to CSR, channeling billions of rupees into national development efforts.

The role of CSR in society is multifaceted. It improves the quality of life for local communities, enhances the reputation and competitive advantage of companies, and contributes to national and global development goals. CSR fosters sustainable business practices that reduce environmental degradation, promote ethical governance, and ensure equitable economic growth. It also plays a significant role in peacebuilding, especially in conflict-prone regions where corporate activities have historically caused tension. Moreover, CSR initiatives that involve education and youth empowerment contribute to human capital development, laying the foundation for long-term societal progress.

Corporate Social Responsibility represents a critical intersection between business operations and societal expectations. It is a dynamic, evolving framework rooted in ethics, accountability, and sustainability. Whether through Carroll's hierarchical model, Freeman's stakeholder theory, or Elkington's triple bottom line, CSR provides companies with a roadmap to align profit-making with positive social and environmental impact. In Nigeria, and particularly in regions such as Lagos, Port Harcourt, Cross River, and Delta States, CSR has played an instrumental role in addressing poverty, improving health outcomes, fostering education, and mitigating environmental damage. As global challenges such as climate change,

inequality, and social unrest continue to escalate, the importance of CSR in shaping a just and equitable future cannot be overstated.

Corporate-Community Relations in the Extractive and Manufacturing Industries

Corporate-community relations (CCR) in the extractive and manufacturing industries are critical for fostering sustainable development and ensuring the social license to operate. These industries, by their nature, have significant impacts on local communities, both positive and negative. The literature reveals a complex interplay between corporate actions and community responses, highlighting the importance of strategic engagement and the challenges faced in such interactions. In the extractive sector, companies often operate in regions where communities are heavily dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods. The activities of these companies can lead to environmental degradation, displacement, and social upheaval, which can erode trust and lead to conflicts. For instance, in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, oil exploration has led to environmental pollution and community displacement, resulting in strained relations between oil companies and local communities (Njoku, Iwueke, & Emezi, 2023). To mitigate these issues, companies have increasingly adopted Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategies that focus on community development, environmental protection, and stakeholder engagement.

A notable example is Newmont Ahafo Mines in Ghana, which has implemented CSR initiatives aimed at improving local infrastructure, education, and healthcare. The company's approach emphasizes stakeholder engagement, ensuring that community members have a voice in decision-making processes. This participatory approach has been associated with enhanced community trust and cooperation (Ansu-Mensah et al., 2021). However, the effectiveness of such initiatives depends on the genuine involvement of communities and the alignment of corporate actions with local needs and expectations.

In the manufacturing sector, companies often establish operations in rural or peri-urban areas, where they can contribute to local development through job creation and infrastructure development. However, the rapid industrialization can lead to challenges such as labor disputes, environmental concerns, and social inequality. For example, in Southern Ethiopia, industries have been found to contribute to community development through CSR activities, but these efforts are often undermined by poor regulatory enforcement and corruption, leading to adverse environmental and health impacts (Mamo et al., 2024).

The role of government is also pivotal in shaping corporate-community relations. In Indonesia, the government's role in implementing CSR in the extractive industries has been highlighted as crucial. The lack of clear guidelines at the local level has led to inconsistencies in CSR practices, with companies operating without a standardized approach to community engagement (Chawa, 2020). This underscores the need for robust regulatory frameworks that guide CSR activities and ensure that they align with national and local development goals. Furthermore, the concept of Political CSR has emerged, which examines how corporations engage with societal issues beyond legal requirements. In the extractive industries, this approach can sometimes lead to the reinforcement of corporate power at the expense of community interests. For instance, in Albania, oil companies' CSR initiatives have been critiqued for silencing community demands and consolidating corporate influence, rather than addressing the underlying social issues (Persson, 2024).

The literature indicates that while CSR initiatives in the extractive and manufacturing industries have the potential to contribute positively to community development, their success hinges on genuine stakeholder engagement, alignment with local needs, and supportive regulatory frameworks. Companies must move beyond tokenistic gestures and adopt strategies that foster long-term, mutually beneficial relationships with

communities. This requires a commitment to transparency, accountability, and responsiveness to community concerns. Only through such comprehensive approaches can corporate-community relations evolve into partnerships that drive sustainable development.

Empirical Review

Community Stakeholders' Participation in Extractive Industry Corporate Social Responsibility – Njoku, Iwueke, & Emezi (2023)

This study by Njoku, Iwueke, and Emezi (2023) explored the level of community stakeholders' participation in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives by companies operating in Nigeria's extractive industry. Using both quantitative and qualitative approaches, the authors examined how oil and gas companies in the Niger Delta engage with host communities in the planning, execution, and evaluation of CSR projects. Findings from the study revealed that stakeholder participation was generally low, with companies often implementing CSR projects unilaterally without genuine community input. The authors argued that this top-down approach fosters mistrust and undermines the sustainability of CSR initiatives. The study emphasized the need for participatory models that empower communities to take ownership of CSR interventions. Compared to the current study, Njoku et al. (2023) focused primarily on the participatory element within extractive industries, with limited attention to the manufacturing sector. While both studies underscore the importance of engagement and sustainable development, the current review extends the scope by incorporating the manufacturing industry and highlighting cross-sectoral similarities and challenges in corporate-community dynamics.

Corporate Social Responsibility's Contribution to Sustainable Community Development: Evidence from Industries in Southern Ethiopia – Mamo, Regassa, & Eyasu (2024)

In this empirical study, Mamo, Regassa, and Eyasu (2024) investigated the impact of CSR on community development among

manufacturing industries in Southern Ethiopia. Using survey data from 200 respondents and in-depth interviews with local administrators and industry representatives, the study analyzed the types of CSR activities implemented, community perceptions, and sustainability outcomes. The results indicated that while industries engage in community support projects—such as water provision, school renovations, and health center support—their efforts were often sporadic and lacked long-term planning. Moreover, the authors identified a mismatch between corporate priorities and community needs, largely due to inadequate stakeholder engagement and absence of structured CSR frameworks. Unlike the current study which addresses both extractive and manufacturing sectors across multiple regions and countries, Mamo et al. (2024) provided a more localized, industry-specific perspective. Their findings reinforce the broader conclusion of this current work: that effective CSR requires alignment with local development goals and community participation, though their study does not include extractive industry contexts, making it narrower in comparison.

Corporate Social Responsibility and Stakeholder Engagement in Ghana's Mining Sector: A Case Study of Newmont Ahafo Mines – Ansu-Mensah, Marfo, Awuah & Amoako (2021)

This case study by Ansu-Mensah et al. (2021) examined stakeholder engagement practices in the context of CSR at Newmont Ahafo Mines in Ghana. The study employed qualitative methods, including interviews with community leaders, company officials, and local government representatives. The authors found that Newmont's CSR approach was characterized by structured engagement mechanisms, such as community forums and participatory planning committees. These platforms facilitated dialogue and fostered mutual trust, leading to more impactful and accepted development projects. However, the study also identified limitations in power dynamics, where corporate influence sometimes overshadowed community voices, particularly in the allocation of project resources. Compared to the present

study, this work provides an in-depth analysis of a single extractive company, offering valuable insights into best practices for community involvement. The current review, on the other hand, builds a broader comparative understanding by analyzing trends across both extractive and manufacturing sectors, with attention to different regional practices. While Ansu-Mensah et al. (2021) focus more on success factors in one localized case, the present study highlights common challenges and opportunities across different industries and geographies.

Theoretical Framework

The Stakeholder Theory of Organizational Communication, originally proposed by R. Edward Freeman in 1984, is a suitable communication theory for the study of *Corporate Social Responsibility and Healthy Community Relations: A Study of Lafarge Cement Company in Cross River State*. This theory emphasizes that organizations must consider and communicate with all parties affected by their operations, not just shareholders. Freeman's stakeholder model challenges the traditional economic model of the firm by asserting that long-term corporate success depends on the effective management of relationships with various stakeholder groups including employees, customers, suppliers, government agencies, and most importantly in this study areas

Stakeholder theory is built on the assumption that businesses operate within a broader social framework and must maintain open, ethical, and inclusive communication with their stakeholders to sustain legitimacy and public trust. The theory assumes that all stakeholders have intrinsic value and that their interests must be actively addressed in corporate decision-making. It also posits that mutual respect, trust, and dialogue between a corporation and its stakeholders are essential for organizational stability and success. Therefore, effective communication is not merely a transactional process but a relational one that requires sustained engagement, listening, and adaptation to stakeholders' concerns.

In the context of this study on Lafarge Cement Company in Cross River State, stakeholder theory can be applied to evaluate how the company communicates its CSR initiatives and engages with the host community to build healthy, trust-based relationships. Lafarge, being a major industrial player in the region, interacts with various community stakeholders whose quality of life may be directly affected by the company's operations, such as environmental degradation, employment opportunities, infrastructure development, and healthcare initiatives. By applying stakeholder theory, the study can assess whether the company's communication strategies are inclusive, transparent, and responsive to the community's needs and expectations. It allows for an exploration of whether Lafarge involves the community in planning and executing CSR activities, and whether there is a feedback mechanism to ensure continuous dialogue and accountability. Through this lens, stakeholder theory provides a robust framework for understanding the role of communication in nurturing sustainable corporate-community relations and ensuring that CSR efforts translate into tangible social benefits.

Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a survey research design. The survey method was considered most appropriate because it allowed for the collection of quantifiable data from a defined population to examine the relationship between corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices and healthy community relations. The area of study for this research was Mfamosing community in Akamkpa Local Government Area of Cross River State. The choice of this area was informed by the presence of extractive industry operations, particularly Lafarge Cement, and the visible impact of their activities on local communities, which made it a suitable location for a study on CSR and corporate-community relations. The estimated target population was approximately 5,000 people (citypopulation.com), based on the size of

the host community and Lafarge's operational workforce in community engagement roles. The sample size for this research was determined using Taro Yamane's formula for finite population sampling. Based on an estimated population of 5,000 and at a confidence level of 95% with a margin of error of 5%, the calculated sample size was approximately 370 respondents. This sample size was considered adequate for statistical representation and meaningful data analysis.

Now applying Yamane's formula:

$$\begin{aligned}n &= \frac{5,000}{1 + 5,000(0.05)^2} \\n &= \frac{5,000}{1 + 5,000(0.0025)} \\n &= \frac{5,000}{1 + 12.5} \\n &= \frac{5,000}{13.5} \\n &= 370.37\end{aligned}$$

The study employed a stratified random sampling technique. This technique was used to ensure that all segments of the population such as youth, elders, men, women, and corporate staff were proportionately represented. The population was divided into strata based on roles and stakeholder relevance, and respondents were randomly selected from each stratum. This approach enhanced the reliability and representativeness of the data collected.

The primary instrument for data collection was copies of questionnaire designed in both closed-ended and open-ended formats. The questionnaire was divided into sections covering demographic data, awareness of CSR programs, perceptions of CSR impact, level of community involvement, and quality of corporate-community communication among residents in the community. In addition, key informant interviews were conducted with selected Lafarge staff and community leaders to gain deeper insights into the nature and effectiveness

of CSR activities. Data were collected using self-administered questionnaires distributed to community members and face-to-face interviews with selected key stakeholders. Trained research assistants who understood the local language and context assisted in administering the questionnaires to ensure clarity and completeness. Data collection took place over a period of three weeks, which ensured ample time for comprehensive responses and follow-up where necessary. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were used to summarize demographic data and responses to questionnaire items. Qualitative responses from interviews were analyzed using thematic content analysis to identify recurring themes and insights relevant to the research objectives.

Data Presentation for Quantitative

Table 1: Lafarge regularly holds town hall meetings to share CSR plans.

Response	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree (SA)	120	37.83%
Agree (A)	150	40.5%
Disagree (D)	60	16.2%
Strongly Disagree (SD)	40	10.81%
Total	370	100%

Field survey 2026

The findings suggest that respondents generally perceived town hall meetings as a regular communication strategy through which Lafarge Africa Plc shared information about its CSR plans. However, the presence of some contrary responses indicates that not all respondents experienced or recognised the meetings to the same extent.

Table: The Company uses local media (radio, flyers, etc.) to inform the public about CSR initiatives.

Response	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree (SA)	100	27.0%
Agree (A)	160	43.2%
Disagree (D)	70	18.9%
Strongly Disagree (SD)	40	10.9%
Total	370	100%

Field survey 2026

The findings indicate that local media was generally recognised as an important channel for disseminating CSR information by Lafarge Africa Plc. However, the differing responses suggest that awareness or access to CSR information through local media was not uniform among all respondents.

Table 3: Community leaders are consulted before CSR projects are implemented.

Response	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree (SA)	140	32.4%
Agree (A)	150	40.5%
Disagree (D)	50	16.2%
Strongly Disagree (SD)	30	10.9%
Total	370	100%

Field survey 2026

The findings indicate that community leaders were generally perceived to be consulted before CSR projects were implemented by Lafarge Africa Plc. This suggests that stakeholder consultation formed an important part of the company's CSR communication process, although the differing responses indicate that such consultation was not experienced or recognised uniformly by all respondents.

Table 4: There is a lack of transparency in the company's CSR communication.

Response	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree (SA)	110	29.7%
Agree (A)	140	37.8%
Disagree (D)	70	18.9%
Strongly Disagree (SD)	50	13.5%
Total	370	100%

Field survey 2026

The findings indicate that a considerable proportion of respondents perceived lack of transparency as a challenge in Lafarge Africa Plc's CSR communication. However, the differing responses suggest that this perception was not shared uniformly among all respondents.

Table 5: Community feedback is rarely considered in CSR planning.

Response	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree (SA)	120	32.4%
Agree (A)	130	35.1%
Disagree (D)	75	20.3%
Strongly Disagree (SD)	45	12.2%
Total	370	100%

Field survey 2026

The findings indicate that many respondents perceived community feedback as inadequately considered in CSR planning by Lafarge Africa Plc. However, the differing responses suggest that experiences of community participation in CSR decision-making were not uniform among all respondents.

Table 5: Lafarge's CSR efforts have positively impacted community health.

Response	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree (SA)	80	21.6%
Agree (A)	120	32.4%
Neutral (N)	60	16.2%
Disagree (D)	70	18.9%
Strongly Disagree (SD)	40	10.9%
Total	370	100%

Field survey 2026

The findings indicate that respondents generally perceived Lafarge Africa Plc's CSR efforts as having a positive impact on community health. However, the presence of neutral and negative responses suggests that this perceived impact was not experienced or recognised consistently across the community.

Table 7: The company has helped reduce environmental pollution through its CSR.

Response	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree (SA)	75	20.2%
Agree (A)	115	31.08%
Neutral (N)	65	17.56%
Disagree (D)	75	20.3%
Strongly Disagree (SD)	40	10.81%
Total	370	100%

Field survey 2026

The findings indicate that respondents had mixed perceptions of the environmental impact of Lafarge Africa Plc's CSR initiatives. While many recognised positive contributions towards reducing environmental pollution, a notable proportion expressed neutral or negative views, suggesting that the perceived environmental benefits were not consistent across the community.

Table7: Establishing a local CSR communication office would improve engagement.

Response	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree (SA)	150	40.5%
Agree (A)	140	37.8%
Disagree (D)	50	13.5%
Strongly Disagree (SD)	30	8.1%
Total	370	100%

Field survey 2026

The findings indicate that respondents generally believed that establishing a local CSR communication office would improve engagement between Lafarge Africa Plc and the host community. However, the differing responses suggest that this view was not shared uniformly by all respondents.

Table 8: Using participatory communication methods (e.g., focus groups) would enhance CSR effectiveness.

Response	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree (SA)	140	37.8%
Agree (A)	150	40.5%
Disagree (D)	55	14.9%
Strongly Disagree (SD)	25	6.8%
Total	370	100%

Field survey 2026

The findings indicate that respondents generally supported the use of participatory communication methods, such as focus groups, to enhance CSR effectiveness and strengthen community involvement. However, the differing responses suggest that this view was not shared uniformly among all respondents.

Table 9 Training community liaison officers will improve CSR communication.

Response	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree (SA)	160	43.2%
Agree (A)	135	36.5%
Disagree (D)	45	12.2%
Strongly Disagree (SD)	30	8.1%
Total	370	100%

Field survey 2026

The findings indicate that respondents generally perceived training community liaison officers as an important strategy for improving CSR communication and strengthening corporate-community relations. However, the differing responses suggest that this perception was not uniform among all respondents.

Qualitative Data Analysis

This section presents the qualitative findings from interviews conducted with selected staff of Lafarge Africa Plc and residents of Mfamosing community in Akamkpa Local Government Area of Cross River State. The responses are presented descriptively in thematic block paragraphs, with verbatim expressions from participants to reflect their views and lived experiences.

Theme One: Communication Channels and Information Dissemination

Findings from the interviews revealed that Lafarge communicates its CSR activities through several formal channels, including town hall meetings, community liaison officers, and consultations with traditional leaders. A senior staff member explained, *“We hold quarterly town hall meetings where we present our CSR plans and allow community leaders to ask questions. We also send formal letters before any major project begins.”* Another company representative added, *“Our community liaison officers are always available to bridge the gap between the company and the people.”* However, residents expressed mixed feelings about the effectiveness of these channels. While acknowledging that meetings are sometimes held, some argued that communication does not adequately reach ordinary community

members. One youth leader stated, *"They may inform the chiefs, but the information does not always get to us on time."* A female respondent similarly remarked, *"Most times we hear about projects when they have already started. We are not properly informed before decisions are made."*

These responses suggest that although formal communication structures exist, there is a perceived gap between official announcements and grassroots awareness. The reliance on leadership-based communication appears to limit inclusiveness, particularly among women and youth groups.

Theme Two: Communication Challenges and Trust Concerns

A recurring issue in the interviews was the challenge of transparency and trust, particularly concerning environmental matters. Several residents expressed concerns about delays in information related to blasting activities and dust pollution. One elderly resident stated, *"Sometimes they blast without proper notice, and the dust affects our houses and health. We are not always told early enough."* Another participant commented, *"We want them to be open about the environmental risks, not just the benefits."*

Language barriers were also mentioned as a challenge. A community member noted, *"Some of our older people do not understand English very well. Information should be explained in our local language so everybody can understand."*

On the company's side, staff members acknowledged certain difficulties in engagement. One CSR officer explained, *"Sometimes misinformation spreads quickly in the community, and it creates tension even before we have the chance to clarify issues."* Another added, *"There are expectations that go beyond what CSR can realistically provide, and when those expectations are not met, it affects trust."*

These perspectives reveal a mutual perception gap. While the company believes it is making efforts to communicate, residents perceive shortcomings in transparency and timeliness. Trust appears to be closely linked to how environmental and health-related information is shared and

how community concerns are addressed.

Theme Three: Perception of CSR Impact and Need for Participatory Engagement

Regarding the impact of CSR initiatives, many residents acknowledged positive contributions. One community leader stated, *"The scholarship program has helped many of our children go to school."* Another respondent mentioned, *"They have repaired some roads and provided occasional medical outreach, and that has helped the community."*

Despite these acknowledgments, some residents questioned the sustainability and relevance of certain projects. A youth representative observed, *"Some projects are good, but they don't always address our most pressing needs. We need more involvement in choosing what is important."* Similarly, a women's leader remarked, *"If they consult us properly before starting projects, the impact will be greater."*

Company representatives also emphasized the importance of collaboration. One staff member stated, *"We are open to stronger partnership with the community. Joint planning and regular consultation will improve the relationship."* Another suggested, *"Establishing a more structured feedback mechanism will help us understand community priorities better."*

These responses indicate that while CSR efforts are recognized, there is a strong desire for deeper participation, transparency, and shared decision-making. Both parties appear to agree that sustainable and healthy company-community relations depend on continuous dialogue, mutual respect, and collaborative planning.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

This section presents an expanded discussion of the findings based on both quantitative and qualitative data, supported with relevant literature. The discussion is organized according to the four research questions that guided the study.

Communication Media Employed in Disseminating CSR Activities

The findings revealed that Lafarge Africa Plc utilizes multiple communication media to disseminate information about its CSR activities to host communities. Quantitative data showed that 32.4% of respondents strongly agreed and 40.5% agreed (total of 72.9%) that the company regularly holds town hall meetings to share CSR plans. Similarly, 27.0% strongly agreed and 43.2% agreed (70.2%) that the company uses local media such as radio and flyers to inform the public about CSR initiatives. Furthermore, 37.8% strongly agreed and 40.5% agreed (78.3%) that community leaders are consulted before CSR projects are implemented.

These figures indicate that a significant majority of respondents acknowledged the existence of structured communication channels. However, the qualitative findings revealed important nuances. While company representatives stated that *“we hold quarterly town hall meetings”* and *“liaison officers serve as a bridge between us and the community,”* some community members argued that the communication is often limited to traditional rulers and elites. One participant stated, *“They inform the chiefs, but the information does not always get to us.”*

This suggests that although formal channels exist, communication may be largely top-down. According to Morsing and Schultz (2006), effective CSR communication should move beyond information dissemination to active stakeholder engagement. Stakeholder theory further emphasizes the need to involve all affected groups, not just leadership structures. Therefore, while the quantitative results demonstrate high awareness of communication efforts, the qualitative findings reveal gaps in inclusiveness and grassroots penetration.

Communication Challenges in Informing Communities

The study found notable communication challenges in the process of informing communities about CSR initiatives and environmental risks. Quantitative data showed that 29.7% strongly agreed and 37.8% agreed

(67.5%) that there is a lack of transparency in CSR communication. Additionally, 32.4% strongly agreed and 35.1% agreed (67.5%) that community feedback is rarely considered in CSR planning. These results indicate that more than two-thirds of respondents perceived transparency and limited feedback incorporation as significant challenges. This perception was reinforced by qualitative data. Community members expressed concerns such as, *"Sometimes they blast without proper notice,"* and *"We want them to be open about environmental risks."* Language barriers were also identified, with one respondent noting that information should be communicated in local dialects to ensure understanding.

On the company's side, staff members acknowledged that *"misinformation spreads quickly"* and that high expectations sometimes create tension. This highlights a mutual communication gap, where both parties perceive shortcomings in engagement processes.

The findings align with Du, Bhattacharya, and Sen (2010), who argue that transparency and credibility are critical components of effective CSR communication. When environmental risks are not communicated promptly and clearly, trust deficits may emerge. Thus, the study demonstrates that communication challenges are deeply connected to issues of trust, perception, and participation.

Community Perception of CSR Efforts (Health and Environmental Impact)

The findings revealed mixed perceptions regarding the health and environmental impact of Lafarge's CSR efforts. Quantitative data showed that 21.6% strongly agreed and 32.4% agreed (54.0%) that CSR efforts have positively impacted community health. However, 18.9% disagreed and 10.9% strongly disagreed (29.8%), while 16.2% remained neutral. Similarly, regarding environmental pollution reduction, 20.3% strongly agreed and 31.1% agreed (51.4%) that the company has helped reduce environmental pollution. However, 20.3% disagreed and 10.9% strongly disagreed (31.2%),

while 17.6% were neutral.

These results show that although a slight majority perceived positive impacts, a significant proportion expressed skepticism or uncertainty. The qualitative data provided further insight into these mixed perceptions. Some respondents acknowledged benefits such as scholarships, road rehabilitation, and medical outreach programs. For example, one community leader stated, *"The scholarship program has helped many of our children."*

However, others raised environmental concerns, particularly regarding dust pollution and blasting activities. One resident remarked, *"Dust affects our houses and health."* These findings are consistent with Idemudia (2011), who noted that CSR initiatives in extractive industries often face criticism when environmental concerns persist. Even where companies implement community development projects, environmental impacts may overshadow positive contributions. Therefore, community perception appears to be shaped by both tangible benefits and environmental experiences.

Improving CSR Engagement and Healthy Community Relations

The study also examined how communication models could improve CSR engagement and corporate-community relations. Quantitative findings showed strong support for improved participatory communication practices. Specifically, 40.5% strongly agreed and 37.8% agreed (78.3%) that establishing a local CSR communication office would improve engagement. Furthermore, 37.8% strongly agreed and 40.5% agreed (78.3%) that participatory communication methods such as focus groups would enhance CSR effectiveness. Additionally, 43.2% strongly agreed and 36.5% agreed (79.7%) that training community liaison officers would improve CSR communication.

These high percentages indicate strong consensus among respondents that communication reform is necessary for sustainable engagement. Qualitative findings supported this view. Community members

emphasized the importance of inclusion, with one participant stating, *“If they consult us properly before starting projects, the impact will be greater.”* Company staff also expressed openness to collaboration, noting that *“joint planning and regular consultation will improve the relationship.”*

These findings support participatory communication theory, which emphasizes dialogue, inclusiveness, and shared decision-making. Grunig and Hunt's (1984) two-way symmetrical communication model also suggests that mutual understanding and feedback mechanisms strengthen organizational legitimacy and trust. The discussion reveals that while Lafarge Africa Plc employs recognized communication media and implements CSR initiatives, significant gaps remain in transparency, inclusiveness, and participatory engagement. Quantitative data showed majority acknowledgment of communication efforts (over 70% in several indicators), but qualitative data exposed dissatisfaction with grassroots involvement and environmental risk communication. The integration of findings suggests that sustainable CSR engagement in industrial operations requires moving beyond top-down communication toward participatory, transparent, and culturally sensitive models. Strengthening dialogue, institutionalizing feedback systems, and enhancing environmental communication

Conclusion

The study concludes that although Lafarge Africa Plc has established communication systems and implemented various CSR projects in Mfamosing community, gaps remain in the areas of inclusiveness, transparency, and participatory engagement. Communication is primarily structured and formal, but it does not always ensure effective grassroots involvement. Environmental concerns and perceived delays in risk communication contribute to trust challenges between the company and the host community. Furthermore, while CSR projects are recognized and appreciated, their long-term effectiveness is influenced by how well they

address environmental issues and incorporate community input.

Therefore, sustainable corporate-community relations in industrial operations require not only the implementation of CSR projects but also consistent, transparent, and participatory communication practices that build trust and mutual understanding.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- I. The company should shift from a predominantly top-down communication model to a more inclusive, two-way engagement framework that allows active community participation in CSR planning and evaluation.
- ii. The company should establish a permanent and accessible CSR communication office should be established within the host community to improve accessibility, transparency, and responsiveness.
- iii. The company should provide timely, clear, and proactive information regarding environmental activities such as blasting and dust control measures to reduce misinformation and build trust.
- iv. Community liaison officers should receive continuous training in stakeholder engagement, conflict management, and culturally sensitive communication.

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