

## Social Entrepreneurship: An Effective Tool for Meeting Social Challenges and Sustainable Development

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*A stable social environment will in no doubt facilitate sustainability of any economy. The dynamism of social entrepreneurship is undoubtedly a spring board for overcoming social challenges towards sustainable development of any nation. Specifically, this paper focuses on the pivotal role of social entrepreneurship as an effective tool against social challenges towards the initialization of sustainable development in an economy. This paper draws on existing literature to focus on the following parts; part one is the introduction, part two focuses on the concepts of entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurs and social challenges, part three examined principles of social entrepreneurship, models of social entrepreneurship and motivations of social entrepreneurs, part four looked at sustainable development and social entrepreneurship: a tool for facilitating sustainable development in developing countries while part five is conclusion and recommendations.*

*Keywords:* Entrepreneurship, Social entrepreneurship, Social entrepreneurs and Sustainable development

### INTRODUCTION

It is important to note that our environment and society is constantly and rapidly changing. Most societies are dealing with social challenges such as climatic changes, food crises, aging population, energy problems, natural disasters, health care challenges, infrastructural inadequacies, economic challenges, to mention a few. There are also social challenges that are consequences of evolving lifestyles, social institutions and structures (OECD, 2011; WESS, 2013). All these challenges are capable of affecting the social wellbeing of individuals. Life can only be interesting if there are tools and strategies readily available for dealing with these challenges. Social challenges at different levels (global, national or regional)

require special strategies and tools for handling them. Until adequate provision is made on the best tools and practices for resolving these challenges and meeting people needs, the objective of sustainable development can never be achieved. If economic globalization offers opportunities to improve living conditions, it also implies that substantial and continuous restructuring and change – most especially in a time of economic crisis – and a renewed or new approach, not only to the new social challenges but also to the old ones that have not yet been met successfully (OECD, 2010).

Thus, the complexities of social challenges experienced in most nations of the world demands

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a more creative and innovative approach in balancing these pressures and constraints geared towards overcoming these challenges as well as initializing sustainable development in our societies (OECD, 2011; WESS, 2013). Social entrepreneurship focuses on the identification of social challenges and the adoption of innovative and entrepreneurial approaches targeted at proffering short and long term solutions (OECD, 2011, Borzaga et al, 2013). Social entrepreneurship connotes selfless entrepreneurial efforts, undertaking, and strategy geared towards production of social impact. It is also important to note that while social improvement to beneficiaries and communities is the main focus and drive of social entrepreneurship, investors are hugely rewarded financially or socially as well. This ensures continuous availability of adequate funding as well as sustainability of the creation of social value and development (OECD, 2011 Borzaga et al, 2013). Individuals, governments, NGOs, CBOs and other interest groups have made several attempts in providing solutions to mankind challenges. Among these groups, the contribution of the governments towards meeting the challenges of the citizenries is very outstanding.

The governments of various nations particularly in Africa have one time or the other initiated different policies, programs and schemes to ensure that adequate attention is given to the populace of the nation. Some of these programs whose objectives ranges from provision of finances, infrastructure, raw materials, technology, training etc. are numerous. Examples of such programs include the Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP) in South Africa targeted at combating unemployment and poverty, National program for the Eradication of Poverty (NAPEP) in Nigeria, to mention a few. A key criticism of the Government of African countries for example Nigeria is the limited priority given to the poor within the health, education, economic, and social welfare sectors (Holmes et al, 2012). Most of the social programs established by the Governments of diverse economies usually do not get to the underprivileged and marginalized of the economy (Vranken, 2013). Particularly the supply of social services most often than not excludes the poor in

the society (Holmes et al, 2012). Therefore it is obvious that the activities of Government alone is not sufficient to curb the social problems and challenges existing in the Nations. Upon this trust, this paper aims to examine social entrepreneurship as an effect tool for meeting social challenges with a focus on achieving sustainable development in developing countries.

## **ENTREPRENEURSHIP: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE AND DEFINITION**

Defining the concept of social entrepreneurship can only be meaningful if the concept of entrepreneurship itself is clearly defined. The concept of the entrepreneur originated from French economics in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries (cited in Dees 1998). The term entrepreneur in French is interpreted to mean one who undertakes (cited in Dees 1998). However as expected, one of the earliest definitions of the term the entrepreneur was presented by a French economist called Jean Baptiste Say in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. From Jean's perspective as to what it implies to 'undertake', the entrepreneur is conceived as one who shifts economic resources out of an area of lower productivity and profitability to an area of higher productivity and profitability (cited in Dees, 1998). From his standpoint the activities of entrepreneurs are targeted at value creation.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the economist who is mostly linked with the concept of the entrepreneur, Joseph Schumpeter describes the entrepreneur as a change agent in the economy (cited in Dees, 1998). From his view point, entrepreneurs move the economy forward by either serving new markets, or creating new ways of doing things. Thus these early definitions of the term the entrepreneur have presented a foundation for contemporary researchers to modify the concept to feature variations of themes. For instance Peter Drucker describes entrepreneurs as individuals that are in search of any form of change in order to respond and exploit opportunities presented by change (cited in Dees, 1998; Schaltegger and Wagner, 2013). Opportunities in this context would mean opportunities to create value. From his perspective, entrepreneurs are not necessarily change agents but they are always optimistic about

exploiting the opportunities presented by change. In other words entrepreneurs do not see the problems created by change but the possibilities that change could present. In his view not all business set ups are entrepreneurial except they are exploiting the opportunities presented by change. Drucker also believes that entrepreneurship does not necessarily have to be for profit motives only but also a drive for social impact (cited in Dees, 1998). A contemporary researcher Howard Stevenson of the Harvard business school, describes the entrepreneur as one who pursues exploitation of business opportunities without regard to resources currently controlled (Dees, 1998). In other words, Stevenson sees a social entrepreneur as one who is not limited by the constraints of resources currently available to proffering social challenges (Dees, 1998).

### ***Social entrepreneurship***

Many authors such as Brinckeroff (2000), Borzaga and Solari (2001), Mair et al (2005), Bright et al (2006), Prahalad and Hammond (2002) cited in Schaltegger and Wagner (2013) to mention a few, have attempted to conceptualize the term social entrepreneurship. However the definitions presented are usually a reflection of what the authors conceive to be the definition of entrepreneurship as a term. Social entrepreneurship has been defined by a group of researchers as not-for-profit initiatives in search alternative funding strategies or management approaches to create social value or impact (Austin, Stevenson and Wei-Skiller cited in Garima and Saxena, 2013). Another school of thought defines social entrepreneurship as the socially responsible practice of commercial businesses involved in trans- sector partnerships (Sagawa & Segal cited in Garima and Saxena 2013). A group of researchers simply consider social entrepreneurship as a means to alleviate or curb social problems as well as speed up social transformation (Alvord et al. cited in Garima and Saxena 2013).

### ***Business entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurs***

There is a sharp contrast between business entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurs. A holistic

definition of entrepreneurship will feature various themes as well as encompass diverse views and perspectives that can help to draw clearly different types of entrepreneurship. Business entrepreneurship is the identification and exploitation of business opportunities and the attraction of adequate resources with the goal of proffering solutions to societal business problems or challenges. Social entrepreneur as one who is not limited by the constraints of resources currently available to proffering social challenges (Dees, 1998). Social entrepreneurs are individuals with vision determination and commitment to persevere even in the face of daunting odds and obstacles. For a business entrepreneur wealth is a yardstick to measure value creation, how much wealth accrues to the business is an indication of the success of the business or venture, while to a social entrepreneur wealth is a tool for solving social problems and challenges in social entrepreneurship. Therefore, the success of a social entrepreneur is indicated by the positive social impacts achieved (Dees 1998). Hence in order to enhance better understanding of the meaning of social entrepreneurs, this paper will present a definition of social entrepreneurship as the identification and exploitation of opportunities and the attraction of adequate resources with a focus on overcoming social challenges or problems in a society.

### ***Social Challenges-Concepts and Definitions***

It is of utmost importance to attempt to effectively conceptualize social challenges in order to develop a working definition all through this work. The definition of social challenges will be x-rayed from the perspectives of three contrasting definitions namely; the objectivists, constructivists, and mixed perspectives of conceptualizing social challenges. The objectivist definition describes social challenges as social conditions highlighted by a process of scientific enquiry and values which are unfavorable to human existence and wellbeing (Manis 1976). As expressed in this definition the objectivists' perspective focuses solely on adverse conditions in the empirical world based on a process of investigation, observation and experimentation. This implies that social scientists are able to identify and measure social challenges

or problems independently even though the populace or stakeholders/policy makers do not consider such conditions or situations as adverse or unfavorable to human existence or wellbeing. The question is if the challenges considered as problematic by the public and policy makers differ from that of the objectivists, would this approach be effective and holistic in overcoming social challenges in a society? If the focus becomes combating problems like floods and food insecurity which are considered as social problems from an objectivists perspective, then what about employment policies to cater for the physically challenged to curb the numbers of destitute on the streets. Therefore considering social challenges or problems from the objectivists' point of view may not sufficiently define the concept of social challenges or problems.

The Constructionists define social challenges as the activities of individuals or groups expressed as a consequence of dissatisfaction or grievances based on some supposed conditions or prevailing circumstances (Spector and Kitsuse 1997). In other words the Constructionists see social challenges or problems as expression of dissatisfaction and grievances through mediums such as speeches, news coverage, protests, and all of such activities portraying threatening situations or uproar and insurgencies. One very important point worthy of note in respect to the Constructionists definition is that the conditions assumed as problematic do not necessarily have to be true, real or factual to be defined as problems. Therefore the constructionists conceptualize activities of journalists, politicians and other pressure groups as the expression of social challenges. From a critical perspective of this approach, it is important to note that the activities of journalists, politicians and other pressure groups could be misleading and also could be characterized by selfish ambitions. Instead of studying supposed threatening conditions as expressed by the groups, the Constructionists approach would be a response and course of actions based on the views of the aggrieved groups. It is important to point out here that their activities might only portray the shared problems of the aggrieved groups based on an assumed problematic condition which may not be an actual

individualistic condition threatening to societal wellbeing. Again considering social challenges from the perspective of the Constructionists will not sufficiently define the concept of social challenges or problems.

The mixed definition views a social challenge as an aspect of the society that people consider worrisome and would like to see conditions change (Henslin 2003). A detailed analysis of this perspective shows a combination of objective condition ( i.e some aspects of the society that can be measured or experienced) and subjective concern ( i.e a concern shared by a significant number of people) being conceptualized as social problems or challenges. However as explained earlier the summation of either views or perspectives as presented in the mixed definition may not effectively represent a holistic definition of social problems or challenges.

It is of great and utmost importance to effectively and holistically define the concept of social challenges. This is so particularly because only when an all-encompassing definition is presented would a holistic approach to overcoming social challenges be achieved. If a problem is not effectively conceptualized, developing an effective solution may not be easily achieved as well. Therefore this paper presents a holistic definition of social challenges as adverse or unfavorable conditions, situations or circumstances in a society that are consequences of absence of effective social systems or failure of the existing ones. From this view perspective, persistent and enormous adverse effects of flood, crises, and activities of aggrieved groups to mention a few examples of social challenges, are all consequences of absence of an effective social system or failure of the existing ones. Thus this conceptualization of social challenges based on absence or failure of effective social systems presents an all-encompassing platform for a holistic approach towards proffering solutions and effective checks to social problems or challenges.

### *Social entrepreneurs and social challenges*

Social entrepreneurs are agents of change whose primary focus is the social sector. They make

foundational changes and sustainable improvements in social systems, addressing the root causes of social challenges and problems rather than the resulting consequences. They always seek to eradicate needs rather than respond to them. It is important to note that their activities and approach to problem solving always has the potentials to stimulate sustainable global improvements. The ultimate focus of social entrepreneurs is to create and sustain social value. The reward for a social entrepreneur is not wealth creation or profits, but social improvements and impact. The motivation of social entrepreneurs is long term social reward on the venture. Their ultimate focus is sustaining social impact as well as creating lasting improvements (SESE, 2013). Social entrepreneurs are usually driven by a vision of how to achieve sustainable social impact and improvements. They persistently develop diverse approaches towards the achievement of their goals. Social entrepreneurs are not easily swayed by obstacles; rather they doggedly modify their strategies with a focus on surmounting social challenges. This persistence and never give up attitude is a reinforcement that facilitates the achievement of sustainable social impact and improvement (El Ebrashi, 2013).

### *Principles of Social Entrepreneurship*

Addou, Fahmy, Greenward and Nelson (2011) identified the principles of social entrepreneurship to include; achievement of positive social impacts, non-conventional thinking, use of sustainable methods and innovation. According to them, Achievement of positive social impact: Social entrepreneurship responds to communities that have been marginalized or excluded by existing market actors and non-market institutions; Non-conventional thinking: Social entrepreneurship aims for what Joseph Schumpeter called "creative destruction," a revolutionary transformation of a pattern of production which is often associated with entrepreneurship at large but, in the case of social entrepreneurship, is applied to social challenges; Use of sustainable methods: Social entrepreneurship must include a strategy for achieving financial sustainability, such as earning income; and, Innovation that can be adapted and "scaled up" beyond the local context: It is by

pioneering ideas that can be applied at a larger scale that social entrepreneurship is able to contribute to systemic and path-breaking change.

### *Models of social entrepreneurship*

Addou, Fahmy, Greenward and Nelson (2011) social enterprises can assume a variety of legal and organizational models. These models are basically classified into four categories and they include;(i) Leveraged nonprofits which capitalize on the interest of a variety of stakeholders to operate and to secure ongoing support based on a diversified portfolio of funding. (ii) Enterprising nonprofits which have a self-financing component contributing to the organization's sustainability. (iii) Hybrid enterprises which combine aspects of the for-profit and non-profit legal models, either through an innovative legal structure or by using a for-profit subsidiary to support the social activities of the nonprofit.

### *Motivations of social entrepreneurs*

Social entrepreneurs are not constrained by their own limited resources. They are skilled at efficient allocation of limited resources and also at attracting resources from others. They are not constrained by sector norms or customs; rather they explore all form of resource attraction ranging from philanthropy to commercial business. These resource strategies largely reinforce and facilitate their social missions (El Ebrashi, 2013). It is also important to note that social entrepreneurs ensure to take calculated risks as well as effectively manage risks resulting from potential failure. This guarantees availability of resources for sustainable social impact since stakeholders are only exposed to minimum risks.

Social entrepreneurs usually ensure to have a good understanding of the communities they are serving. They ensure to know as well as correctly assess the needs and values of the people they intend to reach out to. They also pay cognizance to the expectations of their investors and partners. Thus they provide social improvement to their beneficiaries as well as attractive financial reward to their investors (Tivedi and Stokols, 2011). This largely facilitates long term investments in social

value creation and sustainable social improvements.

Therefore, it is evident that a social entrepreneur identifies and tackles social challenges on a large scale. Social entrepreneurs exploit opportunities in order to improve systems, invent and disseminate new strategies as well as present sustainable remedies capable of value creation. The focus of social entrepreneurs is not just an immediate, small scale impact but a lasting long-term change. The mission of the social entrepreneurs is to identify areas where society is in a deadlock as well as providing innovative and creative ways of proffering solutions by changing the system and also persuading society to adopt the solutions presented. Ultimately, the motivation of social entrepreneurs is to produce visible and measurable social impact with particular focus on the marginalized and disadvantaged in a bid to overcome social challenges as well as achieve social sustainability.

## **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Nurse (2006) stated that the concept of sustainable development emanated in the early seventies. However the 1972 UN Stockholm Conference on human environment arguably was the first platform for the international recognition of the concept. It is important to note that it is generally accepted in the literature that the World Commission On Environment and Development (WCED, 1987), was the key driver of the conceptual linkage between environmental issues and development implications (Langelle cited in Nurse, 2006). The United Nations Conference on Sustainable development (1993), and the World Summit for Sustainable Development (2002) in Johannesburg, all set the stage for an international conceptualization and globalization of sustainable development (Nurse, 2006). Thus the formulation of the Brundtland Report (WCED, 1987) was achieved.

The concept of sustainable development can be said to be multi - facet and interdisciplinary in nature. However the most generally acceptable definition is the one provided by Brundtland Report (WCED, 1987). The report defines

Sustainable development as `development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Harris, 2003). Extensive discussions and constant usage of the concept of sustainable development has since developed a multiplicity in definitions and interpretations of the concept (Harris, 2003). The economic perspective is one of such extensions which define sustainable development as a system able to produce goods and services on a continuous basis in order to maintain manageable levels of government and external debt, and to avoid extreme sector imbalances, which damage agricultural or industrial production (Harris, 2003).

However as a working definition particularly with the relevance to the theme of this paper, this study will adopt an extensive conceptualization of sustainable development as presented by the Brundtland Report with a social perspective to the definition. Thus this paper presents a definition of sustainable development as the satisfaction of basic human needs within a society as well as fairness and equity in the distribution of resources geared towards sustainability for the present and future generations.

### ***Social entrepreneurship: A tool for facilitating sustainable development in developing countries***

A brief overview of traditional options adopted by most countries towards meeting social challenges and achieving sustainable development will help to buttress the importance of social entrepreneurship in meeting social challenges. The goal and strategy of most nations as regards the achievement of sustainable development has been geared towards meeting social challenges such as reduction of poverty and resulting consequences of poverty (Seelos and Mair, 2005). Poverty reduction and other Millennium Development Goals are also largely considered as sub-sets of economic development (Seelos and Mair, 2005). However many decades of foreign investments and aids as well as policy reforms targeted at economic growth particularly in under-developed and developing nations have mostly produced failed efforts and attempts (Seelos and Mair, 2005).

Based on Economic theory the assumption had been that the relative regression of under-developed and developing nations would be a spring board and power drive to measure up with the developed nations. However that has not been the case with many of the countries in focus. Rather there seems to have been a constant trend of unequal distribution of resources and wealth within developing nations and between countries (Fosu, 2010).

Brundtland Report (WCED, 1987) argued that there is no universal formula for sustainable development. He suggested that nations would have to develop customized designs geared towards the achievement of sustainability. There are various developmental projects and government interventions particularly in developing and under-developed countries have not presented a replicable formula that would facilitate sustainable economic development. Thus the achievement of sustainable development still requires innovative approaches and strategies especially for developing and under-developed nations. Social challenges are consequences of absence of effective systems or failure of the existing ones. As such changing the systems or putting appropriate systems in place might be the right way to go in achieving sustainable development. This is why this paper considers social entrepreneurship as a panacea for social challenges and a spring board for the achievement of sustainable development. Particularly, because creating social impacts by changing systems that sustain social challenges or putting in place appropriate systems that effectively check social challenges is at the centre of the concept of social entrepreneurship.

To further understand the role of social entrepreneurship in the achievement of socio-economic impact in developing countries, the next section will feature a very brief overview of other social entrepreneurial initiatives in South Africa and in Cameroon (www.SCHWAB foundation for social entrepreneurship). This will be followed closely by an overview of how their activities and those of the case study relate to the ultimate goal of achieving sustainable development.

The activities of social entrepreneurs in different areas of the world have transcended mere commercialization of products and services (Fischer and Comini, 2012). Social entrepreneurs have been involved in the expansion of opportunities for individuals to become self-emancipated, generating income as well as being able to lead and earn the livelihood envisioned for their children and themselves (Fischer and Comini, 2012). Social entrepreneurship facilitates societal systems to co-opt individuals who are deprived of physical and basic socio - economic means required to become active social participators as individuals' consumers, as well as citizens (Fischer and Comini, 2012).

The activities of Mobility Aid and Alliances Research and Development Centre (MAAARDEC) an organization in Nigeria, creates an impression of the scope and scale with which social entrepreneurs are able to meet social challenges, creating social impact. Sequel to this is an argument on why social entrepreneurship is considered a more effective option compared to other traditional options particularly towards meeting social challenges as well as achieving sustainable development. Building on this would be a description of two other social enterprises namely; North Star Alliance in South Africa, and ASAFE in Cameroon. These cases will underscore and evaluate the impact of social entrepreneurs as regards creation of social value based on the inputs believed to facilitate sustainable development especially in developing and poor countries.

#### *Mobility aid and alliances research and development centre (maardec)*

In Nigeria the Mobility Aid and Alliances Research and Development Centre (MAARDEC) is a social entrepreneurship outfit whose focus is to ensure that 20,000 Nigerians with disabilities acquire efficient and sustainable mobility aids and appliances by 2015. The vision of this social entrepreneur was borne out of the fact that like many other developing countries Nigeria has an estimated population of 2 million disabled persons. Many of these disabled are forced to depend on their families and the ones without close relatives to help end up becoming street

beggars. In Nigeria there are hardly any facilities for the disabled. Facilities for street crossings, accessing public buildings and public transportation for the disabled persons is largely lacking in Nigeria. It is also evident that government intervention programs involving training and rehabilitation are grossly limited in relevance to providing disabled individuals with the opportunities for personal and social growth.

Therefore MAARDEC was birth as a response to the aforementioned challenges of individuals with disabilities. The percentage of staff of MAARDEC with disabilities is given at about 50%. The centre offers guidance and counseling services for the disabled and facilitates public education with a focus on the potential abilities and capacities of disabled individuals. MAARDEC initiated the first ever Ms Wheelchair Nigeria pageant in 2010, providing a forum to celebrate successful women with disabilities' as well as equipping them to serve as advocates for all Nigerians with disabilities.

MAARDEC in partnership and collaboration with MTN foundation have been working on the provision over 15,000 mobility aids to persons with disabilities in Nigeria since 2009. MAARDEC in partnership also with Contact Solutions Limited provides qualified persons with disabilities employment working as customer service representatives. The centre has also formed an alliance with Conversion Sound to assemble and market digital hearing aids in Nigeria at affordable prices thus providing employment with persons with disabilities. Other aids developed as a result of MAARDEC activities include a more effective and workable leg brace and specially fabricated hand controls that allow those who have lost the use of their legs to drive.

#### ***North Star alliance in South Africa***

Studies show that Southern African Countries have the highest occurrences of HIV/AIDS. Particularly mobile workers are put at risk because of prolonged separation from partners and poor access to preventive and curative treatments to most sexually transmissible infections and other communicable diseases. Thus the concept of North

Star Alliance was birth in 1998. North Star Alliance is a road side wellness clinic in South Africa. The main focus of the social enterprise is to provide primary health care and services to truckers and mobile communities. Joining forces with the Road Transport Industry Education and Training, they provide treatment and information on diseases such as STIs, TB, malaria, diabetes, hypertension, HIV and eye diseases. It is also important to note that all services are offered free of charge. In 2005, a specialized programme was designed in conjunction with National bargaining Council for the road freight industry, for high risk population that had limited access to HIV prevention services. This joint efforts gave birth to the Trucking Against Aids initiative and the development of road side wellness clinics providing health care services for truck drivers, mobile workers, sex workers and the local communities. As at 2008 the services of North Star Alliance had expanded to Swaziland, Zimbabwe and Zambia. To enhance its services and community outreach programme, North Star created a software programme, called Corridor Medical Transfer System. The software programme is used to record patient information, diagnosis and treatments. This acts as a health passport particularly in tracking usage and access over a wide reach and geographical area.

In 2012, North Star Alliance launched an initiative called NSEWA with 'an on the job training focus' which involved national and international drivers targeted at curbing the occurrences of road accidents.

#### ***Association pour le soutien et l'appui a la femme entrepreneur (asafe) in Cameroon***

ASAFE is a social entrepreneurship outfit in Cameroon whose focus is on the provision of business training and development services, as well as alternative financing and IT training for the disadvantaged and less privileged in the society, particularly women in Cameroon and other parts of Africa. The outfit uses information and communication technology to bring its entrepreneurs together in a cluster thereby connecting them to larger markets. The activities of ASAFE create enormous employment



opportunities as well as expand the initiatives of the existing entrepreneurs with particular emphasis on women in Cameroon and other parts of Africa. Economic empowerment is regarded as a key focus of the initiatives of ASAFE.

In 1992 ASAFE launched the Femme Credit Epargne initiative. This is a credit and savings service outfit designed specifically for low income women. Since then 15,000 women have benefited from this outfit. A Cisco Gender Networking Academy was established in 2000 to facilitate movement of women into added-value careers. Again since then 550 computer science engineers have been trained and have either found jobs or created their own businesses.

Sporting activities were launched in 2004 to facilitate social inclusion and community collaboration, which has seen 25,000 women and men brought together for regular competitions. In 2006 ASAFE launched yet another initiative to improve the quality of lives of people living in remote areas through solar energy projects particularly in two villages. As a consequence of development experienced in these villages, the villagers have also formed cooperatives for organic farming and integrated agriculture.

The examples of the social value created by the activities of social entrepreneurship elucidated above shows how impact has been created in the lives of those who need it as well as presenting a glimpse of hope for sustainable development. The activities of MAARDEC, North Star Alliance, and ASAFE, are inspirational as regards fostering innovation and facilitating the sharing of best practices and solutions among stakeholders in the sustainability sector.

### ***Key Philosophies of Sustainable Development***

Specifically the activities of these social entrepreneurs will be analyzed based on the extent to which their initiatives relate to what is considered as the key philosophies of sustainable development. These key areas include; satisfying basic socio-economic needs, systemic changes to create opportunities for the vulnerable or disadvantaged, and securing the rights of future generations to meet their needs.

#### *i) Satisfying basic socio-economic needs*

One of the key philosophies of sustainable development is the satisfaction of basic socio-economic needs of the poor (Brundtland, 1987). To achieve this, North Star Alliance provides primary health care services to truckers and mobile communities, usually comprising of poor individuals who ordinarily may not have access to such health care services. The initiative of North Star alliance also involves efforts to expand their reach so as to provide health care services to many more individuals in the target communities. Therefore basic health care services is been provided for group of individuals such as sex workers, truck drivers who ordinarily may not have had the means to get access to such quality of services.

#### *ii) Systemic changes to create opportunities for the vulnerable or disadvantaged*

Another key philosophy of sustainable development is a systemic change geared towards creation of opportunities for the vulnerable or disadvantaged Brundtland Report (WCED, 1987). Health and social challenges are deterrents to economic productivity. Therefore MAARDAC provides mobility facilities to the physically challenged as well as economic empowerment and counseling programs all at no cost. This is targeted at giving the physically challenged opportunities to participate actively in economic life. A major percentage of the employees of the enterprise also consist of physically challenged individuals thereby providing employment opportunities to the physically challenged who ordinarily are not readily integrated into the employment sectors and other areas of economic life. Miss wheelchair initiative powered by MAAARDAC also provides opportunity for self-fulfillment and actualization particularly in a society where there are actualization constraints for physically challenged individuals.

Again ASAFE provides business and IT training and development services particularly for women. Women in most societies are regarded as the most vulnerable group in a society. However the initiative of ASAFE is key to the reduction of inequality and the promotion of education and

development which is key to facilitation of active participation of women in economic life. ASAFE also increasingly attempts to connect the rural poor existing markets to urban and international markets. The initiative of ASAFE is a spring board for increased employment opportunities for women and internationalization of the existing markets of women entrepreneurs. Also the initiatives of ASAFE particularly as it involves community development, facilitates the inception of socio economic development in these communities.

It is important to also mention that the North Star Alliance initiative provides training for truck drivers to curb the occurrences of road accidents thereby checking the incidences of death and harm coming to individuals travelling on the roads. This also represents a systemic change giving individuals opportunities to actively and continuously participate in socio economic activities in the society.

*iii) Securing the rights of the future generation to meet their needs*

Unemployment is a persistent social challenge that is capable of restraining the abilities of future generations to meet their needs. It is important to note that the initiatives of the social entrepreneurs earlier discussed are all targeted at creation of employment opportunities for all groups of individuals. Growth of these initiatives also implies the expansion of job opportunities for all group of individuals as well as potential employment opportunities for future generations. In this light the initiatives of MAARDAC, ASAFE, and North Star Alliance, are considered a security for the rights of the future generation to meet their needs.

**FIGURE 1 HERE**

**CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

The concept of Sustainable development remains a learning field. It has also emerged as a sub-set of entrepreneurial theories and practice. Particularly, social

entrepreneurship has been cited by many studies as a remedy for social problems and challenges towards the initialization of sustainable development; however there remains a considerable uncertainty as regards the social impacts of social entrepreneurs in developing world's particularly the African continent. This study has highlighted recent researches in the area considering that only few studies have explored the relationship between social entrepreneurship and sustainable development in Africa. There remain considerable opportunities for further in research in this area particularly in a country such as Nigeria.

Ultimately, this paper argues that the activities of social entrepreneurs secures the right to live for the present generation and to be born for future generations as well as guarantee their freedom to live while also having access to basic human needs.

Considering the impact of social entrepreneurship in our case study in solving social challenges, this paper recommends that there is need to have many more social entrepreneurs to take up the challenge as . We also recommend the involvement of the government in financing social entrepreneurs in Africa. This will help to attract more individuals, organizations and institutions into social entrepreneurship for solving social challenges. well as rise up to the enormous opportunities particularly present in the African continent. Looking at the magnitude of the social challenges that mankind is saddled with. We also recommend the involvement of the government in financing social entrepreneurs in Africa. This will help to attract more individuals, organizations and institutions into social entrepreneurship for solving social challenges.

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## APPENDIX

Figure 1 an operational model of the contribution of social entrepreneurship to sustainable development

Purpose	Sustainable Development		
Levels	Individuals	Communities/Societies	Future Generations
Social challenges	Basic Socio-economic Needs	Needs for Enabling social structures	Needs for maximizing choice
Social Entrepreneurship	Effectively meeting Social Challenges/ Problems		

**Source:** Adapted from Seelos and Mair (2005).