

# Contribution of Social Entrepreneurship to Sustainable Community Development in Zimbabwe. A Case of Virtuous Women Trust Operating in Harare

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## Abstract

The cross-sectional study was aimed at assessing the contribution of social entrepreneurship to sustainable community development in Zimbabwe using case study approach. The behavioural theory of social entrepreneurship and the community development theory guided the study. Mixed research methods were used guided by the pragmatist research philosophy. A case study was used with a sample of 80 participants selected from four farming communities in and around Harare using stratified random sampling and judgement sampling techniques. Data collection was done through questionnaires and interviews. Data analysis was done using SPSS version 25.0 for quantitative data, NVIVO and thematic analysis for qualitative data. The findings indicate that there is limited knowledge of social entrepreneurship concept amongst research participants. However, there was greater appreciation of the sustainable community development concept. The findings also revealed that there are some challenges for the social entrepreneurship ventures and the communities that retard sustainable community development in the country. The study recommends proper information dissemination channels, more capacity building initiatives through specific grants to support social entrepreneurship organisations and the crafting of an Act that guides social entrepreneurship ventures independent of other NGOs.

## Keywords

Social Entrepreneurship, Sustainable Development, Social Innovation, Poverty

## 1. Introduction

Social entrepreneurship<sup>1</sup> is gaining currency in contemporary discourses of international development and as such has become a focus for international development institutions such as the World Bank and United Nations Global Compact in order to make an impact in development of communities. At the same time the adoption of the social enterprise models to the provision of social services is increasingly becoming necessary, as the global economy is experiencing consistent unstable changes dating back to the 1990s when social enterprise was prominent in welfare policy discourse in Europe and the United States of America (USA) and it has similarly been embraced by other parts of the world like parts of Asia (Bidet & Eum, 2011; Defourny & Nyssens, 2010; Park & Wilding, 2013).

Social entrepreneurship has frequently been incorporated into policy makers' strategies for development and social entrepreneurship proving to have an important role to play in regeneration programs in Europe and regional development agencies seeking inclusive economic growth (Kerlin, 2006). It, however, appears that in the developing parts of the world, social enterprise is deliberated theoretically and makes of "general talk" and any forms of practical implementation are at the bottom of the pyramid (de Mendiguren Castresana, 2013: p. 248). Developing countries, a category in which the African continent falls experience significant economic, political and social challenges. Global poverty affects more than one billion people in the world (Roy & Roy, 2010). Generally, not-for profit organisations (NPOs) sponsored by organisations from the donor community and grants from the government have assumed a critical role in trying to assuage poverty. However, the sole utilization of these benefactor awards and government subsidies could not exterminate the social problems. Such a profoundly cutthroat climate demands that NPOs vigorously compete for donor attention. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Zimbabwe are registered as either a Private Voluntary Organization (PVO) or a Trust.

The United Nations defines community development as a cycle where local area individuals meet up to make an aggregate move and create answers for normal issues. Community development likewise is perceived to be a specialised area of operation that the International Association for Community Development (IACD) has defined as a training founded occupation and a scholarly control which advances active participation consensus based system, supportable improvement, financial freedom, privileges, uniformity as well as civic equity through strengthening, association and instruction of individuals living in the communities, regardless of, personality or interest in various environmental set ups be it rural or urban. Community development is resource building that improves the quality of life among residents of low- to moderate-income communities, where communities are defined as neighbourhoods or multi-neighbour-

<sup>1</sup>Social enterprises are businesses whose primary purpose is addressing a social or environmental challenge rather than creating profit for owners or shareholders (British Council, 2021).

hood areas (Ferguson & Dickens, 1999). Sustainable community development, on the other hand, refers to collaboration, communal progression and affluence distribution and or sharing borders around a variety of philosophies right about community initiatives as this is embodied by giving work to the burdened local area individuals (Doherty, Haugh, & Lyon, 2014). Social enterprise in this respect, may advance the mix of the socially distraught and barred into some type of nice business. Social change is therefore attained through the adoption of innovative, pattern breaking ideas and the utilisation of sound business strategies and skills (Frank & Muranda, 2016).

In this way, imaginative methodologies that give answers for these difficulties were fundamental and social entrepreneurship (SE) is by all accounts a successful methodology.

In the 1980s and 1990s, governments in sub-Sahara Africa, including Zimbabwe, increasingly downsized core public service operations, experimented with alternative ways to deliver services, and down-loaded many services from government to societies, civic society associations and people through the decentralization model (Kokor & Kroes, 2001). Local area development programs got considerable help from governments and some agencies of the donor community. In this manner, numerous governments advanced improvement projects that focused on ecological security, social reestablishment and revenue generation (Cohen & Prusak, 2001). Poverty alleviation, disease control, starvation and enthusiasm building amongst the poor were some of the objectives of such undertakings. Endeavours were coordinated to support residents' gatherings, networks, Christian organisations, and NGOs to look into the endeavours that basically require proletarian level management. Over the previous years, neighbourhood connections have reacted differently when it came to some fruitful community development projects that NGOs and governments started in the wellbeing, education, family planning, infrastructure development and agricultural space. As such this study focused on assessing the contribution of social entrepreneurship to community development in Zimbabwe.

A central concern however is that of the perception or limited knowledge that obscures the contribution of SE to development and the enhancement of cohesion in communities. The extensiveness and latitude of the mission of social enterprises and the rate at which social transformation is taking place in the country are the cause for much conjecture. The ability of governments to provide safety nets among exposed groups of society have diminished, resources mobilisation by NGOs and other charitable organisations has dwindled considerably. As such, communities have become the fundamental focus of intervention initiatives through creating home grown surviving mechanisms to deal with the subsequent crises. According to a Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee (ZIMVAC) 2019 report nearly 5.5 million people in rural areas and 960,000 people in urban areas needed humanitarian assistance through April 2020 (Republic of Zimbabwe, 2005).

Despite the growing interest in social entrepreneurship and its seductive appeal to government officials, businesspeople and civil society organisations, it is surprising that moderately few studies focused on its contribution within a theoretical and evidence-based framework. To a greater degree, there has not been much debate going on about the value created by social entrepreneurship and its contribution to sustainable community development. Therefore, in a bid to understand the contribution of local NGOs and PVOs to community development in Zimbabwe, this research sought to assess this phenomenon in the context of the Virtuous Women Trust<sup>2</sup>, a social entrepreneurship organisation whose members are dotted around Harare, Norton, Mt Hampden and Nyabira areas. The Trust believes in the Emergency Theory of social innovations of scale but there is a gap in measuring its contribution since its inception in 2012. More specifically, the study sought to; establish community understanding of social entrepreneurship and community development, establish the challenges faced by social entrepreneurship ventures in Zimbabwe, and to evaluate the contribution of social entrepreneurship to sustainable community development.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on two key theories namely Community Development Theory (CDT) and the Behavioural Theory of Social Entrepreneurship (BTSE). The CDT is viewed as the furthestmost real-world structure for societal entrepreneurs searching for sustainable transformation for everyone and the places of their habitation. It focuses on the centrality of vulnerable people in the process of overcoming externally imposed social problems (Tan, 2009). Several authors share some common views of community development as the association of the agencies of the community, the creating of local capabilities, and political activity for change. The work of community development was summed up by Pulles and Schiele (2013) as mutual solving of societal problems aggregate critical thinking, self-improvement, and empowerment.

The BTSE examines the elements which motivated the creation of the social venture within its context, the fundamental institutional dynamics, and configurations, in what way the typologies quantify civic impact, resources mobilisation and bringing around sustainable collective transformation. The behavioural philosophy of social entrepreneurship inspects the important factors that lead to social undertaking creation, the essential affiliation components and designs, and how these typologies measure the social impact, actuate resources, and acknowledge acceptable social change (El Ebrashi, 2013). The rationale behind social entrepreneurship is people's aims, which are trailed by setting off occasions and prompts identification of available opportunities. People's goals are the af-

<sup>2</sup>Virtuous Woman Trust, an umbrella body advocating and lobbying for and on behalf of Zimbabwean women in agriculture. The Trust regulates, supports, advocates and capacitates women farmers in both urban and rural areas. Its activities are guided by a philosophy that is inclusive and pro-poor.

tereffects of mentality, abstract standards and supposed behavioural control. These aims lead to setting off occasions, which are set off by information on business as usual, local area impact, business venture, social issues, political issues, individual components, situational factors, and so forth (El Ebrashi, 2013). These setting off events direct the association among aims and practices and assemble the consistency of goals to outline conduct. The exhibition of a societal venture is estimated through maintainable modifications made by friendly undertakings at local area platforms. Additionally, civic ventures centre around monetary sustainability and effectiveness.

## 2.2. Empirical Literature Review

There has been a rise in social entrepreneurship activities and their importance in addressing social challenges and on how they offer innovative, sustainable and effective social solutions. Dees & Economy (2001) states that social entrepreneurship has emerged as a contemporary issue in the social arena and is a concept well suited for this era and stages of development. Dees & Economy (2001) further alluded that there is no debate as to whether social entrepreneurs have a role to play in the development of any economy but rather, the crux seems to be “to what extent does social entrepreneurships add value to society”, (p. 15). Frank and Muranda (2016) argue that entrepreneurial activities spearhead the resolving of social issues, and the utilization of an income-earning business or strategies by a non-profit distributing organizations as ways of generating income for the purposes of supporting a social need when governmental and charitable efforts have failed in developing countries. Dees & Economy (2001) defends social entrepreneurship by stating that social entrepreneurships fill the gaps left void by the ineffectiveness, inefficiency, and the lack of sustainability of major institutions in providing social and economic changes. Mair and Mati (2006) concurred and are of the opinion that social entrepreneurship catalyses social change and addresses important social needs in a way that is not dominated by direct financial benefit for an entrepreneur or government institution. This somewhat broadly indicates that social entrepreneurship compares to a business model for individuals and communities from non-governmental organizations to fulfil social issues.

The ILO (2017) state the major social and economic problems plaguing the world such as social unrest, unemployment, economic woes, extreme poverty, and societal needs unmet by government and failure of market processes to solve these problems have given prominence to the emergence of social entrepreneurship for development. Social entrepreneurship, therefore, provides a sustainable solution to these social and economic issues (Mulgan & Landry, 1995). Social entrepreneurship is a relatively recent concept and a strong emerging phenomenon (ILO, 2017). ILO (2017) highlighted that in Europe and in North America, the phenomenon emerged in the crisis context during the late 1970s to tackle social exclusion. It was a response to unmet social needs and the limits of tradi-

tional social and employment policies that affected communities (Defourny & Nyssens, 2010). This phenomenon grew from voluntary associations with the will to provide employment to those individuals who were disqualified and could not be absorbed by the traditional labour markets and by some specific businesspersons whose business ideas had some distinct purposes socially. Worldwide, social entrepreneurship is being promoted by many networks and organisations who have been dispatching significant drives to recognize and support social businesspeople to bring about changes in communities. ILO (2017) argues that unlike a traditional business, the success of a social enterprise is measured by the social value it brings to the community. In this way, a social entrepreneurship is based on a view of addressing a social need and social entrepreneurs are not necessarily required to have large-scale ideas but produce a positive impact in societies.

Despite the immense development interventions in Africa, there is still a myriad of challenges that continue to render the continent one of the less favourable places for human habitation and survival (LSE, 2017). Africa is synonymous with civil war, plague, ignorance and poor infrastructures. However, despite these causalities numerous milestones in Africa have been achieved in the fight against poverty. LSE (2017) highlighted such milestones can be pointed out as; more Africans are going to school and accessing better infrastructures. The continental economic progression rate is auspicious and various fundamentals of participative governance have been embraced by many nations. LSE (2017) alludes that, considering where Africa is coming from and where it ought to go, this progress remains too limited to create a significant impact and emphasized that creating a meaningful change in Africa requires an accelerated pace characterized by determination, innovation and creativity. LSE (2017) states these challenges justify the existence of social entrepreneurs and views the unique ability of social entrepreneurship to mix social and economic objectives, makes it better suited to respond to the multidimensional nature of poverty in Africa. LSE (2017) views social enterprises as providing more appealing, systematic and integrated anti-poverty opportunities to Africa. The donations model, that has overwhelmed the antipoverty plan for quite a long time, has frequently neglected to achieve extremist changes in the monetary framework and it doesn't make enough positions further catching the poor in a horrible reliance cycle that continues for ages.

Africa is embracing social entrepreneurship as a way of promoting community development. Jafta (2013) explains that social entrepreneurship can help solve some of South Africa's developmental problems and address the lack of social cohesion. Jafta further elaborates that social entrepreneurship is imperative because sources, for example, the National Planning Commission's Diagnostic Report of 2011, the Social Cohesion Summit Report (Department of Arts and Culture, 2012), just as media reports and relaxed perceptions show that South Africa's formative issues are past financial aspects in nature as South Africa has perhaps the most inconsistent societies in the world. Community development re-

quires the involvement of social entrepreneurs who can mobilize community resources for the purpose of attaining their social mission (Dhesi, 2010). The political and socio-economic context in Zimbabwe has a profound bearing on the citizens' access to social services, goods and economic opportunities (Triegaardt & Kaseke, 2010). The ominous socio-political and economic environment portrayed by out-of-control inflation, the absence of financial development, the high and rising degrees of joblessness, food deficiencies and expanding levels of poverty have impacted adversely on the ability of citizens to access basic needs (National AIDS Council of Zimbabwe, 2012).

Social endeavour units on a very basic level vary from business ventures which look to produce business esteem (abundance creation) for people. Social enterprises seek to create social value which represents the sum of the value added to all members of the community less the value of the resources used. Lamentably, around is no reliable comprehension of societal worth formation inside the Social Entrepreneurship writings (Dees & Economy, 2001; Mair & Marti, 2006). Innovativeness, proactive behaviours, and risk management are important pre-determinants of social value creation (Weerawardena & Mort, 2006).

Singh's exploration in India uncovered that societal business visionaries made social value by affecting recipients within the accompanying manners: expanding consciousness stages on main points of contention, establishing enabling conditions for them, guaranteeing that their social and financial requirements were met and changing insights, attitudes, perspectives and practices, and even standards (Seelos & Mair, 2005). Van der Have & Rubalcaba (2016) elucidate the possibility of two focuses of development because of the fact that, a few social innovations that make Social Value additionally include financial trade for administrations joined to them, while different types of SI add to human and public activity and can't fulfil needs through the commercial centre. On the other hand, Lisetchi and Brancu (2014) suggest that "social advancement alludes to imaginative exercises and administrations that are spurred by the objective of meeting a social need and that are dominantly diffused through [existing or recently created] associations whose basic roles are social" (Lisetchi & Brancu, 2014: p. 89).

SIs that come up as a result of community collaboration, put together joint efforts work with respect to local area qualities and collaborate with definite recipients to viably tackle social issues and often requires engaging citizens and various individual and institutional stakeholders in the creation of innovative ideas and for effective implementation at all levels (Lisetchi & Brancu, 2014). Herrera (2016) examined the impact of SI in bridging the social divide caused by inequality and inequity. SI was affected by the cycle, administration, partners, and other accomplice associations engaged with the issue. Also, co-making socially creative arrangements was fundamental for tending to the social gap and accomplishing coordinated development. SI entails satisfying human needs that are currently unmet, creating change in social relationships (e.g., between local

communities and government), and contributing to the strengthening of recipients by expanding financial capacities and improving admittance to assets (Moulaert et al., 2005).

The wide array of activities accomplished by social enterprises include social and economic integration of the disadvantaged, excluded and low-income populations; education, health and social care; community services; ethical agriculture, horticulture and food processing; advocacy and activism; and environmentalism (Defourny & Nyssens, 2010). A social undertaking is a business venture whose mandate conglomerates income generation, profitability with the need to regard and sustain the operating and environmental surroundings together with its stakeholder network. This incorporates paying attention to putting resources into and effectively dealing with the patterns that are moulding the present world. It is an organisation that shoulders its responsibilities to be a good citizen both inside and outside the organisation, serving as a role model for its peers and promoting a high degree of collaboration at every level of the organisation (Deloitte, 2018).

While most researchers concur that what separates social endeavours from their business partners is the way that they join productivity and social/ecological objectives (Dacin, Dacin, & Tracey, 2011; Pless, 2012), what social business really involves is as yet the subject of warmed discussion. Specifically, there remains conflict among researchers regarding definitional limits and the measurements along which these endeavors ought to be recognized and examined (Dacin et al., 2011). The significance of social ventures has been acknowledged twice by the Nobel council (Doherty, Haugh, & Lyon, 2014). First time in 2006 when Muhammad Yunus won the Nobel Harmony Prize for his endeavours to decrease destitution in Bangladesh, invigorating private companies through microloans offered by the organization he established, Grameen Bank (Yunus & Jolis, 2007). The second was in 2009, when interestingly the prize in Economic Sciences was given to a lady, Elinor Ostrom, for her work about small communities which, rather than rivalling each other for similar assets, figured out how to coordinate to endure, something that invalidate the thought advocated by the Tragedy of the Commons (Doherty, Haugh, & Lyon, 2014), as per which the person is bound to confront struggle because of the shortage of resources. Ostrom's study showed that by and large, societies can flourish with the making of choices to determine irreconcilable situations, regarding the others and guaranteeing environmental sustainability, without relying upon governments or companies (Ostrom, 1999).

Social Entrepreneurship is characterised by Defourny and Nyssens (2010) an imaginative, social worth making activity that can happen inside or across the non-profit, business and public sectors. Martin and Osberg (2007) agrees with Nyssens' definition however communicates it in negotiating prudence when he affirms that social entrepreneurship is a phenomenon of applying business aptitude and market-based abilities in the non-profit sector. Public Innovator's (2008) point of view of social entrepreneurship is that it's anything but an act of



reacting to inefficiencies in the distribution of goods and services in the free market with extraordinary and monetarily supportable developments pointed toward taking care of social issues. Existing academic writings subsequently, proposes that social entrepreneurship should be viewed as the combination of business abilities and social abilities for the production and creation of social substance. The above definitions provided delineate two key characterizing attributes, that is, the use of business exercises to produce incomes and the quest for a societal assignment which is social value creation. Social entrepreneurship in this respect essentially is dissimilar from a secluded free enterprise that pursues turnover maximisation for its investors. Its eventual aim is to address social concerns such as poverty, vulnerability, inequality, incapacitation and unemployment.

### **3. Research Methodology**

#### **3.1. Research Philosophy and Design**

The study used a case study of Virtuous Women Trust because of the nature of the research problem under study that is affixed in realistic circumstances. Virtuous Women Trust operations are concentrated in the peri urban areas of Harare which made accessibility easy given the constraints imposed by COVID-19 pandemic. The study used mixed methods concurrent triangulation strategy which allowed for the comparison, integration and interpretation of data collected. The research was based on both positivism and interpretivism which offered the researchers an opportunity to observe around objectively as in positivism, at the same time allowing an opportunity to shape the research through perceptions observed and learnt during the research, which is in line with interpretivism (Creswell, 2014).

#### **3.2. Study Population and Sample**

The study was conducted within the city of Harare. The targeted population were the founders, trustees, management, and employees of social enterprises operating within the capital and grown-up residents of Harare, Norton, Nyabira and Mt Hampden farming communities, both of which experience similar social, financial and structural contests as well as poverty, redundancy and delinquency. These farming communities are the areas in which the selected social entrepreneur operates in. The population for this study encompassed all social enterprises, their owners, management, and their staff members located in Harare. The population also included experts in the field of social entrepreneurship and community development given their expert knowledge on the concept under study. The target population is estimated to be around 100 participants based on information provided by the Ministry of Labour and Social Services.

From a population of 100 participants, a sample of 80 for this study was determined using the acceptable Yamane Formulae of determination of sample size (Fox & Bayat, 2008) at 95% level of significance. The constitutive sample of 80 participants was split into 75 respondents for the questionnaires and five for

the interviews. The five interviews were meant to provide for at least one in-depth key informant interview in each of the four targeted farming communities plus an interview with the management of Virtuous Women Trust to augment data collected using the semi structured questionnaire. Purposive or judgmental sampling was chosen for this sampling method as a strategy in which particular persons or events were selected deliberately in order to provide important information that could not be found from other choices (Maxwell, 1996). Participants were grouped into stratus based on their farming area, in this case Harare, Norton, Mt Hampden and Nyabira. Management and employees of the Virtuous Women Trust were chosen based on their knowledge of the subject matter and interviews were administered on them.

### 3.3. Data Collection and Analysis Tools

The study made use semi-structured questionnaires which were pre-coded. The questionnaire was semi structured to allow for flexibility to collect more data as the respondent answers were not constrained by the structure of the instrument. The structured part of the questionnaire made use of a five-point Likert scale (5 for strongly agree, 4 for agree, 3 for neutral, 2 for disagree and 1 for strongly disagree) for ease of administration of the instrument. Quantitative data collected was entered and analysed in SPSS presented in descriptive narrations, graphs, tables, screen plots and pie charts. Qualitative data gathered through face-to-face in-depth interviews was analysed using NVIVO data analysis tool and thematic analysis.

### 3.4. Ethical Considerations

The researchers obtained university clearance letters to engage with the Women of Virtue Association and participants were assured and guaranteed the level of anonymity and confidentiality within their participation of the research. The use of aliases or pseudonyms for individuals or places was used to protect identities of participants. Participants were informed about the voluntary nature of the study as the key purpose of informed consent was to ensure that participants understood the risks and benefits entailed in participation and had the right to withdraw from the research at any moment without any explanation.

## 4. Research Findings

### 4.1. Demographic Characteristics of the Study Participants

The demographic information of the participants namely, gender, age, education, farm ownership and duration background characteristics of social entrepreneurs is summarised in **Table 1** below. The majority of the study participants were female who constituted 80.8% of the sample while male was 19.2%.

The age demographic variable shows that the majority of those who took part in the study were of a mature age hence facilitating the collection of essential data for the study. Literature on the relationship between a social entrepreneur's age and the creation of social value suggest that mature individuals are more

**Table 1.** Study participants' information.

Age Range	Land Holding Status		Farming experience (yrs)			Level of education	
	%	Range	%	Range	%	Level	%
18 - 30	15.4	Owned land	38.1	0 - 5	46.2	Secondary Education	7.7
31 - 40	38.5	Inherited land	33.3	6 - 10	30.8	Certificate level	34.6
41 - 50	34.6	Leased	19.1	11 - 15	3.8	National Diploma	23.1
51+	7.0	Rented	9.5	16+	19.2	Degree Level	26.9
-	-	-	-	-	-	Master's Degree	7.7
<b>Total</b>	100		100		100		100

socially oriented, perhaps being more established and aware of the problems in the world (Johnson, 2003).

In terms of education levels, the majority (34.6%) of the participants had attained Certificate level of education followed by those that had attained degree level of education which constituted 26.9%, whilst diploma holders constituted 23.1%. Ordinary level and master's degree holders were lowest at 7.7% each. There was no one who had a qualification that was below the ordinary level qualification. Thus, the respondents possessed the required skills of reading and writing and could understand or at least have an idea of the concept of social entrepreneurship and sustainable community development, aspects fundamentally important to the study. The analysis on the level of education showed that education absolutely impacts one's propensity to venturing into social entrepreneurship in all social and economic spheres. Cognitive Determinants of Social Entrepreneurship vary depending on the degree of education and economic development (Nicolás, Rubio, & Fernandez-Laviada, 2018).

Land is a critical resource and in this regard the majority (38.1%) of participants owned the land on which they were undertaking their activities followed closely by those who were operating at some inherited properties which constitute 33.3%. An insignificant 19.1% of the participants were leasing while 9.5% were running their social entrepreneurship activities on rented properties. This supports the notion expressed earlier on that social orientation of social entrepreneurs is based on one's maturity. These people would have acquired some resources to be able to venture into supporting social problems. The majority (46.2%) of the study participants fell in the 0 - 5 years farming experience, followed by those in the 6 - 10 years farming experience that constituted 30.8% of the study participants. Those that had been into the farming business for 16 years and above constituted 19.2% of the study participants whilst those that were into business for 11 - 15 years had the least percentage at 3.8%.

#### 4.2. Diagnostic and Reliability Test

Out of the 75 questionnaires distributed, 66 were returned completed showing a

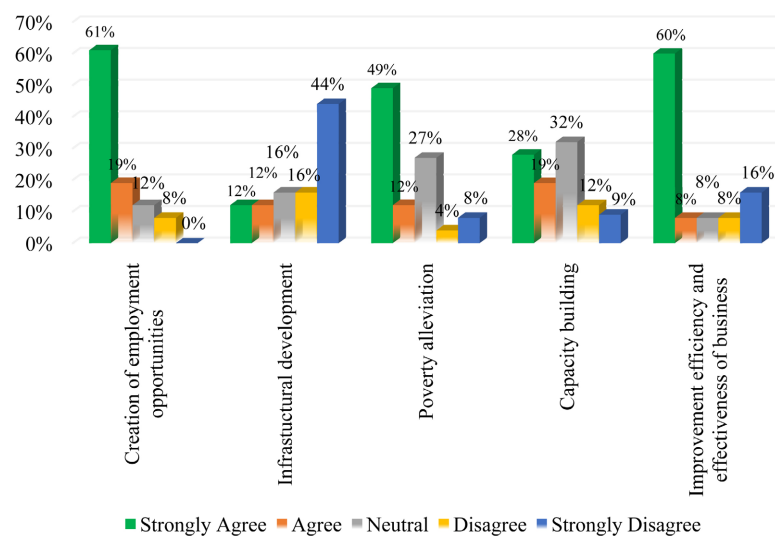
response rate of 88%. The high rate of response was attributed to the fact that the questionnaires were distributed through the Virtuous Women Trust whose database was utilised to reach out to more people given the Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) induced restrictions. For the interviews, 4 out of the 5 scheduled interviews were conducted representing an 80% response rate. A pilot study of the questions was performed to pre-test the questionnaire to enhance reliability. The combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches within a study was utilised because it generates more credible and persuasive conclusions about the research problem. These respondents possessed the required skills of reading and writing and could understand or at least have an idea of the concept of social entrepreneurship and sustainable community development, aspects fundamentally important to the study. To achieve validity in this research, methodology and data collection were carefully aligned and the interpretivism approach was used to reveal the different opinions on questions given by individuals in a social environment to understand the social impact on stakeholders.

### 4.3. Research Findings and Discussion

The research findings answering the respective research questions are discussed below. Given the dynamism nature of the study phenomenon, the questionnaire was designed with suggested answers to the study phenomenon. Respondents were asked to choose their response based on a Likert scale of I to 5, with 1 as strongly agree, 2 as Agree, 3 as neutral, 4 as disagree and 5 as strongly disagree.

#### 4.3.1. Community Understanding of Social Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Community Development

The evaluation of the contribution of the concept of social entrepreneurship is based on the perception of the participants of the phenomenon. The suggested responses were around the definition of social entrepreneurship and its key deliverables as depicted in **Figure 1** below.



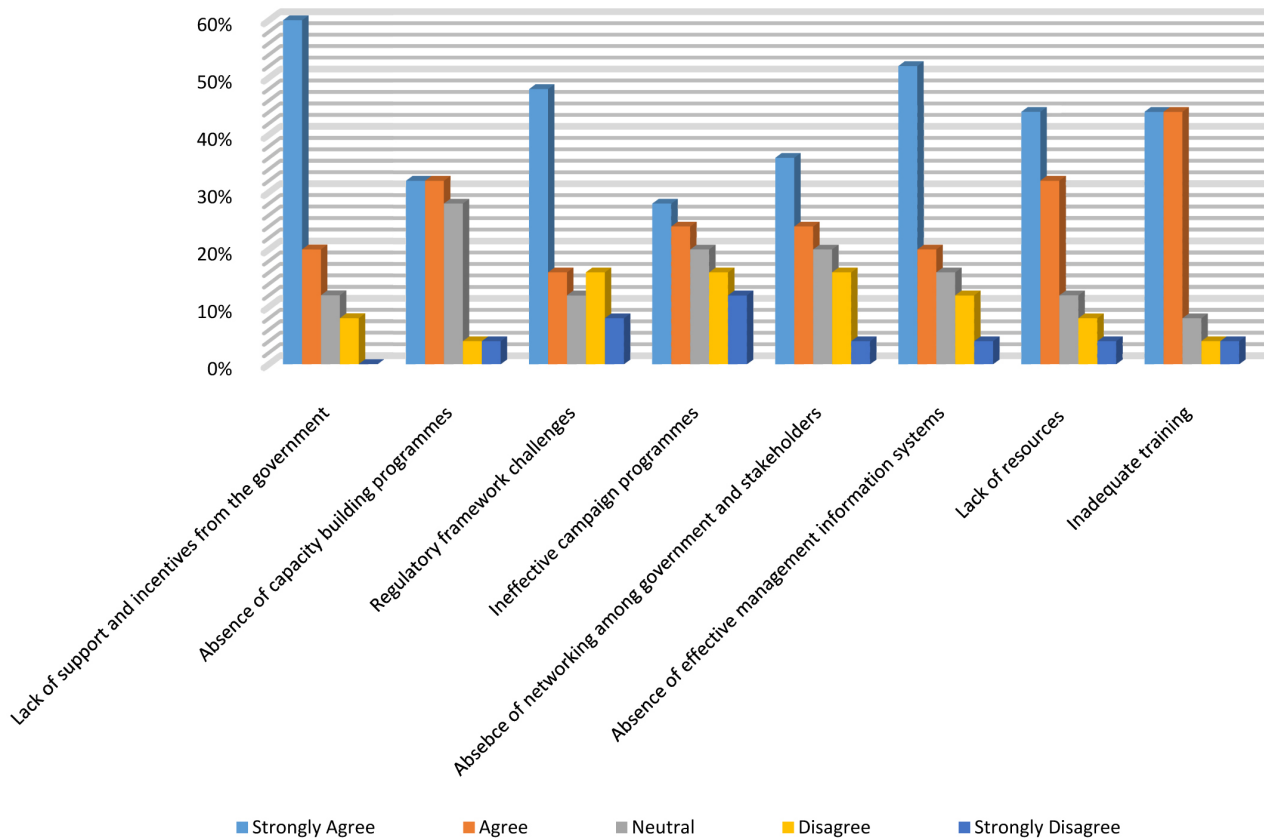
**Figure 1.** Understanding of sustainable community development.

The respondents showed varied levels of their appreciation of the concept with 73% strongly agreeing and 15% agreeing that a social entrepreneurship venture is a voluntary social and cultural organization. This is supported in literature by Defourny and Nyssens (2010) defines social entrepreneurship as an innovative, social value creating activity that can occur within or across the non-profit, business and public sectors, whilst 77% were of the opinion that the concept combines revenue growth and profit making with its environment and stakeholder networks consistent with the assertion by Martin and Osberg (2007) that social entrepreneurship is a phenomenon of applying business expertise and market-based skills in the non-profit sector. A total of 62% of the respondents were also of the view that it seeks to solve social problems as supported by the Public Innovators' (2008) perspective of social entrepreneurship. However, 55% disagreed that socially entrepreneurial activities blur the traditional boundaries between the public, private and non-profit sector. The results point to the Mair and Marti (2006); Zahra et al. (2009); Dacin et al. (2011) perspective that In the African continent, there is still no consensus on the meaning of the term social entrepreneurship.

On the participants' understanding of sustainable community development the participants were also given some guidelines around the definition of sustainable community development. The majority (61%) of the respondents were of the understanding that sustainable community development was creation of employment opportunities, whilst 60% strongly agreed that it is improvement of efficiency and effectiveness of business and 49% of them understood it as poverty alleviation. The majority (80%) of respondents believed sustainable community development was anchored on employment creation. However, 12% were neutral while 8% disagree with the notion that creation of employment is a measure of sustainable community development. A significant 44% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the notion that sustainable community development was to do with infrastructural development. The community's understanding of sustainable community development resonated with the earlier United Nations definition. It is viewed as an all-encompassing concept that is applied to the practices of civic leaders, activists, involved citizens, and professionals to improve various aspects of communities, typically aiming to build stronger and more resilient local communities.

#### **4.3.2. Establish the Challenges Faced by Social Entrepreneurship Ventures in Zimbabwe**

The participants were required to show how far they agreed with eight possible challenges as shown in Figure 2. From the responses, there was consensus among respondents with more than 50% of the respondents agreeing that all the stated challenges were indeed challenges that were faced by social entrepreneurship organisations in Zimbabwe. A combined 80% of the respondents agreed that social entrepreneurs lacked support and incentives from the government while 60% agreed that absence of capacity building programmes was a challenge for social entrepreneurship.



**Figure 2.** Challenges faced by social entrepreneurship ventures.

Regulatory framework was cited by 48% who strongly agreed and 16% agreed to it being one of the challenges whilst 28% strong agreed and 24% also agreed to absence of ineffective campaign programmes. A combined 72% of the respondents also agreed that absence of effective management information systems was hindering the successful implementation of the objectives of social organisations. Regarding lack of resources is one of the challenges while 44% strongly agree and 44% agreed that lack of training 76% agreed that it was a serious challenge for the phenomenon under study.

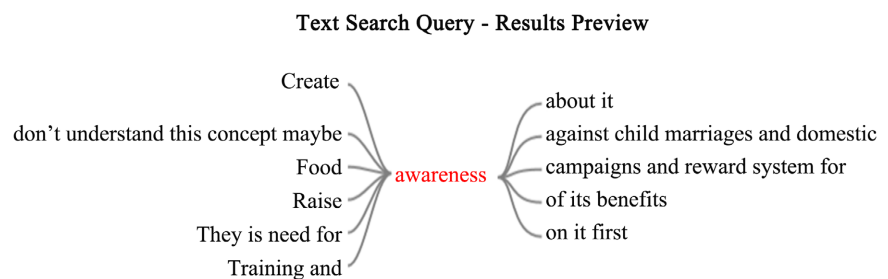
The above discussion is supported by literature where Dees (2007) adds that due to the lack of legislative frameworks, social entrepreneurs do not find the kind of support they need to blend socially and attain their objectives. This is also supported by Aidis (2005) who noted that there were four categories of institutional barriers to growth: formal institutions (laws, regulation and taxes); informal barriers (corruption and unfair competition); environmental context (lack of finance and purchasing power); and skills levels (human resources). Although the strength and impact of institutional barriers varies by the field of study, Aidis (2005) found that entrepreneurs strongly affected by any one of the institutional barriers noted above were often strongly affected by all of them. Inadequacy of training was pitched as the major challenge by 88% of the respondents. Training allows for the acquisition of new skills, sharpen existing ones, better performance,

increase productivity and creation of better leaders. Since organisations and communities are the sum total of what their employees and residents achieve individually, they should do everything in their power to ensure that employees and community members perform at their peak.

Further analysis of the data revealed that there was a positive correlation between lack of resources and inadequate training as shown by a Pearson correlation score of 0.663 significant at the 0.01 level. This relationship speaks to the fact that in the absence of resources, organisations cannot train their people and also without training people cannot perform to their maximum potential. Lack of resources is viewed by most participants as a deterrent to the attainment of social entrepreneurship organisation's objectives. It is also seen as a challenge hampering holding of awareness campaigns in societies to educate them about the existence of social entrepreneurship concept that can help them deal with most of the social ills that are bedevilling them individually and their communities at large. This was further supported by the word tree that was run in NVIVO as depicted in **Figure 3** below showing that the word "awareness" was the frequently used word from the in-depth interviews.

The second frequently used word is training, showing that there is need to create awareness about the concept of social entrepreneurship in the country, which can be done through trainings or awareness campaigns in all the ten provinces of the country.

Another correlation test was run on the relationship between lack of resources and lack of support and incentives from the government. There was a positive correlation between the two with a score of 0.55 which shows that there is lack of support from the government that is extended to social entrepreneurs and incentives to motivate upcoming and would be social entrepreneurs. *Dees (2007)* argue that due to the lack of legislative frameworks, social entrepreneurs do not find the kind of support they need to blend socially and attain their financial objectives. The same scenario obtains in Zimbabwe, social entrepreneurship organisations are registered as Private Voluntary Organisations (PVO) or as Trustees which suggest that they are not recognised as they are supposed to be and to then get the kind of support they require remains a challenge. The ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare where social enterprises fall under deals with well-established and mostly foreign based NGOs, hence government support in terms of legislation and incentives will remain skewed.



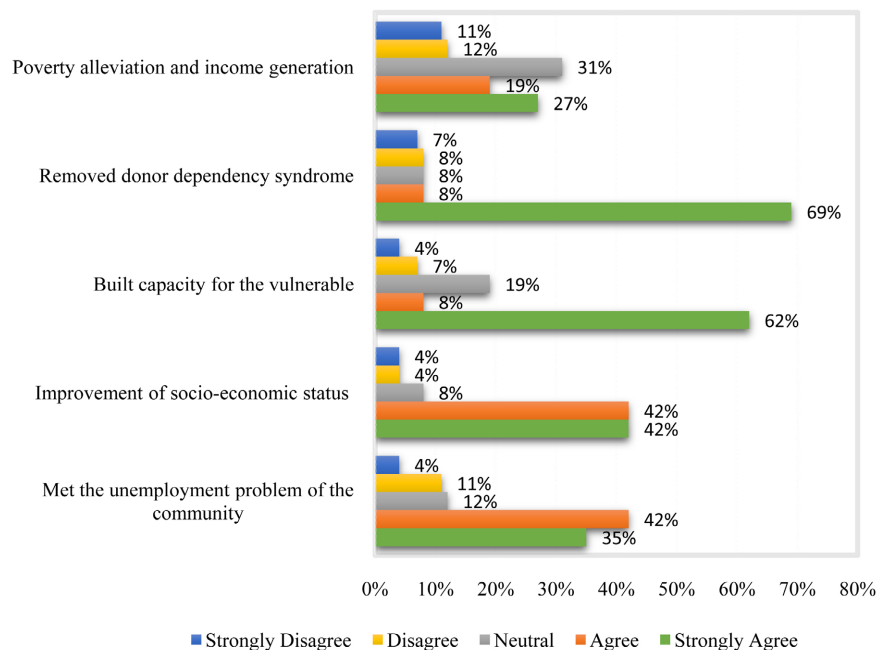
**Figure 3.** Results preview by text search query.

The final correlation test run established a positive correlation between capacity building for the vulnerable groups of the community and removal of donor dependents syndrome with a score of 0.55 at 0.01 level. This means that if capacity for the vulnerable groups is built or if the vulnerable groups of the societies are capacitated, donor dependents will be removed. Literature supports this relationship where social enterprises are deemed to provide more appealing, systematic and integrated anti-poverty opportunities to Africa. The charity model, which has dominated the antipoverty agenda for decades, has often failed to bring about radical reforms in the economic system and does not create enough jobs, further trapping the poor in a vicious dependency cycle that goes on for generations (LSE, 2017).

#### 4.3.3. Evaluate the Contribution of Social Entrepreneurship to Sustainable Community Development

The participants were required to signpost their level of agreement to an array of possible outcomes of social entrepreneurship as shown in **Figure 4** below.

Of the responses obtained, 84% of the participants agreed that Virtuous Women Trust had improved the socioeconomic status of people through creation of income generating projects whilst 77% agreed that the unemployment challenge of the community was met with 75% saying that social entrepreneurship had removed the donor dependency syndrome from the community. About 70% of the participants said that Virtuous Women Trust had built capacity of the vulnerable in their communities while 46% agreed that the organisation had alleviated poverty in the community. One of the outcomes of social entrepreneurship is to raise awareness of the problems faced by the communities therefore



**Figure 4.** Contributions of social entrepreneurship to sustainable community development.



creating networks for communities so that more people can participate in developing communities (Farmer & Kilpatrick, 2009). In a bid to identify and later raise awareness of the community's challenges, the study sought to identify these community challenges. The study identified drug abuse, unemployment, poverty and lack of capital to start sustainable projects, illegal farming, environmental degradation, early marriages, domestic violence, illiteracy, disempowerment, poor health facilities leading to high mortality rates and breakdown of pandemics as the key social problems bedevilling the communities under study.

The researchers also sought responses from the respondents as to what sort of help they had received from Virtuous Women Trust as individuals and also as a community in solving the cited social problems to which the following came out;

- Agricultural skills Project and business management skills have been imparted to them and they can now run their projects independently. These projects have created employment for the farmers and for the community members who are employed as part-time seasonal workers throughout the year.
- Virtuous Women Trust has facilitated networking with other women in agriculture where they are grouped in cluster of those that are in the same line of farming business. They get some specific training, and they also benefit from the experiences of others. Because of the trainings, most women (widows and single mothers in particular) are now self-sustained and can feed their families and able to take their children to school.
- Virtuous women have also contributed to individuals by facilitating access to funding and inputs. The organisation has arranged for piglets through its partners. These women farmers are given four pigs to start the project, so they feed the pigs until they start breeding. After breeding the farmer would take 4 piglets and pass on to the next farmer who will also do the same. Most women are now running piggery projects in Norton, Mt Hampden and Nyabira communities as a result.
- In terms of infrastructural development, the organisation has assisted in the maintenance of roads that access the farming communities and the establishment of irrigation schemes through its partners..

## 5. Summary and Conclusion

### 5.1. Summary of Findings

The study was premised on the need to evaluate the contribution of social entrepreneurship on sustainable community development in Zimbabwe. Such a focus was motivated by the realisation that social entrepreneurship presents a plethora of opportunities which, when exploited, will have the potential to lift millions of people out of the poverty trap in Zimbabwe. The study was guided by the behavioural theory of social entrepreneurship and the Community Development Theory (CDT). The review of literature exposed that while there have been studies on the contribution of social entrepreneurship on sustainable community

development, these studies have been few and largely focused on countries outside Zimbabwe. Mixed methods were used for this study guided by the pragmatist research philosophy. Systematic and purposive sampling techniques were used to select a sample of 80 participants from the Virtuous Women Trust.

The findings revealed that there were some challenges for the social entrepreneurship ventures and the communities that retards sustainable community development in the country. The findings are in sync with the views of many authors of the existing academic literature on social entrepreneurship and sustainable community development. Whilst the findings showed that there was limited to no understanding of social entrepreneurship, however there was greater understanding of the sustainable community development concept. The study, therefore, concludes that knowledge, skills, and motivation towards social entrepreneurship is scarce among members of the Virtuous Women Trust community, contrary to the views noted in literature.

The study also revealed that the social entrepreneurship ventures in Zimbabwe are facing several operational and regulatory challenges. Among them are lack of incentives and regulatory framework in the country, absence of capacity building programmes, ineffective campaign programmes, lack of resources and inadequate training. The study therefore concludes that in the absence of these impediments, social entrepreneurship could be a game changer in dealing with the social demands of communities in Zimbabwe. The study therefore concluded that social entrepreneurship contributes positively to community development. Thus, despite the existence of challenges for the government to capacitate social entrepreneurship organisations which in turn empower community members, social entrepreneurship could be a game changer in dealing with the social demands of communities in Zimbabwe.

## 5.2. Research Implications

There are implications that limited appreciation of the social entrepreneurship concept impedes its full utilisation for maximum results for sustainable community development. The avalanche of sustainable community development knowledge presents a serious challenge to the concept itself. It has the implication that policy makers and policy beneficiaries have knowledge of what must be attained in their communities but without the knowledge of available opportunities to the attainment of the desired goals. The platforms for social entrepreneurship present numerous opportunities for dealing with the various social problems highlighted above such as drug abuse, poverty, and domestic violence if awareness of the concept is upped through the relevant ministry and other supporting government departments. Social undertakings assume a vital role in communities by setting out new open opportunities in employment creation, revenue generation, upgraded arrangement of administrations, expansion in local revenue maintenance and engaging the community in development programmes.

The contribution of social entrepreneurship as a concept can only be realised

if there are awareness campaigns and government support to bring about social entrepreneurship initiatives into business activities and the nation at large. There is need for an awareness drive which begins by establishing fundamental policy frameworks that promote the social entrepreneurship concept and its general acceptance as a business model that can lead to the attainment of sustainable community development and in turn Sustainable Development Goals. Thus, the Virtuous Women Trust as the social entrepreneurship venture are encouraged to create more awareness through trainings and workshops, capacitate more women to be self-sufficient, and to engage more with members of the community. On its part, the government is encouraged to avail more and proper information dissemination channels, more capacity building initiatives, have specific grants to support social entrepreneurship organisations, and to craft an act that guide Social Entrepreneurship Ventures independently

### 5.3. Suggestions for Future Research

The research focus was limited to women in agriculture amongst many members of the vulnerable groups. Also, the research was delimited to four farming communities of Harare, Norton, Mount Hampden and Nyabira due to resource constraints. This research could be extended to other members of the vulnerable groups such as the disabled and children. Also, the contribution of social entrepreneurship to community development could be evaluated in other communities where other forms of livelihoods are taking place other than farming.

### Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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## Appendix: Clearance Letter from ALMA



24/02/2021

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### RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT ACADEMIC RESEARCH STUDY

#### TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to confirm that **Mr. Erasmus Masara, Student No. N01911473G**, is a registered student at Africa Leadership and Management Academy (ALMA), an affiliate college of the National University of Science and Technology (NUST), under the MSc. in Governance and Leadership academic programme. His proposed research met all the requirements as specified in the Africa Leadership and Management Academy regulations, policies and guidelines and therefore approved by the ALMA Graduate Academic Committee. His research topic is: **Contribution of Social Entrepreneurship to Community Development in Zimbabwe. A Case of Virtuous Women Trust Operating in Harare.**

The research proposal conforms to the ethical principles as outlined in ALMA Research Ethics Code. Permission is hereby requested for **Mr. Erasmus Masara** to carry out the research as described in the approved proposal topic. ALMA sincerely requests you to assist the student in any way possible for the success of the study.

If you need further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Pindai Sithole', is written over a horizontal line.

Pindai Sithole, PhD (Programmes Coordinator, ALMA).

Mobile: 0773051212

E-mail: [sitholepindai@gmail.com](mailto:sitholepindai@gmail.com)