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# EXPLORING SOCIAL-ENTREPRENEURS' CONTRIBUTION IN SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURAL PROCUREMENT IN DEVELOPING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

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## ABSTRACT

*The study is aimed at exploring the social entrepreneurs' contribution in social infrastructures procurement in the developing communities in Lagos State. The aim was achieved by assessing the level of procurement of varying social infrastructures by social-entrepreneurs and barriers limiting their social engagement in the developing communities in Lagos State. The study adopted survey method and using the questionnaire as the study research instrument. Seventy (70) structured questionnaires which addressed the study objectives were distributed among the randomly selected construction professionals within the study area. Data collected were analysed using mean item score, percentage and Kruskal-Wallis respectively. Fact garnered from the study revealed that the engagement of the social-entrepreneurs was encouraging in the procurement of varying social infrastructure which includes educational buildings, health institutions, shopping mall, housing, library buildings, recreational centers and car park center. Despite the encouraging contributions of the social entrepreneurs in the procurement of the social infrastructures, there are still barriers limiting their engagement within the study area. The study revealed that lack of financial accessibility and government dominance of the social sector are the most significant barriers. Other barriers which also impact on social-entrepreneurs contributions include lack of legal and regulatory support, lack of political support, lack of social trust, issue of social miscreants and corruption prevalence. The study test for the significant difference among the construction professional groups in their perception of the barriers limiting social-entrepreneurs social engagement. The findings revealed that there is no significant difference among the construction professional groups on all the barriers within the study area except for the lack of social trust and social miscreants' barriers. In conclusion, the study recommends the need for the government to provide an enabling environment and collaborate with the social-entrepreneurs as to address the impending barriers.*

**Key words:** Social-Entrepreneurs, Built Environment, Social Infrastructures, Construction Professionals.

**Cite this Article:** Ojelabi, R.A., Afolabi, A.O., Omuh, O.I. and Tunji-Olayeni, P.F, Exploring Social-Entrepreneurs' Contribution In Social Infrastructural Procurement In Developing Sustainable Communities, International Journal of Civil Engineering and Technology, 9(8), 2018, pp. 1424-1433.

<http://www.iaeme.com/ijciyet/issues.asp?JType=IJCIET&VType=9&IType=8>

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Without a doubt, a nation is made up of communities and the communities inhabit percentage of the nation's population, as such the significance of community in nation building cannot be ignored. A community according to Mattessich, Monsey and Roy (1997) was defined as a geographically confined area which inhabits people who are bound to each other and their environment. Various communities either rural or urban fall among the chain of environment that needs social interventions and the government is saddled with the responsibility to provide the social needs. The government of every nation is referred to as an agent of development as it is the pivotal hallmark of her functions. However, there has been a wide gap in the government's response to the peoples need and in the quest to meeting such needs, another agent of development was birthed. Liu (2004) consented by identifying the government and the people as the two key forces in economic development. The inability of the government to meet the people's needs, provide the platform for some group of individuals who capitalize on this need gap and they are known as 'entrepreneurs'. Saifan (2012) affirmed the relevance of entrepreneurs in the development of a society. Thompson (2014) also opined that entrepreneurs are pivotal in society's growth and development. Faggio and Silva (2014) further address entrepreneurs as a catalyst for economic growth. The significance of entrepreneurs cannot be overemphasized as their relevance cut across every sphere of life. There are different types of entrepreneurs, but this paper will be dwelling on social entrepreneurs.

Wiguana and Manzilati (2014) emphasized that the two words that make up social-entrepreneurship basically form the literal meaning and they are 'social' and 'entrepreneurship'. The researchers further addressed social-entrepreneurs as entrepreneurs that have social attributes. Auerswald (2009) further affirmed that social-entrepreneurs are emerging actors that aimed at solving social and economic problems. Saifan (2012) also addressed social-entrepreneurs as entrepreneurs that are concerned with social infrastructural needs such as health facilities, educational facilities, and vocational facilities among others which can upgrade the social value of the society. Bacq and Janssen (2011) further revealed that they are individuals who are not motivated by profits but rather by social value. It is evidenced from the foregoing that the propelling factor that set social-entrepreneurs into operation is the existence of social needs and they are not been gratified by the desire to make profits.

There is no controversy that social-entrepreneurs are the agent of social values and their impacts in developing nations are limitless. Developing nations around the world awaits the impacts of social entrepreneurs as the governments are overwhelmed with the provisions of social infrastructural facilities. World Economic Forum (2016) revealed that Nigeria is ranked 132<sup>nd</sup> in 138<sup>th</sup> in infrastructural strength among nations across the world. The findings affirmed that the governments are overwhelmed with social and economic infrastructures. However, social infrastructures provision cannot wait because its relevance in nation building is very strategic. Availability of social infrastructure will no doubt guarantee improve and wellbeing of the people in a community, encourage social inclusion among the people in a community and also helped in the attainment of a sustainable community. Therefore, the need for an urgent intervention to the massive infrastructural gap observed is very necessary. The necessity to create another pathway beyond the government institutions through which social infrastructure facilities can be enhanced is highly crucial. The idea of social-entrepreneurs in infrastructural

development was found to be an innovative approach to ensuring sustainability in infrastructural provisions in developing communities.

There have been several studies on social-entrepreneurship with a focus in business and education. Seelos and Mair (2005) research on social-entrepreneurship focused on creating a new business model to serve the poor. Likewise, British Council (2017) social-entrepreneurship research is centered on its necessity and role in education. In the same vein, Sekiliuckiene and Kisielius (2015) addressed the theoretical framework of social-entrepreneurship. It is evidenced that the previous research output on social-entrepreneurship has been able to focus on the theoretical definition of the term, its impact as a modern business model and its contribution to the education sector. However, there is a limited research on social-entrepreneurship contribution in social infrastructure procurement within the built environment, especially in Nigeria. Therefore, the study assesses the construction professional perception on the level of contribution of social-entrepreneurs in the procurement of social infrastructures in developing communities in Lagos state. It also examines the barriers to social entrepreneurship in the study area.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The quest for infrastructural development in the developing world has been an issue of concern to stakeholders within the built environment (Ojelabi, Oyeyipo & Afolabi, 2017; Afolabi, Tunji-Olayeni, Ojelabi and Omuh, 2018). This is as a result of the state of the social and economic infrastructures which dictate the condition of living of the populace. Social Infrastructure Planning Implementation (2007) refers to social infrastructures as facilities that can enhance the wellbeing of a group of people or community. It identifies social infrastructures to include universal services and facilities such as a library, educational facilities, safety and emergency center, sport and recreational center, art and cultural facilities and health facilities among others. World Economic Forum (2016) revealed that the social and economic infrastructures of the countries in the developing world are very poor. The state of social infrastructural facilities in the developing nation's communities has contributed to the poor state of being of the people. Roger, Osberg, and Osberg (2007) however opined that social needs of the socially disadvantaged communities are one of the key drivers that set the new agent of reformation into operation and they are known as the social entrepreneurs. The role of social-entrepreneurs in economic development has been the subject of discourse among researchers over the years. Social-entrepreneurs have been affirmed as a force to reckon with in social facilities development following the order of constitutional institutions. Cukier et al., (2011) opined that social- entrepreneurs are groups of individuals who strive to make the world a better place. Light (2006) also revealed that social entrepreneurs are agents of large-scale sustainable development through enhanced and sustainable ideas. Mair and Marti (2006) also address social-entrepreneurs as a creative and innovative individual who identify the optimized way of providing social needs that were unsatisfied by the governments. Social entrepreneurs are undoubtedly a new engine for economic and social reformation. It is obvious from past study that the relevance of social entrepreneurship is limitless and its necessity in developing communities is of high relevance. Malunga et al., (2014) revealed that social entrepreneurship and community social needs are inseparable as the former defines the existence of the latter. One of the most prominent need in developing nation's communities is social and economic infrastructures. The push for social and economic infrastructures in developing communities is not alien to the 21<sup>st</sup> century as it aligns with one of the sustainable development goals agenda of the United Nation (Ojelabi, Fagbenle, Adedeji, Tunji-Olayeni & Amusan, 2018). The millennium development goals cannot be actualized unless community infrastructural development is given top priority. The position of community development in nation building is very crucial, as such, developing community's social infrastructural must be second-to-none.

The emergence of the social-entrepreneurs has been a blessing to the social needs of various communities across the world.

Irrespective of the necessity of social-entrepreneurs in economic development, their achievements are not without a barrier. There is no enterprise including the governments' that is not faced with one challenge or the other in the discharge of their duties. Malunga et al., (2014) identify the barriers which wrestle with the operations of the social-entrepreneurs to include lack of proper and legal frameworks and lack of sustainability and premature scaling up. The researchers opined that due to the non-existence of legal framework for the initiation of social enterprise, their capacity to attract financial support is being jeopardized. The issue of premature scaling by entrepreneurs is as a result of them taking more than they can chew. Social entrepreneurs attracting more community social needs without the corresponding capacity to deliver effectively will alter their goal of providing sustainable impacts in social infrastructures intervention. Silvathanu and bhise (2013) findings also ranked finance and government negligence high among the issues that are contending with social-entrepreneurs capacity. In the same vein, Benevolent (2013) also identify the key problems like finance, negligence and legal issue challenging the sustainable practice of social entrepreneurs. Razavi, Asadi, Esfandabadi, and Ekbatani (2014) likewise identify lack of understanding of social entrepreneurial activities, lack of political support and the government dominance of the social sector to be responsible for the retarded growth of social-entrepreneurs contributions in community development.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study was aimed at examining social entrepreneurship contribution in social infrastructures procurement in developing communities in Lagos State. In a bid to achieve the objectives, data were garnered from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were obtained with the aid of structured questionnaires administered to the construction professionals in the study area. The choice of the targeted respondents was based on their involvement and knowledge infrastructures development within the built environment. The sample was selected using random sampling technique and a total of seventy (70) questionnaires were distributed.

The questionnaire was divided into three sections, section one examined the characteristics of the respondents. The second section addressed the contributions of social-entrepreneurs in community infrastructure development and they are placed on the Likert scale of 1-4 in the following order 1 = Very Low, 2 = Low, 3 = High, 4 = Very High. The third section addressed the barriers impacting on social-entrepreneurs social roles in the provision of social infrastructures in the developing communities following the order on the Likert scale; 1 = not significant, 2 = less significant, 3 = significant, 4 = very significant.

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the respondent's characteristics, while mean item score was used to analyze the social-entrepreneurs contributions in social infrastructures procurement and challenges militating against their roles in the study area.

### **4. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

#### **4.1. Characteristics of Respondents**

In this section, the personal information of the respondents used for the study was analyzed using percentage. The results obtained are presented in table 1

Table 1 shows the summary of the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The male gender represents 58.6% while female gender represents 41.4%. It is evidenced by the result that the gender representation is highly adequate. Likewise, the study revealed that the age bracket 31-40 years represents 48.6% of the total respondents which is second-to-none in the age bracket group. It was followed by age bracket 21-30 years with 28.6% and 41-50 years with

10%. The age brackets 15-20 years and above 50 years were the least on the table and they are below 10% on the response rate scale.

**Table 1** Descriptive Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	41	58.6
Female	29	41.4
Total	70	100
Ages		
15-20 years	3	4.3
21-30 years	20	28.6
31-40 years	34	48.6
41-50 years	7	10.0
>50 years	6	8.6
Total	70	100
Profession		
Builder	23	32.9
Architect	10	14.3
Quantity Surveyor	18	25.7
Civil Engineer	3	4.3
Estate Manager	13	18.6
others	3	4.3
Total	70	100
Professional Experience		
<5 years	4	5.7
6-10 years	31	44.3
11- 15 years	27	38.6
16-20 years	6	8.6
> 20 years	2	2.9
Total	70	100

The respondent's professional group as shown in the Table 1 revealed that the Builders have the highest respondents from the groups with 32.9% and it was followed by the Quantity Surveyors professionals group with 25.7%. The other professional groups which include Architects, Estate Managers and Civil Engineers have a response rate of 14.3%, 18.6%, and 4.3% respectively. It is evidenced that the professional's group are well represented.

Table 1 also shows the professionals experience and it is evidenced that 44.3% of the respondents have 6-10 years' experience and 38.6% have 11-15 years' experience in the built environment.

#### **4.2. Assessing the Contributions of Social-Entrepreneurs in Community Infrastructure Development**

This section reveals the level of contribution of the social-entrepreneurs in varying social infrastructures in the developing communities as revealed in Table 2.

**Table 2** Social-entrepreneur contribution level in varying social infrastructures.

<b>Social Infrastructure</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Remark</b>
Educational buildings	3.73	Very high
Health center	3.54	Very high
Shopping mall	3.40	High
Library Building	3.19	High
Housing	3.07	High
Recreational center	2.74	High
Vocation center	2.73	High
Car park center	2.69	High
Cultural development center	2.09	Low
Fire and emergency service center	1.97	Low

The study revealed that social-entrepreneurs have their highest contributions in the procurement of educational and health buildings with a mean score of 3.73 and 3.54 respectively. Other social infrastructures where the social-entrepreneurs equally have high contributions includes shopping mall buildings, library buildings, housing construction, recreational center construction, vocational center construction and car park construction. The study revealed that the contributions of the social-entrepreneurs are low in the procurement of social infrastructures like cultural development center and fire and emergency service center.

#### **4.3. Barriers to Social-Entrepreneurs Contributions in the Procurement of Social Infrastructures in Developing Community.**

This study identifies the barriers faced by social-entrepreneurs in the procurement of social infrastructures in developing communities. The results were presented in Table 3.

**Table 3** Social-entrepreneurship barriers

	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Remark</b>
Lack of adequate financial access	3.50	Very significant
Government dominance of the social sector	3.36	Significant
Lack of legal and regulatory support	3.06	Significant
Lack of political support	2.94	Significant
Social miscreants issue	2.86	Significant
Lack of social trust	2.74	Significant
Corruption pandemic	2.70	Significant
Lack of focus of social entrepreneurs	2.19	Less significant
Negative perception on social entrepreneurship.	1.91	Less significant
Lack of awareness on the social issue	1.41	Not significant

The most significant barriers to social-entrepreneurs contributions in the procurement of social infrastructures as revealed from the study was lack of access to financial support. The other significant barriers from the study are the government dominance in the social sector, lack of legal and regulatory support backing social-entrepreneurs social functions, issues of social miscreants in the developing communities, lack of social trust from the people and corruption

pandemic. The less significant barriers to the social entrepreneurs were the negative perception of the people on social entrepreneurs and the people lack awareness on social issues.

#### 4.4 Research Hypothesis

The study examines the significant difference among the construction professionals on the barriers to social-entrepreneurship in the study area. The results garnered from the group of professionals respondents were presented in Table 5.

<b>Table 5</b> ANOVA Result of Construction Professionals Perception on Social-entrepreneurship Barriers						
		<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
social miscreants	Between Groups	15.576	5	3.115	6.876	.000
	Within Groups	28.995	64	.453		
	Total	44.571	69			
Lack of awareness on the social issue	Between Groups	2.915	5	.583	1.691	.150
	Within Groups	22.071	64	.345		
	Total	24.986	69			
society negative perception of social entrepreneurship	Between Groups	12.233	5	2.447	1.754	.135
	Within Groups	89.252	64	1.395		
	Total	101.486	69			
Lack of focus of social entrepreneurs	Between Groups	3.189	5	.638	1.389	.240
	Within Groups	29.397	64	.459		
	Total	32.586	69			
Government dominance of the social sector	Between Groups	1.407	5	.281	.965	.446
	Within Groups	18.664	64	.292		
	Total	20.071	69			
lack of political support	Between Groups	2.427	5	.485	.448	.813
	Within Groups	69.344	64	1.084		
	Total	71.771	69			
Lack of legal and regulatory support	Between Groups	1.329	5	.266	.282	.922
	Within Groups	60.442	64	.944		
	Total	61.771	69			
Lack of adequate financial support access	Between Groups	1.966	5	.393	1.620	.167
	Within Groups	15.534	64	.243		
	Total	17.500	69			
corruption pandemic	Between Groups	3.854	5	.771	.677	.642
	Within Groups	72.846	64	1.138		
	Total	76.700	69			
Lack of social trust	Between Groups	10.635	5	2.127	2.581	.034
	Within Groups	52.736	64	.824		
	Total	63.371	69			

The construction professional groups which include the Architects, Builders, Quantity Surveyors, Estate Managers and Civil Engineers perceptions on the barriers to social-entrepreneurs were put to test and the result is presented in Table 4. The statistical level of testing of significant has been set to 5%. The results show that the significant level of all the barriers was above 0.05 except for lack of social trust and social miscreant's barriers which are below 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference among the construction professional groups on all the barriers except for barriers on lack of social trust and social miscreants.

#### 5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study revealed the contributions of the social entrepreneurs in the procurement of social infrastructures and barriers to its uptake in the development of sustainable communities within

the study area. Findings from the study revealed that the contributions of the social entrepreneurs are highly immense in the procurement of the social infrastructures which include educational institutions, health center, shopping mall, housing, recreational center, library buildings, vocational center and car park center. The geometric increase in the procurement of the social infrastructures has been a blessing to the locals' in the developing communities and the economy. KPMG (2012) affirmed that social infrastructures as a subset of infrastructure sector plays a significant role in the community social needs and also increase the revenue generation of the economy.

Despite the encouraging contributions of the social-entrepreneurs in infrastructures procurement, the study revealed that there are barriers slowing down their social infrastructures push. The most significant barriers impacting on the social-entrepreneurs contribution in the study area was lack of access to financial support and government dominance of the social sector. The study is in consonance with Razavi, Asadi, Esfandabadi, and Ekbatani (2014) and Wildmannova (2017) findings on the barrier to social entrepreneurship in Iran and Czech Republic. The government dominance within the social sector is a very significant barrier as it has caused the retarded growth of social-entrepreneurship in the study area. Government and its agencies on infrastructures have been a stumbling block to the expansion of social entrepreneurs within the social sector due to their lack of recognition of the change agents. This is evidenced in the lack of political, legal and regulatory support which are within the government jurisdiction as revealed from the study to be instrumental to the social-entrepreneurs limitations. Other significant barriers from the study are issues of social miscreants, lack of social trust and corruption prevalence. The issues of the social miscreants are due to government negligence in the activities of the group and the challenge it posed to the growth of the social sector. The prevalence of corruption in the study area has also affected the people interest in the social sector.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

World Economic Forum (2016) revealed that Nigeria was ranked 132<sup>nd</sup> of the 138<sup>th</sup> infrastructural strength of nations globally. The report revealed that Nigeria is the 6<sup>th</sup> to the last nation in the position which signifies one of the weakest nations in infrastructural strength. Likewise, communities that abound the country are also malnourished in infrastructure. Government have been in the center stage in the provision of economic and social infrastructures, however, her weight is more in the supply of economic infrastructures. The concentration of the government on economic infrastructures procurement has widened the gap of social infrastructures need at the local level. The emergence of the social entrepreneurs has been a blessing to the locals' social infrastructural needs. Through the engagement of the social-entrepreneurs, there has been an upward surge in the social sector in the procurement of educational institutions, health institutions and housing among others. However, there are still some issues limiting the contributions of the social entrepreneurs in the social sector which include lack of financial support, government social sector dominance, lack of legal and regulatory support and lack of political support amidst other challenges.

Therefore, to sustain and boost the engagements and contributions of the social entrepreneurs in the social sector, the study recommends the need for the government to provide an enabling environment and support to override the barriers limiting the social change agent group.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors appreciate the publication funds provided for the open access of this article by Covenant University through Covenant University Centre for Research, Innovation, and Development (CUCRID).

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