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ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROSPECTS AND IMPEDIMENTS FOR NIGERIAN URBAN PLANNERS

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ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurship is the process of producing something new and valuable by investing the required time and energy, taking on the associated financial and social risks and reaping financial rewards as well as freedom and personal fulfillment in return. It also accelerates the processes of industrial development, employment creation, and poverty alleviation. The benefits and difficulties of entrepreneurship for Nigerian urban planners are examined in this paper. The study observed that consumers, captains of industries, and government officials are becoming more interested in entrepreneurship as a way of stemming down the tide of unemployment in our nation. Descriptive technique was used as the analytical tool for this paper and it focuses on examining various urban planning professional programs that can help entrepreneurs succeed and generating expected outcome from them. In addition to outlining their difficulties, the study suggested five key domains that potentially provide entrepreneurial prospects for Nigerian urban and regional planners. It comprises the following: research information, building and construction, property development, energy efficiency, city greening, landscaping, and planning advocacy. In order to embrace self-employment and lessen the emphasis on looking for nonexistent white-collar jobs, the paper concludes that it is imperative that you choose a business endeavor that best utilizes the gifts that God has given you as well as it must be operated according to universally accepted ideals like fairness, honesty, and integrity

KEYWORDS: Challenges Entrepreneurship, Nigeria, Opportunities, Urban Planners.

1. INTRODUCTION

Global interest in entrepreneurship has been on the rise since the early 1980s (Klofsten, 2018). The primary cause of this interest was the difficulties faced by industrialized nations due to economic recessions, high unemployment rates, and irregularities in the cycles of international commerce, which were unfamiliar to the majority of these nations (Fauziah, 2024). In view of this circumstance, there has been an increasing tendency focusing more on the potential role of entrepreneurs as a viable remedy for the issues that confront most nations of the world. (Garavan, 2019). The task of developing an enterprise culture is one that many development organizations, including educational and professional training institutions, are tackling globally. Many of these agencies already offer crucial

support, such as financial and advisory roles. One of the most recent discourses is imbibing entrepreneurship courses in some of the world's post-secondary institutions, and a large number of business or management schools offer major academic programs in entrepreneurship in addition to traditional business or management areas, like finance, accounting, marketing, human resources, and basic management.

However, in a developing nation like Nigeria, these programmes have not been fully developed, explored, or utilized. Nigeria faces number of challenges that can only be met with the help of innovative, well-educated, and entrepreneurial citizens who, regardless of their line of work, possess the courage to face and overcome obstacles head-on. Furthermore, since education is crucial in forming young people's attitudes, skills, and cultures, it is imperative that entrepreneurship education be entrenched in the school curricula. This is because a dynamic economy that is inventive and capable of producing the necessary jobs will require a higher number of young people who are willing and able to become entrepreneurs. These individuals will either start or successfully grow their own businesses or social ventures, or they will become innovators in the larger organizations where they work.

The current state of the economy and the high rate of unemployment has dawned all parties and this has forced majority to recognize the critical role that entrepreneurship plays in the economy and the potential for economic growth. Quite number of disciplines have worked to promote entrepreneurship in all forms after realizing how crucial business owners are to the growth of Nigeria's economy. In order to achieve the goal of developing an inventive and entrepreneurial society, governments at all levels are consistently focusing on encouraging an enterprise culture among young people who are employable. Consequently, educational establishments, especially those at the tertiary level, are given an extra assignment, which has helped young graduates to strengthen their business skills.

In urban planning, land use, environmental protection and use, public welfare, and the design of the urban environment—which include air, water, and infrastructure that enters and exits urban areas—are to be considered in order to build a business and a political process to achieving virile economy development growth.

Urban planning variously describes as “the art and science of ordering the use of land and the character and siting of buildings and communication routes so as to secure the maximum practicable degree of economy, convenience, and beauty,” Keeble (1969), provides one of the most widely used definitions in literature. Attempts have also been made by professional bodies to define planning and the work of planners. The definitions of planning provided by three reputable professional town planner associations are outlined below:

Urban and Regional Planning, according to the Nigerian Institute of Town Planners, is "concern with the spatial ordering of land use both in the urban and rural settings for the purpose of creating functionality efficient and aesthetically pleasing physical environment for living, working, circulation

and recreation (NITP,2013). Moreover, urban planning, also known as city and regional planning, is a dynamic profession that aims at enhancing the welfare of individuals and their communities by developing more practical, equitable, healthy, effective, and appealing spaces for both the present and the future, (American Planning Association, 2015).

In addition to the aforementioned, planning also entails two activities: creating places that are valued and have an identity, and managing the conflicting uses of space, (Royal Town Planning Institute, 2016). All these definitions advanced are basically centers on location and nature of social, economic, and environmental change as it affects the dynamics of human activities. On a broader perspective, it is evident that urban planners and their coordinating roles are extremely important to the residents of any town, city or nation, as the standard of their work directly affects each citizen's quality of life.

On a macrosm level, the Nigerian setting is a kind of, a regrettable analogy due to haphazard development springing every day and moments. Our cities and towns are incredibly unorganized, at best haphazard, and underdeveloped, and every year hundreds of graduates in the field of urban planning wander the streets unemployed. It is a fact that the public does not fully comprehend the role and importance of skilled urban planners, despite the fact that they ought to be the most sought-after professionals. This is because Nigerians have never known what it's like to live in a town or metropolis that these talented urban planners have concertedly and methodically planned, designed, built, and maintained.

The harsh reality is that Nigerians have a very narrow mentality as regards the purpose of earning a degree. We struggle for the academic qualifications, by hook or crook, with the main aim of securing a government job preferably at the Federal level) after graduation, hopefully with the help of a highly placed or influential person we know in a key government position. We fail to realize that this mentality is stifling our tremendous potential as urban planners in Nigeria. The reality is that government jobs for planners in the country are extremely limited, this connotes that not all graduates can become government employees. This situation applies to all practitioners as well. It is imperatives at this juncture to think beyond the box and begin to appreciate and grasp the many opportunities that exist in the society in order to be creators of values rather than just employees of the government. This is the crucial idea of entrepreneurship in action, and this is the focus of this paper as evidenced by the title, "Entrepreneurship Prospects and Challenges for the Nigerian Urban Planners.

Frank (2017), argued that the focus of urban planning in most western industrialized countries have shifted from land usage and infrastructure development to community development, revitalization, and sustainability; in order to meet these new challenges, urban planners have become more creative and business-minded. Based on these changes, He further argued that the curriculum of urban planning training institutions in the polytechnics and universities need to be updated to include the teaching of essential entrepreneurial skills in creating a new generation of entrepreneurial urban planners who can meet the ever-evolving needs of dynamics society. This argument is one that the Nigerian government

shares, as it has mandated entrepreneurship education for universities and polytechnics courses, including urban planning.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In addition to promoting self-employment and the reduction of poverty, entrepreneurship helps to generate the trained and semi-skilled labour force needed for national development. The Federal Republic of Nigeria in 2004 observed that "Integration of individual into a sound and effective citizen respect for the work of the individual, faith in mans' ability to make rational decisions, moral and spiritual values in interpersonal and human relations, social, cultural, economic, scientific and technological progress" The policy stipulated that programs that meeting the criteria for educational advancement in Nigeria must not just give "certificates," but also have a focus on practical skills. As a result, this will significantly help in curbing the rate of unemployment and unemployable issues.

Lack of start-up money is one of the main barriers keeping urban planners from achieving their entrepreneurial goals after graduation. According to [Drell,2022).], crowd funding is the method by which a new company raises initial funding from members of the public who stand to gain from the good or service the company offers. "These civic crowd funding starts-ups stir up local communities and businesses to raise money for community centers and urban beautification, giving citizens a sense of ownership and a stake in the future of their cities," Drell said, describing the crowd funding process from the perspective of urban planning. She mentioned "Patronhood," an American urban planning firm that effectively used crowdsourcing to launch a company that specialized in creating neighborhood business stands.

The planning firm "Spacehive" in the UK, that created a community centre in Wales, was another success story of crowd funding. In Nigeria, crowd funding is especially relevant because this will support our creative urban planners instead of waiting for the government to build the infrastructure desperately needed, due to fall short time and time again.

Parklets are a new environmental urban planning trend that is becoming popular in many American cities. [Patton, 2020]. These are little parks made out of unused parking spaces that are created within busy city streets; over 27 parklets have been developed in San Francisco, and 40 more are planned. The cost of these parklets ranges from \$15,000 to \$20,000, and their construction and upkeep are typically covered by surrounding businesses, who want to beautify their surroundings and, more importantly, draw in customers by offering them as places to sit.

The needs of intended planning clients that urban planning entrepreneurs are serving are crucial factor that must be taken into cognizance if they are to be successful. Peter (2014) argued that many urban planners involved in building projects become so focused on the building process that they often forget to consider the needs of their clients. Peter (2014) presented a case study of a Dutch urban planning company called "City Works" that is "bringing the art of listening back into the city planning process"

(Peter, 2014). City Works makes a concerted effort to bring together all relevant stakeholders before beginning a project. This allows the company to thoroughly understand the needs of these stakeholders in order to provide a project that truly satisfies these needs.

Urban planners are expected to be more proactive in bringing about community change. In addition to comprehending the demands of the community, by working with government planning agencies to create initiatives that improve people's quality of life (Lapointe, 2020). He used the Colombian city of Medellin as an example, where government planning authorities and urban planners collaborated to build inexpensive public transportation and housing for the city's large impoverished population. Indeed, Medellin was victorious in a competition held by The Wall Street Journal and as the most inventive city globally (Sierra, 2015).

3. NIGERIAN URBAN PLANNERS' CHALLENGES AND ENTREPRENEURIAL OPPORTUNITIES

3.1 Prospects

The field of urban and regional planning offers its practitioners numerous chances to pursue careers as entrepreneurs or as advocates for entrepreneurship. Among other roles, they are adept at playing the following ones:

- Planners as entrepreneurs—directly and actively contributing to urban development through participation in the provision of services and facilities.
- Create and carry out plans and programs that would foster an environment for entrepreneurship to thrive, towards achieving robust and sustainable urban development.

Urban planners can foster or make an impact in an atmosphere that is favorable for entrepreneurs to flourish in the following programme areas.

3.1.1. Housing

The private sector is mostly responsible for the supply of housing in most cities. About 80 percent of housing supply are through these efforts.

Entrepreneurs who work as real estate developers draft layout plans and drawings for properties, they want to develop for public sale utilizing sites set aside for housing. Therefore, governments use new regulatory measures to encourage private innovation and improve market functioning, by leveraging on the power of the private sector to develop urban space while utilizing market potential. A strong housing finance system and well-crafted private sector housing regulations encourage entrepreneurs to enter the housing production market, resulting in numerous value chain enhancements in other sectors which in turn have multiplier effects and impact on the economy and the social lives of the citizenry.

3.1.2 Climate Change

Rising sea levels, more frequent and intense storms, heavy rains, floods, droughts, heat waves, and other extreme weather occurrences are some of the consequences of climate change that nations of the world are experiencing. For instance, the floods that struck Nigeria in 2012 were the worst in recent memory, with catastrophic consequences for both economic infrastructure and human populations. Urban planning plays vital roles by for reducing the consequences of flooding, climate change, adapting to these changes, and building more resilient and sustainable societies. One of these is by creating plans for hazard mitigation, which foresee the consequences of flooding and landslides in the future safeguarding them so that the community can rebuild itself as needed. Planning is also essential for implementing policies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions by optimizing transportation and utilizing energy-saving initiatives.

3.1.3 Modernizing the City

Rehabilitating dilapidated buildings and infrastructure impoverished neighbourhoods could lead to a city's chain of entrepreneurship. This is especially true if the original plan is developed in inclusive, collaborative, and holistic way. Urban upgrading projects have been implemented some Nigerian cities through community contracting and labour-intensive public works programs. These have a tendency to raise the level of living in such communities, create jobs for locals, and foster entrepreneurship development.

3.1.4 The City Environment

The sustainability of the environment is essential to the qualitative adjustments required to improve cities and the urban degenerated lives in them. This is because cities that are environmentally sustainable are thriving and provide a high standard of living. These cities are more likely to draw the entrepreneurs and skills sets necessary for development and success. In UN-Habitat (2015) noted that solid waste management and sewage/waste water treatment as the main areas of concern for Nigerian urban environment management. Despite the efforts of the Federal Ministry of Environment and State governments on integrated waste management facilities, the problem of safely collecting and managing solid waste has persisted. In order to determine whether there has been progress or not, planners have a responsibility to keep an eye on the cities and provided the infrastructure where available. In the field of solid waste management, there are business prospects for consultants, garbage collection firms, waste collectors, recycling companies, composting companies, car dealers, and repairers, among others.

Table 1 presents groupings where urban planners can function as direct entrepreneur. It is worthwhile to note that planners have a very broad range of activities where they can contribute positively in stimulating economic and social development as entrepreneur.

Table 1. Planners as Entrepreneurs

No	Area/Field	Opportunities
1	Research and planning consultants	Consultants to prepare: • Master / structure plans • Detailed neighbourhood plan • Urban design plans e.g slum upgrading plans, • Facilitating the issuance of certificate of Occupancy to the residents. • Urban Research • Data bank eg, traffic counts etc • Data Management • Transportation e,g urban bus stops, school bus systems on behalf of PTA,s of the schools • Local Economic Plans • Risk Management • Energy Audit
2	Information Communication Technology (ICT)	• Gis Mapping • Development and use of software programs • Modelling
3	Property Development /Building and construction	• Comprehensive layout and development plans • Modernizing community markets on behalf of the Local Governments • Planning and design of business parks • Contractors • Investors • Facility managers
4	Energy Efficiency	• Consultants • Energy auditors • Investors • Promoters

5	City Landscaping/ Greening	• Landscape Designer • Horticulturists • Contractors • Facility managers

Source: Olowookere, 2017

3.2 Obstacles

There are several barriers that make it challenging to plug to business opportunities for urban planners as entrepreneur. Few of these challenges in relation to Nigeria environment are as follows:

3.2.1 Disabling economic environment

Nigerians are well aware of the multitude of issues that have beset the country for decades, ranging from a nearly non-existent pipe-borne water supply to an almost non-existent epileptic power supply horribly damaged roads to haphazard and unplanned housing estates; non-existent public transport systems to an economy that is constantly failing. Regretfully, the root cause of all these issues is the malignant corruption that has seriously infected the Nigerian economy. The crippling nature of the Nigerian economy serves as the biggest impediment for urban planners to succeed as entrepreneurs, requiring a great deal of integrity, creativity, and excelling in their fields.

3.2.2 Inactive information

A successful entrepreneur in the urban planning field cannot rely exclusively on the knowledge acquired in their colleges and universities, given the rapidly evolving urban context and the rapid advancement of new technologies. The use of technology to offer useful urban planning solutions is one area in which he must stay up to date on most recent innovations and trends in planning. His goal is to accomplish this by regularly reviewing the most recent research in urban planning. Additionally, he needs to attend seminars, workshops and go to training sessions and conferences both locally and internationally. Old planning techniques are ineffective for today's society; it is a fact. Every urban planning company that wants to survive must be innovative and proactive.

3.2.3 Financial limitations

Cash is the lifeblood of any organization; without enough of it, no matter how valuable and inventive a planning strategy is, it cannot be put into action. Raising the essential capital to successfully launch and maintain a business before income begins to trickle in is one of the biggest obstacles facing the aspiring urban planner. Borrowing from the bank is the most obvious approach to raise start-up cash, but this is a bad idea that can lead to a difficult-to-recover death trap. What feasible choices are left for the urban planning entrepreneur in the event that the bank loan is withdrawn as a source of startup funding?

3.2.4 Friends and Family:

Important startup capital may be acquired from friends and family in form of an equity investment in the business or a zero-interest loan. Unlike commercial banks, who are primarily concerned in earning an interest payment on their investment, this group of people is more interested in the success of the entrepreneur.

3.2.5 Collaborative Alliances:

In an interview conducted for this paper, an experienced urban planner entrepreneur strongly advocated that the best way forward for an urban planner with entrepreneurial aspirations is to team up with like-minded people in related fields such as architecture, building, and civil engineering, and establish a strong alliance with professionals who have complementary skill sets. To establish the new company, each partner would need to provide a specific amount of funding.

3.2.6 Business Angels

Affluent people known as "Angels" can also provide start-up funding by investing in ventures that have the potential to be extremely successful in exchange for an ownership share in the future business. Nonetheless, industrialized nations tend to use this strategy more frequently for raising funds. The urban planning entrepreneur from Nigeria can explore this option/window. Crafting a well-thought-out company plan and delivering compelling pitches to affluent potential investors are crucial to this method of effectively raising cash.

3.2.7 Venture Capital

This is an institutional approach to fundraising, akin to that of business angels. These organizations are typically founded by a group of affluent individuals to provide capital for ventures with significant risk and potential for large profits. In Nigeria, this approach is likewise not particularly popular, but certain companies—Unique Venture Capital Company Limited, Henshaw Capital Partners, Vetiva Capital, Osprey Investments Nigeria Limited, and Disok International Limited, for instance—are specialists in this field.

3.2.8 Crowd funding

This creative and relatively new approach to financing startups has emerged. "Crowd funding is the use of small amounts of capital from a large number of individuals to finance a new business venture," investopedia website, describes this phenomenon in details. Using social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, crowd funding leverages the simple accessibility of a large network of friends, family, and co-workers to spread the news about a new venture and draw in investors. By extending the pool of investors from which money can be raised outside of the conventional circles of owners, relatives, and venture capitalists, crowd funding has the potential to promote entrepreneurship. Crowd funding might be a useful tool for budding urban planning entrepreneurs in Nigeria to generate much-needed funds, as many people use social networking websites and make hundreds of friends through them.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following suggestions are offered to help urban planners to choose which of the business options in the previous discourse that will be is most appropriate.

In order to deliver great urban planning services that clients will find worthwhile; it goes without saying that you need to be exceptionally skilled in your field. Therefore, it is imperative that you choose a business endeavor that best utilizes the gifts that God has given you. An entrepreneur experiences severe physical, mental, and emotional strain when they launch a new company. This is due to the fact that it takes a variety of tasks, including organizing, promoting, obtaining funding, and putting in a lot of overtime, to establish a strong presence in the market. Despite the numerous challenges that entrepreneur faces, passion acts as the driving force that keeps them inspired to see their firm through to success. When you are passionate about something, going to work becomes enjoyable since you are engaged in something you enjoy. When a company meets the needs of a community and its members are ready and prepared to pay for it, it has succeeded in meeting those needs. According to Lapointe (2020), it entails getting out there and interacting with legislators, homeowners, and other stakeholders to talk about how to address the demands of a dynamic metropolitan environment.

For a business to succeed in the long run, it must be operated according to universally accepted ideals like fairness, honesty, and integrity. This is due to the fact that being dependable is a differentiator that clients will value both now and down the road for urban planners. The pricing strategy is determined by the urban planner; therefore, integrity becomes a necessary attribute. The planner must also make sure that skilled labour and high-quality materials are used at the most affordable cost when carrying out urban planning projects. It would seem that being cunning and doubtful fosters short-term financial success. If these flaws are exposed, the result is long-term loss and ultimately failure on both a personal and professional level.

5. CONCLUSION

The vast number of urban planners who graduate from Nigerian tertiary institutions each year cannot be satisfied by government planning jobs, so it is essential that Nigerian urban planners become more enterprising and start their own businesses. This includes forming partnerships with like-minded professionals in the complementary fields of architecture, building, and civil engineering. Nigeria has too many needs for urban planners to list, so there are plethora of opportunities for proactive and creative urban planners to flourish by offering state-of-the-art solutions to planning issues, whether they are related to the environment, housing, transportation, urban design, or economic development.

To be successful over the long term, urban planners must engage in extensive community interaction in order to grasp the demands of the community and provide highly valued planning services. When a

provider effectively explains to clients the possible advantages of a project, people are eager to pay for it.

Undoubtedly, there are numerous obstacles that prevent the Nigerian urban planner from realizing his entrepreneurial goals, as earlier discussed in this paper. But there is always a solution to a problem, and these challenges can typically be met if one is very inventive and open to learning from and consulting with like-minded people. Nothing worthwhile comes easily, as the adage goes.

It is impossible to overstate the contribution urban planners make to raising the standard of living for a nation's population. It is imperative that all Nigerian urban planners recognize their duty to use their God-given abilities to make a profit while also doing their part to improve the lives of their fellow citizens.

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