

**Through the Lens of *Ubuntu*: The Value of Partnerships  
and Corporate Social Responsibility towards Community  
Development in the City of uMhlatuze, South Africa**

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**ABSTRACT** The paper explores partnerships among the multinational corporations (MNCs), local municipalities and host communities in a bid to establish what informs corporate social responsibility (CSR). MNCs are essential in improving the wellbeing and living standards of host communities. The philanthropic activities have to be ethical, legitimate and guided by the spirit of giving back, informed by the philosophy of ubuntu (humanity). The qualitative approach was adopted to gather in-depth understanding of the existence and nature of partnership among MNCs, local municipalities and host communities. The participants were purposefully selected based on their expert knowledge and engagement in community development initiatives. The findings indicate that CSR operations are characterised by an absence of formal partnership between MNCs and host communities. A pragmatic policy framework needs to be developed to guide the philanthropic activities aimed at enhancing the socio-economic development of host communities.