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ENHANCING GREEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP THROUGH MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIPS FOR SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC

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Abstract: Green entrepreneurship is vital for achieving climate resilience and sustainable economic growth in Nigeria. Case studies have proven the potential of green entrepreneurship to enhance socio-economic growth, good health and wellbeing in Nigeria. Through systematic literature review and participant observation, this study identifies the need to enhance green entrepreneurship through multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainable economic growth in Nigeria. It further identifies the benefits of green entrepreneurship education across campuses, communities, cities and companies in Nigeria. This paper examines some climate resilience projects for enhancing green entrepreneurship through multi-stakeholder partnerships that have been implemented in Nigeria in recent times. It recommends strategic partnership and green financing from multilateral organizations such as the World Bank Group towards enhancing green entrepreneurship in Nigeria. This paper concludes that multistakeholder partnerships are increasingly being utilized for pooling the economic and technical resources needed to enhance green entrepreneurship for sustainable economic growth in Nigeria.

Keyword: Climate Resilience, Economic Growth, Green Entrepreneurship, Partnerships, Sustainable Development.

I. INTRODUCTION

The severe effects of a temperature increase exceeding 1.5°C were underlined in the 2018 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) assessment, particularly for Africa (World Bank, 2016). The effects of climate change are farreaching and include heat waves and severe weather, deteriorated air quality, displacement and migration of vectors resulting in increase of a range of diseases related to water and ecological factors. Increasing incidences of mental health issues are being recorded and identified as a consequence of environmental change(Lu, 2016; PAHO, 2013). Generally, climate change is caused by natural and human activities. Human activities are subdivided into those that either emit large amount of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere contributing to the ozone layer depletion or activities that result in reduced carbon absorption from the atmosphere (Anabaraonye, Okafor & Hope, 2020; Nwafor, 2021). Soil fertility and sustainable economic growth in Nigeria have also been impacted by the climate crisis profoundly (Anabaraonye, Okafor, Ewa & Anukwonke, 2021; Onnoghen, Orji, Olisah & Anabaraonye, 2024). Climate resilience is the capacity for a socioecological system to absorb pressures and maintain function in the face of external stresses imposed upon it by climate change (Folke et al., 2010). It also includes the ability and capacity of an ecosystem to adapt, reorganize, and evolve into more desirable configurations that improve the sustainability of the system, leaving it better prepared for future climate impacts (Folke, 2006). Green entrepreneurship has been recently identified as an innovative strategy for enhancing climate resilience in Nigeria(Onnoghen, Onwuzurike & Anabaraonye,2024). Green entrepreneurship can be defined as the activity of consciously addressing an environmental/social problem/need through the realization of entrepreneurial ideas with a high level of risk, which has a net positive effect on the natural environment and at the same time is financially sustainable (Greentproject, 2016). A green entrepreneur is someone who starts and runs an entrepreneurial venture that is designed to be green in its products and processes from the very moment it is set up (Anabaraonye, Okafor & Eriobu, 2019). The interest of many concerned parties in green entrepreneurship has increased due to the trending issue of the need to preserve the earth's resources (Yin et al., 2022). The idea of green entrepreneurship is based on business owners' ability to diversify ideas and implement new concepts where the environment and citizens are safe. Therefore, many firms intend to adopt green practices. However, a lack of readiness regarding competent workers, ideas, and creativity in production denies them from adopting green processes (Ebrahimi & Mirbargkar, 2017). Green entrepreneurship is considered a supportive strategy that has ability to develop an innovative, competitive and sustainable posture for manufacturing small and medium enterprises. More and more firms are focusing on proactive approaches towards environmental protection by adopting green entrepreneurship (Mitchalis et al., 2022; Ataman et al., 2018). Green entrepreneurial initiatives, innovations and marketing will significantly enhance sustainable economic growth in Nigeria(Nnabuagwu & Odieli, 2023). Green entrepreneurship has the goal of enhancing climate resilience while promoting socio-economic growth. Green entrepreneurship education is therefore vital for promoting green entrepreneurship in Nigeria. Green entrepreneurship education involves the strategic training and enlightening of individuals, communities and institutions on the role of green entrepreneurship in achieving sustainable development.

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Green entrepreneurship education across communities and institutions is vital to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of individuals and systems for sustainable economic growth in Nigeria(Onnoghen, Onwuzurike & Anabaraonye,2024). According to the UN Habitat (2017), green entrepreneurship trainings also equip interested young persons with all the required knowledge in the green business value chain and gives them the opportunity to be a part of the solution to existing environmental challenges through green business ownership. An important consideration in the push for green entrepreneurship is public perception towards green services and products. This can either make or mar the development of green entrepreneurship. Furthermore, when green entrepreneurship thrives in Nigeria, the rate of unemployment amongst the youths will be drastically reduced and this will go a long way to help to achieve the sustainable development goals (Richard, Olatunji & Samuel, 2021). Green entrepreneurship education is therefore very important for establishing business support and laying a structure for entrepreneurs who desire to manage sound businesses with a special focus on environmental and social impact. This study identifies the need for "enhancing green entrepreneurship through multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainable economic growth in Nigeria"

2.METHODOLOGY

This paper examined "Enhancing green entrepreneurship through multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainable economic growth in Nigeria" through existing systematic literature review and participant observation. The main purpose of this research work was to survey theoretical backgrounds and previous studies on the subject and the current progress with the implementation of the climate resilience projects for sustainable economic growth in Nigeria.

2.1. UNDERSTANDING MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIPS

Multi-stakeholder partnerships (MSPs) are collaborations between diverse actors from different sectors, like governments, NGOs, businesses, and communities, to address complex issues and achieve shared goals. These partnerships leverage the unique strengths and resources of each participant to foster holistic and sustainable solutions. MSPs are crucial for tackling global challenges like poverty, hunger and climate change, as they encourage collective action and resource mobilization. The importance of partnership is underscored with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 17(SDG 17) which calls for partnership. Partnerships prosper in environments with clear project goals, objectives, deliverables, and time constraints, as well as when anticipated results are at least proportionate to the resources committed. In these circumstances, stakeholders are better able to keep track of and assess project progress, change resources as needed, foster trust, and lessen coordination issues (Sun et al., 2020). Around the world, industrialized and developed nations have rather effective multi-stakeholder partnerships for enhancing climate resilience (Bäckstrand, 2006). In Nigeria, there is a gap to fill by leveraging on multi-stakeholder partnerships for enhancing green entrepreneurship for climate resilience in Nigeria. There is still much to learn about the particular factors that differentiate certain partnerships from others in terms of achieving their declared aims and objectives (McNamara & Buggy, 2017). For instance, several climate resilience building initiatives launched in rural African communities include regional and indigenous understanding of environmental stewardship and preservation into project objectives (Melore & Nel, 2020; & Aghaebe, 2025). More effective partnership arrangements also appear to feature some type of adaptive governance mechanism. This largely consists of policies, procedures, and institutional flexibility that permit the inclusion of new participants, concepts, and innovative methods for constructing climate resilience, such as climate justice (Fazey, 2007; Smucker & Nijbroek, 2020). Taking into account these elements, multi-stakeholder partnerships developed to tackle climate change may eventually develop into highly complex organizational structures with a wide range of functions. Multi-stakeholder collaborations are shown to be a viable tactic for enhancing climate resilience in sub-Saharan Africa. In developing countries like Nigeria, a comprehensive multi-stakeholder strategy appears to be frequently required to increase climate resilience and reduce the likelihood of disasters (Biagini and Miller, 2013; Pinkse and Kolk, 2012). These partnerships provide possibilities and synergies for information exchange, idea development, issue resolution, and the funding necessary to launch, scale up, and maintain climate-smart activities nationally and regionally. The expansion of multi-stakeholder partnerships in Nigeria accentuates their strategic relevance in boosting green entrepreneurship for climate resilience and sustainable economic growth.

Key aspects of Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships include:

- i) **Diverse Participation:** MSPs involve a wide range of stakeholders, each contributing their expertise, perspectives, and resources.
- ii) Shared Goals: Partners in an MSP agree on common objectives and work collaboratively to achieve them.
- **Holistic Approach:** By combining different approaches and resources, MSPs can address complex problems in a more comprehensive way.
- **Resource Mobilization:** MSPs can pool financial, human, and technological resources to enhance the impact of their work.
- v) Impact and Sustainability: MSPs aim to create lasting and meaningful change, often through innovative and sustainable solutions.

vi) Examples: MSPs can be seen in various fields, including sustainable development, public policy, and addressing social issues.

Benefits of Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships(MSPs) include:

- i) Enhanced Problem-Solving: Diverse perspectives and resources lead to more creative and effective solutions.
- ii) Increased Efficiency: Collaboration can streamline processes and optimize resource allocation.
- iii) Improved Governance: MSPs can foster more inclusive and participatory decision-making processes.
- iv) Greater Impact: By working together, partners can achieve greater scale and impact than they could individually.
- v) Innovation and Learning: MSPs can foster innovation and knowledge sharing among different sectors.

2.2. CASE STUDY ONE: THE UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, NSUKKA, NIGERIA

A good example of the multi-stakeholder partnership projects to enhance green entrepreneurship for sustainable economic growth in Nigeria can be seen at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The University has collaborated with multilateral organizations, non-governmental organizations and passionate individuals to celebrate the world environment day events being held across cities, campuses and countries in June annually. Each year, World Environment Day is hosted by a different country where the official celebrations take place(UNEP,2022; Anabaraonye et al, 2022). The United Nations Environment having declared the theme "Only One Earth" for World Environment Day 2022 presented an unprecedented opportunity for plastic pollution education and mitigation globally. Thus, the Institute of Climate Change Studies, Energy and Environment, University of Nigeria, Nsukka in collaboration with the Benjy Poetry And Music Global Concepts, United Nations Environment Programme(UNEP) and Plogging Nigeria Club organized an educational event on the 8th of June,2022 to commemorate the World Environment Day 2022 featuring the recitation of inspiring world environment day poetry, seminars by climate change professionals and networking opportunities for the youths from around the world (Anabaraonye et al, 2022).

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2.3. CASE STUDY TWO: PARTNERSHIP WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN NIGERIA

Researchers have identified the vital role which non-governmental organizations can play in enhancing green entrepreneurship for climate resilience in Nigeria (Onnoghen, Anabaraonye & Enwereuzo, 2024). These non-governmental organizations can be engaged in multi-stakeholder partnerships towards enhancing green entrepreneurship for climate resilience in Nigeria. Several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Nigeria are actively engaged in climate resilience projects, implementing various strategies and interventions to mitigate the impacts of climate change on local communities. In Nigeria, a substantial number of NGOs exist although at different levels and with unique focus or orientation. Most of them are internationally based while there are other major state and nationally based NGOs. They are known for their unique focus, with several projects servicing such area (Igwe, 2006). Green Environment and Climate Change Initiative (GECCI), is one of such organizations which has spearheaded Initiatives and projects for ecosystem restoration, climate resilience and sustainable development. Through strategic tree planting activities in communities and engaging the indigenous people in every process, GECCI's Green Action Pathway project was focused towards combating desertification, restoration of degraded lands, and enhancement of ecosystem resilience in Anambra State, Nigeria(Onnoghen, Anabaraonye & Enwereuzo, 2024). The organization has also implemented other laudable projects with support from within and outside Nigeria. The Ebenebe Climate Resilience program initiated in Anambra by the organization increased the awareness and enlightenment of the community on the need for conservation and protection of their forests(Onnoghen, Anabaraonye & Enwereuzo, 2024). African CleanUp Initiative (ACI) is a non-governmental organization (NGO) registered with Corporate Affairs Commission in Nigeria with head office in Lagos State. ACI is driven by the desire to raise environmentally responsible citizens. Having started operations in 2010 with a sanitation and advocacy project - Clean Up Nigeria, the organization's major focus areas include environmental sanitation, environmental health, environmental education and community development(Anabaraonye, 2023a; ACI, 2021). Another Prominent Organization, The Project Green Initiative which is an arm of the Benjy Poetry and Global Music Concept focuses on climate education through poetry, lectures, and workshops. The organization has been supporting and evidently acting for growth in climate education, environmental sustainability, and alternatives to crude oil exploration. In 2023, the organization launched the International Virtual Climate Change Education Summit (IVCCES), with presentations of over 10 high quality research papers on climate science, renewable energy, green entrepreneurship, alternative, etc. (Anabaraonye, 2023b).

3.1. ENHANCING GREEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP FOR CLIMATE RESILIENCE IN NIGERIA

To enhance green entrepreneurship for climate resilience in Nigeria through multi-stakeholder partnerships, several strategies can be employed. These include fostering collaboration among government, private sector, NGOs, and local communities, creating enabling environments through policy and financial support, and promoting knowledge sharing and capacity building.

Here's a more detailed breakdown:

1. Fostering Collaboration and Partnerships:

- a) Multi-stakeholder platforms: Establish platforms for regular dialogue and collaboration between government agencies, private sector companies (especially those involved in green technologies), NGOs, and community-based organizations.
 - b) Shared online platforms: Utilize digital tools to facilitate information sharing, communication, and coordination among partners.
 - c) Clearly defined roles and responsibilities: Develop a framework that outlines the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of each partner to ensure clarity and accountability.
 - d) Mutual benefits: Ensure that partnerships are mutually beneficial, highlighting how each partner's strengths and resources can contribute to the overall goal of green entrepreneurship and climate resilience.

2. Enabling Environment and Support:

- a) Policy and regulatory framework: Advocate for policies that incentivize green entrepreneurship, such as tax breaks, subsidies for renewable energy technologies, and streamlined permitting processes for green businesses.
- b) Financial support: Provide access to green finance, including grants, loans, and venture capital, specifically for green businesses and initiatives.
- c) Capacity building: Support training and mentorship programs for entrepreneurs, particularly in areas like green technology, sustainable agriculture, and waste management.
- d) Awareness campaigns: Conduct public awareness campaigns to educate citizens about the benefits of green entrepreneurship and climate resilience.

3. Knowledge Sharing and Innovation:

- a) Knowledge hubs: Establish centers for sharing best practices, research findings, and innovative solutions related to green entrepreneurship and climate resilience.
- b) Research and development: Invest in research and development to identify and promote new green technologies and business models.
- c) Learning from success stories: Highlight and replicate successful green entrepreneurship initiatives from other regions or countries.
- d) Community-based approaches: Support community-based initiatives that empower local communities to develop and implement their own climate-resilient solutions.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation:

- a) Regular assessments: Implement mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of partnerships and green entrepreneurship initiatives.
- b) Data collection and analysis: Gather data on key indicators related to climate resilience, green business performance, and stakeholder engagement.
- c) Adaptation and improvement: Use the findings from monitoring and evaluation to adapt strategies and improve the effectiveness of partnerships and initiatives.

3.2. PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH THROUGH MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIPS IN NIGERIA

To boost green entrepreneurship and sustainable economic growth in Nigeria, multi-stakeholder partnerships can be leveraged by bringing together governments, businesses, NGOs, and communities to share resources, knowledge, and best practices. This collaborative approach can unlock funding, provide mentorship, and facilitate access to technology, ultimately driving innovation and scaling up green solutions.

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Here's how to leverage multi-stakeholder partnerships:

1. Establish Collaborative Platforms:

- a) **Community Sustainability Committees:** Create platforms for dialogue and action among stakeholders to share resources, knowledge, and best practices for green entrepreneurship.
- b) **Entrepreneurship Hubs:** Foster collaboration between businesses, academia, and government to provide mentorship, access to technology, and funding opportunities for green startups.

2. Incentivize Green Practices:

- a) **Financial Support:** Offer grants, tax incentives, or low-interest loans for businesses adopting eco-friendly practices.
- b) **Recognition Programs:** Recognize and reward businesses and individuals demonstrating exceptional commitment to sustainability through awards or public acknowledgment.

3. Enhance Access to Finance:

- a) Green Bonds: Utilize green bonds to mobilize capital specifically for sustainable projects and initiatives.
- b) **Microfinance Institutions:** Partner with microfinance institutions to provide tailored financial support to green entrepreneurs.
- 4. Promote Knowledge Sharing and Capacity Building:
 - a) **Training Programs:** Organize workshops and training sessions on green technologies, sustainable business practices, and market access for entrepreneurs.
 - b) **Research and Development:** Support research institutions to develop innovative green technologies and solutions relevant to the Nigerian context.

5. Policy and Regulatory Frameworks:

- a) **Policy Coherence:** Advocate for policies that promote green entrepreneurship and integrate sustainability into national development plans.
- b) **Regulatory Frameworks:** Develop clear and consistent regulations for environmental protection and resource management.

6. Strengthen Local Networks:

- a) **Community Engagement:** Engage local communities in the planning and implementation of green initiatives to ensure that benefits are shared equitably.
- b) **Local Partnerships:** Foster collaborations between local businesses, NGOs, and community groups to leverage local knowledge and resources.

7. Focus on Key Sectors:

- a) Renewable Energy: Support the development of renewable energy projects and technologies to reduce reliance on fossil fuels.
- b) **Sustainable Agriculture:** Promote sustainable agricultural practices to improve food security, reduce environmental impact, and create green jobs.

- c) Waste Management and Recycling: Invest in waste management and recycling infrastructure to minimize pollution and recover valuable resources.
- d) **Sustainable Transport:** Develop sustainable transport infrastructure and promote the use of electric vehicles and public transportation.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Multi-Stakeholder Partnership and Green financing from multilateral organizations such as the World Bank Group(WBG) and World Health Organization(WHO) towards enhancing green entrepreneurship for achieving climate resilience and sustainable economic growth in Nigeria is greatly recommended.
- 2. Nigerian government should establish and promote public policies within their borders to increase the awareness of green entrepreneurship for environmental sustainability.
- 3. Leadership summits on green entrepreneurship are recommended as important tools which can be used in educating communities and cities in Nigeria for sustainability locally, nationally and globally.
- **4.** Educational blogs can be used in awareness creation and sensitization towards enhancing green entrepreneurship through multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainable economic growth in Nigeria.
- 5. There is also great need for further research in this field of study on green entrepreneurship to enhance adequate knowledge and appropriate adaptation and mitigation strategies for sustainable economic growth in Nigeria.

5. CONCLUSION

Green entrepreneurship which can be advanced through multi-stakeholder partnerships is obviously needed to ensure a cleaner, greener and healthier environment for sustainable economic growth. By actively engaging all stakeholders and implementing these strategies suggested above, Nigeria can effectively leverage multi-stakeholder partnerships to drive green entrepreneurship and achieve sustainable economic growth.

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