Gusau Journal of Economics and Development Studies (GUJEDS),
vol 6, no 1 August, 2025 ISSN: 2786-9695 (Print) 3027-1126 (Online)

ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP ON POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION AND PEACEBUILDING IN THE NIGER DELTA REGION OF NIGERIA

DOI: https://doi.org/10.57233/gujeds.v6i1.11

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Abstract *Post-conflict reconstruction is vital for achieving stability in violence-affected communities. Social entrepreneurship contributes by providing skills training, livelihood support, and community development, fostering economic recovery, strengthening social cohesion, engaging youth, and reducing conflict drivers. This study evaluates the influence of social entrepreneurship on post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding in Nigeria's Niger Delta, supported by Social Capital Theory. A survey research design was implemented across Bayelsa, Delta, and Rivers States, employing descriptive statistics and questionnaires. The analysis employed Cronbach's alpha coefficient (0.86). A total of 354 respondents, representing 82% of a population of 14,804,515, were selected using simple random, purposive, and snowball sampling techniques, based on Yaro Yamane's sample size formula with a 5% margin of error. Findings indicated that social entrepreneurship significantly contributed to economic recovery in the Niger Delta [$F = (9, 344) = 34.953$, $p < .05$]. It also revealed that social enterprises positively impact peacebuilding and social cohesion in post-conflict areas [$F = (9, 344) = 37.440$, $p < .05$]. The study showed that social entrepreneurship initiatives have impact on sustainable development in post-conflict regions [$F = (9, 344) = 31.552$, $p < .05$]. It is concluded that social entrepreneurship drives economic recovery, peacebuilding, and sustainable development in the Niger Delta by fostering innovation and strengthening social cohesion. Programmes such as PIND and NDYEP further support this role by boosting agricultural productivity, creating jobs, and improving access to essential services. It is recommended that government should ensure that social entrepreneurship is integrated into regional development plans to support sustainable recovery and peace, while community peacebuilding structures like*

stakeholder networks and PREVENT teams should be institutionalised to strengthen dialogue and conflict mediation.

Keywords Niger Delta, Nigeria, peacebuilding, post-conflict reconstruction, social entrepreneur ship

Introduction

Armed conflicts and social unrest pose significant challenges to global peace, human development, and economic progress. Traditional state-led interventions and external donor programmes have proven insufficient, leading to a growing interest in innovative, community-based approaches like social entrepreneurship. Social entrepreneurs prioritise social value creation over profit maximisation, mobilising local resources, empowering vulnerable groups, and promoting inclusive economic participation. In countries recovering from conflict, such as Rwanda, South Sudan, and Sierra Leone, social enterprises have been instrumental in rebuilding livelihoods, restoring trust, and providing employment opportunities for youth and women. In Nigeria, the Niger Delta region, social entrepreneurs and community-based organisations have emerged to fill the gap left by government and corporate actors, focusing on skills acquisition, microfinance, women's empowerment, agricultural development, and environmental restoration. Understanding this relationship is essential for designing effective peacebuilding strategies that are locally driven, sustainable, and inclusive.

Post-conflict societies in Nigeria's Niger Delta face significant social, economic, and institutional challenges, including unemployment, poverty, weak governance, and social fragmentation. Despite the cessation of large-scale hostilities, the region still faces recurring tensions, limited economic opportunities, and insufficient progress in reconstruction and peacebuilding. Social entrepreneurship has emerged as an innovative solution, but empirical evidence on its impact on post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding remains scarce. Understanding the influence of social entrepreneurship can offer valuable insights for policymakers, practitioners and community leaders seeking sustainable peacebuilding strategies in fragile contexts.

This study explores the role of social entrepreneurship in rebuilding conflict-affected societies and sustaining peace in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. It provides empirical evidence on the relationship between social entrepreneurship, post-conflict reconstruction, and peacebuilding, advancing theories like Resource Mobilisation Theory and Social Capital Theory. The study offers policy guidance for government agencies, development partners, and peacebuilding institutions on inclusive strategies for post-conflict reconstruction, particularly targeting youth empowerment, women's economic

participation, and community development. It also emphasises the practical role of social entrepreneurs as change agents, promoting economic inclusion and social healing. The research is academically relevant, linking entrepreneurship studies with peacebuilding scholarship, and can be used to explore comparative or longitudinal impacts of social entrepreneurship on peace and reconstruction across other post-conflict regions.

This study examines the role of social entrepreneurship in post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The research is confined to Delta, Rivers, and Bayelsa States, which have experienced post-conflict recovery challenges due to environmental degradation, resource control struggles, and socio-economic marginalisation. The study focuses on three key constructs: social entrepreneurship, post-conflict reconstruction, and peacebuilding. It uses a quantitative research design to collect data from 30 social entrepreneurs, beneficiaries, and community stakeholders involved in post-conflict development projects. The study is based on social entrepreneurship activities and peacebuilding interventions implemented between 2015 and 2025, allowing for objective measurement and generalisation of findings.

Objectives

i. To assess the contribution of social entrepreneurship to economic recovery in Niger Delta region.
ii. To determine how social entrepreneurship influences social cohesion and peacebuilding efforts after conflict in Niger Delta region.
iii. To evaluate the impact of social entrepreneurship activities on sustainable community development in post-conflict settings in Niger Delta region.

Research Questions

i. How does social entrepreneurship contribute to economic recovery in Niger Delta region?
ii. In what ways does social entrepreneurship influence peacebuilding and social cohesion after conflict in Niger Delta region?
iii. What is the impact of social entrepreneurship initiatives on sustainable community development in post-conflict settings in Niger Delta region?

Hypotheses

H_{01}: Social entrepreneurship does not have significant contribution to economic recovery in Niger Delta region.

H_{02}: Social entrepreneurship does not have significant influence on peacebuilding and social cohesion after conflict in Niger Delta region.

H_{03}: Social entrepreneurship initiatives have no significant impact on sustainable community development in post-conflict settings in Niger Delta region.

Literature Review

Social Entrepreneurship

Social entrepreneurs are individuals who use business strategies to solve social problems and make a difference. They prioritise societal benefits over profits, often using ethical methods (Hayes, 2025). Social entrepreneurship combines business and social good. It involves starting a business with the primary aim of addressing social issues and creating sustainable change. Social entrepreneurs are driven by their passion for a cause and design their businesses to both make money and benefit society (Coursera, 2025). Social entrepreneurship involves structuring a firm to address certain social and environmental issues, encompassing both nonprofit entities and for-profit social businesses (Kumar, 2022). A social entrepreneur is a business leader who identifies opportunities to address significant societal challenges.

Whether through environmental protection, the empowerment of marginalised communities, or philanthropic initiatives, these innovators demonstrate that success transcends mere financial gain, focusing instead on tangible societal impact (Fallon-O'Leary, 2025). Social entrepreneurship is a mission-driven approach that tackles social, environmental, and cultural challenges. It employs creativity and resourcefulness to develop sustainable solutions, with a focus on creating lasting change by addressing root causes rather than just symptoms (Mums & Co, 2025). Across various definitions, social entrepreneurship is consistently described as an approach to solving societal problems by combining business principles with a commitment to social impact. These definitions collectively underscore key elements such as innovation, passion, and the pursuit of sustainable solutions. Social entrepreneurs are commonly depicted as visionary and motivated individuals who seek to drive meaningful and lasting change within their communities.

However, differences exist among the definitions. Some place greater emphasis on whether social entrepreneurship should operate within nonprofit or for-profit models, while others focus on specific target areas such as environmental protection, poverty reduction, or the empowerment of marginalised groups. Additionally, the tone of these definitions varies some adopt a formal, analytical perspective, whereas others present a more motivational or inspirational outlook. Further distinctions can also be seen in how broadly social entrepreneurship is defined. Certain interpretations view it as confined to particular sectors, while others perceive it as a concept applicable across multiple fields. Moreover, the importance placed on financial sustainability differs: some definitions highlight it as a fundamental component of success, while others make only minimal reference to it.

Post-Conflict Reconstruction

Post-conflict reconstruction is a multifaceted process aimed at rebuilding societies after war, focusing on governance, infrastructure and community reconciliation, with the ultimate goal of achieving durable peace and stability (Fiveable, 2024). Post-conflict reconstruction is a multifaceted process that aims to stabilise a postwar society by

addressing military, political, economic, and social concerns. It seeks for peace and development, but does not promise a conflict-free future, and frequently entails reconstructing infrastructure, the economy, and social structures (Tzifakis, 2025). Post-conflict reconstruction involves rebuilding society after war or conflict, extending beyond physical infrastructure to establish lasting peace and sustainable futures. This comprehensive process focuses on fostering stability and prosperity for affected communities (Sustainability Directory, 2025).

Post-conflict rebuilding is a complex process with many parts that are all connected. Its goal is to create lasting peace by addressing security, politics, the economy, justice, and resource challenges in a coordinated way (New Partnership for Africa's Developent (NEPAD) Secretariat, 2005). Post-conflict reconstruction (PCR) is a process that connects economic growth, especially structural change and industrialisation based on the relationship between the state and the market, with security. It looks at how conflict affects statehood and stresses the need to rebuild and strengthen state, social, and economic structures after conflict (Ikpe, 2020).

From the above, definitions of Peace Consolidation and Reconstruction (PCR) share similarities in recognising it as a multifaceted process aimed at restoring post-conflict peace, stability, and prosperity across governance, economy, and society. However, they differ in focus, with some prioritising economic elements such as structural change, while others highlight social and political aspects. Variations also exist in the emphasis on the involvement of external actors and the time perspective, with some definitions advocating for community-based approaches versus broader global stakeholder engagement and differing views on immediate versus long-term recovery. Therefore, Post-conflict reconstruction is the process of fixing a community after war by improving government, economy, and social life to create lasting peace.

Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding is a comprehensive, non-violent process that aims to meet the fundamental needs of all parties involved, establishing sustainable systems to prevent future conflicts and promote lasting harmony (Pollack, 2025). Peacebuilding transforms conflict-ridden relationships into stable peace by resolving underlying issues through reconciliation, rebuilding institutions, and restructuring politics and economics (Malek et al., 2013). Peacebuilding entails taking numerous activities to prevent conflict recurrence, promote peace, and support development by addressing conflict causes, improving conflict management capacities, and implementing research-based methods applicable to particular scenarios (Alliance for Peacebuilding, 2023).

Peacebuilding refers to helping individuals in conflict to stop direct violence and create conditions for lasting peace and social change. It addresses 'structural violence', which encompasses the inequalities and conflicts instigated by current institutions or processes (International Alert, 2025). Peacebuilding, as per UN definitions, is about reinforcing peace post-conflict, preventing future

conflicts, and fostering sustainable peace through capacity-building and development initiatives (Peacebuilding Support Office, 2010). Thus, Peacebuilding can be defined as a nonviolent way to make peace last by dealing with the fundamental causes of conflict and encouraging everyone to get involved. It empowers local leaders, enhances communication, and supports infrastructure and financial development for peaceful conflict resolution.

From the foregoing, all definitions of peacebuilding as above agreed on it being a post-conflict, non-violent process focused on creating lasting peace through resolving underlying issues and promoting sustainable development. However, distinctions arise in aspects like addressing structural violence, the involvement of international organisations such as the UN, and tackling inequalities. Definitions also vary in their scope, with some concentrating on interpersonal conflict resolution and others considering broader societal, political, and economic factors. Furthermore, the emphasis on prevention while healing past wounds varies among definitions.

Theoretical Framework

Several theories abound, which can be used to underpin the assessment of the impact of social entrepreneurship on post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding in the Niger delta region of Nigeria. However, this study adopted the social capital theory as the framework of analysis. Social capital is the value derived from positive connections between people, focusing on relationships, knowledge, and individual brands. The concept was first introduced by Pierre Bourdieu in 1986, James Coleman in 1988, and Robert Putnam in 2000 (Tsounis & Xanthopoulou, 2025). The social capital theory explains how social relationships, trust, and shared norms contribute to collective action and social development. Scholars have recently given it further look, especially in developing nations like Nigeria where it is regarded as a crucial catalyst for inclusive growth and social innovation. Social capital enhances cooperation and mutual support, leading to social and economic progress when people trust each other and share common values (Okoroafor *et al*., 2025).

Among the basic assumption of the social capital theory are: The theory assumes that networks foster mutual benefits, as interactions and cooperation lead to trust and shared norms within groups. The structure and quality of these social networks significantly impact access to opportunities and support (Kenton, 2025). In addition, it is assumes that social capital encompasses the structure and quality of social relationships, which yield benefits for individuals and society. It posits that social connections are valuable resources that provide access to information, support, and opportunities, serving as assets to achieve various goals (Tsounis & Xanthopoulou, 2025).

Also, the social capital emphasises that trust and reciprocity enhance societal bonds. When individuals trust one another and engage in mutual assistance, communities grow more cohesive and productive. Reciprocity bolsters relationships and social stability, while trust and shared norms foster effective cooperation among individuals (Ari et al., 2024). It again assumed that social ties significantly impact success, with

individuals possessing strong networks often achieving better social, economic, or political outcomes than isolated individuals. In connected communities, collective action becomes easier, as strong social bonds facilitate cooperation for the common good (Holt-Lunstad, 2024). Social connections significantly influence social capital, with relationships characterised by trust, respect, and shared goals being particularly valuable. Social capital functions at multiple levels including individuals, groups, organisations and nations and plays a crucial role in societal development. Rich social networks are linked to improved governance, economic growth, and overall stability.

Social capital theory provides a useful framework for understanding how social relationships and networks contribute to rebuilding societies affected by conflict. The theory assumes that trust, cooperation, and shared values among individuals and groups serve as vital resources that can be used to achieve collective goals. In post-conflict settings like the Niger Delta, where mistrust and social division often exist due to years of violence and marginalisation, rebuilding social ties becomes an essential part of the peace process. Social entrepreneurship thrives in environments where people can collaborate and share knowledge, resources, and opportunities.

From the lens of Social Capital Theory, social entrepreneurs act as connectors they link divided communities, create networks of trust and promote cooperation between local residents, private investors, and government agencies. By doing so, they help transform fragmented social relationships into productive partnerships that support reconciliation and development. Furthermore, the theory helps explain how communities in the Niger Delta can leverage social capital to restore confidence, promote dialogue, and foster inclusive growth. When trust and collaboration increase, the level of violence and suspicion tend to decline, which creates a more stable environment for entrepreneurial ventures to succeed. Thus, Social Capital Theory highlights that post-conflict reconstruction is not only about rebuilding physical infrastructure but also about restoring social relationships and mutual trust, which are essential for lasting peace and sustainable development.

Notwithstanding its usefulness, some of the criticisms have been leveled against the social capital theory, and they include: It frequently overlooks power disparities, as shown in the Niger Delta, where elites may prioritise their own interests over underprivileged communities. The approach emphasises the good characteristics of social networks while disregarding their potential to increase community divisions. Furthermore, it implies that confidence is simply restored, ignoring the complicated reality of conflict-affected countries. Structural challenges, such as poverty and poor governance, demand action beyond social media. Nonetheless, the theory is still useful for emphasising the social dimensions of peacebuilding and the role of trust in rehabilitation efforts.

Methodology

A survey research design was used, using descriptive statistics and questionnaire to gather data on the assessment of the impact of social

entrepreneurship on post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding in the Niger delta region of Nigeria, as well as towards developing actionable policy recommendations to improve the situation distributed across three States, including Bayelsa State, Delta State and Rivers State. The study used simple random, purposive and snowball sampling techniques to select 354 respondents representing 82% from a total population about 14,804,515 adopting Yaro Yamane sample size formula with a 5% margin error across the three States in the region. The target population size was determined based on its representation of key stakeholders across State earlier mentioned. A Likert-scale questionnaire was developed analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics (mean and standard deviations, and regression analysis) and Cronbach's alpha coefficient, with potential biases acknowledged as limitations.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Research question 1: How does social entrepreneurship contribute to economic recovery in Niger Delta region?

Table 1: Contribution of social entrepreneurship to economic recovery in Niger Delta region

Issue Raised	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
Social enterprises in my community provide innovative solutions to social and economic problems.	354	2.75	1.130	Agreed
Social entrepreneurs create employment opportunities for local residents.	354	3.02	.984	Agreed
Social entrepreneurship initiatives encourage community participation in development projects.	354	2.86	1.050	Agreed
The activities of social enterprises have improved access to essential services (e.g., education, healthcare).	354	2.90	.988	Agreed
Social entrepreneurs reinvest profits to address community needs.	354	2.66	1.189	Agreed
Social enterprises empower vulnerable groups such as women and youth.	354	2.85	1.023	Agreed
Social entrepreneurship promotes collaboration among local stakeholders.	354	2.68	1.128	Agreed
Social entrepreneurs have enhanced skill development and capacity building in the community.	354	2.63	1.135	Agreed
Local social enterprises contribute to poverty reduction in the Niger Delta.	354	2.56	1.268	Agreed
Social entrepreneurship fosters innovation in addressing post-conflict challenges.	354	2.51	1.296	Agreed
Grand Total		2.74		

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 1 presents the responses of the respondents on contribution of social entrepreneurship to economic recovery in Niger Delta region. The first item in the table has the mean of 2.75which implies that the respondents agreed that social enterprises in their community provide innovative solutions to social and economic problems. The second item in the table has the mean of 3.02 which implies that the respondents agreed that social entrepreneurs create employment opportunities for local residents. The third

item in the table has the mean of 2.86 which implies that the respondents agreed that social entrepreneurship initiatives encourage community participation in development projects.

The fourth item in the table has the mean of 2.90 which implies that the respondents agreed that the activities of social enterprises have improved access to essential services (e.g., education, healthcare). The fifth item in the table has the mean of 2.66 which implies that the respondents agreed that social entrepreneurs reinvest profits to address community needs. The sixth item in the table has the mean of 2.85 which implies that the respondents agreed that social enterprises empower vulnerable groups such as women and youth. The seventh item in the table has the mean of 2.68 which implies that the respondents agreed that social entrepreneurship promotes collaboration among local stakeholders.

The eighth item in the table has the mean of 2.63 which implies that the respondents agreed that social entrepreneurs have enhanced skill development and capacity building in the community. The ninth item in the table has the mean of 2.56 which implies that the respondents agreed that local social enterprises contribute to poverty reduction in the Niger Delta. The tenth item in the table has the mean of 2.51 which implies that the respondents agreed that social entrepreneurship fosters innovation in addressing post-conflict challenges. The grand mean of the table is 2.74 which imply that the respondents agreed that social entrepreneurship contributed to economic recovery in Niger Delta region.

Research question 2: In what ways does social entrepreneurship influence peacebuilding and social cohesion after conflict in Niger Delta region?

Table 2: How social entrepreneurship influences social cohesion and peacebuilding efforts after conflict in Niger Delta region

Issue Raised	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
Social entrepreneurship activities have contributed to rebuilding damaged infrastructure in my area.	354	2.58	1.125	Agreed
Economic conditions in post-conflict communities have improved due to social enterprise initiatives.	354	2.58	1.140	Agreed
Small businesses have revived as a result of social entrepreneurship interventions.	354	2.73	1.024	Agreed
Access to financial opportunities has increased through social entrepreneurship projects.	354	2.86	.966	Agreed
Social enterprises have helped to restore basic public services such as schools and clinics	354	2.76	1.096	Agreed
Social entrepreneurship has improved local investment and business confidence.	354	2.83	1.045	Agreed
Social enterprises promote sustainable livelihood opportunities for residents.	354	2.83	1.077	Agreed
The standard of living in my community has improved since the introduction of social enterprise activities.	354	2.76	1.171	Agreed

Social entrepreneurship encourages partnerships that support reconstruction efforts.	354	2.95	.853	Agreed
Community members perceive social enterprises as vital actors in post-conflict economic rebuilding.	354	2.44	1.268	Disagreed
Grand Total		2.73		

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 2 presents the responses of the re spondents on the ways that social entrepre neurship influence peacebuilding and social cohesion after conflict in Niger Delta region. The first item in the table has the mean of 2.58 which implies that the respondents agreed that social entrepreneurship activities have contributed to rebuilding damaged infrastructure in their area. The second item in the table has the mean of 2.58 which implies that the respondents agreed that economic conditions in post-conflict communities have improved due to social enterprise initiatives. The third item in the table has the mean of 2.73 which implies that the respondents agreed that small businesses have revived as a result of social entrepreneurship interventions. The fourth item in the table has the mean of 2.86 which implies that the respondents agreed that access to financial opportunities has increased through social entrepreneurship projects. The fifth item in the table has the mean of 2.76 which implies that the respondents agreed that social enterprises have helped to restore basic public services such as schools and clinics. The sixth item in the table has the mean of 2.83 which implies that the respondents agreed that social entrepreneurship has improved local investment and business confidence. The seventh item in the table has the mean of 2.83 which implies that the respondents agreed that social enterprises promote sustainable livelihood opportunities for residents. The eighth item in the table has the mean of 2.76 which implies that the respondents agreed that the standard of living in their community has improved since the introduction of social enterprise activities. The ninth item in the table has the mean of 2.95 which implies that the respondents agreed that social entrepreneurship encourages partnerships that support reconstruction efforts. The tenth item in the table has the mean of 2.44 which implies that the respondents agreed that community members perceive social enterprises as vital actors in post-conflict economic rebuilding. The grand mean of the table is 2.73 which imply that the respondents agreed that social entrepreneurship influences social cohesion and peacebuilding efforts after conflict in Niger Delta region.

Research question 3: What is the impact of social entrepreneurship initiatives on sustainable community development in post-conflict settings in Niger Delta region?

Table 3: Impact of social entrepreneurship initiatives on sustainable community development in post-conflict settings in Niger Delta region

Issue Raised	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
Social entrepreneurship initiatives promote peace and coexistence among different groups.	354	2.64	1.133	Agreed

Social enterprise projects have reduced youth restiveness and violent behaviour.	354	2.93	.862	Agreed
The activities of social enterprises have enhanced trust between community members.	354	2.59	1.182	Agreed
Social entrepreneurship contributes to reconciliation among previously conflicting groups.	354	2.69	1.140	Agreed
There is greater community cooperation as a result of social entrepreneurship programmes.	354	2.66	1.146	Agreed
Social enterprises provide platforms for dialogue and collaboration among diverse groups.	354	2.76	1.142	Agreed
Social entrepreneurship has improved security and reduced local conflict incidents.	354	2.80	1.148	Agreed
Social enterprise initiatives strengthen social bonds and collective responsibility.	354	2.83	1.045	Agreed
Communities involved in social entrepreneurship experience more stable peace than those without such initiatives.	354	2.61	1.209	Agreed
Social entrepreneurship supports long-term peace through inclusive economic participation.	354	2.73	1.234	Agreed
Grand Total		2.72		

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 3 presents the responses of the respondents on the impact of social entrepreneurship initiatives on sustainable community development in post-conflict settings in Niger Delta region. The first item in the table has the mean of 2.64 which implies that the respondents agreed that social entrepreneurship initiatives promote peace and coexistence among different groups. The second item in the table has the mean of 2.93 which implies that the respondents agreed that social enterprise projects have reduced youth restiveness and violent behaviour. The third item in the table has the mean of 2.59 which implies that the respondents agreed that the activities of social enterprises have enhanced trust between community members.

The fourth item in the table has the mean of 2.69 which implies that the respondents agreed that social entrepreneurship contributes to reconciliation among previously conflicting groups. The fifth item in the table has the mean of 2.66 which implies that the respondents agreed that there is greater community cooperation as a result of social entrepreneurship programmes. The sixth item in the table has the mean of 2.76 which implies that the respondents agreed that social enterprises provide platforms for dialogue and collaboration among diverse groups. The seventh item in the table has the mean of 2.80 which implies that the respondents agreed that social entrepreneurship has improved security and reduced local conflict incidents.

The eighth item in the table has the mean of 2.83 which implies that the respondents agreed that social enterprise initiatives strengthen social bonds and collective responsibility. The ninth item in the table has the mean of 2.61 which implies that the respondents agreed that communities involved in social entrepreneurship experience more stable peace than those without such initiatives. The tenth item in the table has the mean of 2.73 which implies

that the respondents agreed that social entrepreneurship supports long-term peace through inclusive economic participation. The grand mean of the table is 2.72 which imply that the respondents agreed that social entrepreneurship initiatives have impact on sustainable community development in post-conflict settings in Niger Delta region.

Testing of Hypotheses

H_{01}: Social entrepreneurship does not have significant contribution to economic recovery in Niger Delta region.

Table 4: Regression test on whether social entrepreneurship does not have significant contribution to economic recovery in Niger Delta region

R	= .691[a]
R^2	= .478
R^2 adj.	= .464
Std. Error	= .723

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	164.477	9	18.275	34.953	.000[b]
	Residual	179.862	344	.523		
	Total	344.339	353			

Source: Field Survey, 2025

From the table 4, the result of the test showed a coefficient of regression R = .691[a] and R^2adj = .464. The implication of this coefficient of regression is that social entrepreneurship has significant contribution to economic recovery in Niger Delta region. Also, the F- statistics, which is F = 34.953 was significant at 0.05 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which stated that social entrepreneurship does not have significant contribution to economic recovery in Niger Delta region was rejected. This means that social entrepreneurship significantly contributed to economic recovery in Niger Delta region.

H_{02}: Social entrepreneurship does not have significant influence on peacebuilding and social cohesion after conflict in Niger Delta region.

Table 5: Regression test on whether Social entrepreneurship does not have significant influence on peacebuilding and social cohesion after conflict in Niger Delta region.

R	= .703[a]
R^2	= .495
R^2 adj.	= .482
Std. Error	= .913

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	280.694	9	31.188	37.440	.000[b]
	Residual	286.560	344	.833		
	Total	567.254	353			

Source: Field Survey, 2025

From the table 5, the result of the test showed a coefficient of regression R = .703[a] and R^2adj = .482. The implication of this coefficient of regression is that social entrepreneurship has significant influence on peacebuilding and social cohesion after conflict in Niger Delta region. Also, the F-statistics, which is F = 37.440 was significant at 0.05 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which stated that social entrepreneurship does not have significant influence on peacebuilding and social cohesion after conflict in Niger Delta region was rejected. This means that social entrepreneurship has significant influence on peacebuilding and social cohesion after conflict in Niger Delta region.

H_{03}: Social entrepreneurship initiatives have no significant impact on sustainable community development in post-conflict settings in Niger Delta region.

Table 6: Regression test on whether social entrepreneurship initiatives have no significant impact on sustainable community development in post-conflict settings in Niger Delta region

	R = .672[a]					
	R^2 = .452					
	R^2 adj. = .438					
	Std. Error = .907					
Model		**Sum of Squares**	**Df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
1	Regression	233.429	9	25.937	31.552	.000[b]
	Residual	282.774	344	.822		
	Total	516.203	353			

Source: Field Survey, 2025

From the table 6, the result of the test showed a coefficient of regression R = .672[a] and R^2adj = .438. The implication of this coefficient of regression is that social entrepreneurship initiatives have significant impact on sustainable community development in post-conflict settings in Niger Delta region. Also, the F-statistics, which is F = 31.552 was significant at 0.05 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which stated that social entrepreneurship initiatives have no significant impact on sustainable community development in post-conflict settings in Niger Delta region was rejected. This means that social entrepreneurship initiatives have significant impact on sustainable community development in post-conflict settings in Niger Delta region.

Discussion of Findings

The data in Table 1, with a grand mean of 2.74, shows that respondents generally agreed that social entrepreneurship significantly contributes to economic recovery in the Niger Delta. For instance, the Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta (PIND) is fostering innovative solutions to enhance agricultural practices in the Niger Delta region. PIND has introduced the Chorkor Oven and Smoking Kiln for fish processing, addressing challenges faced by women fish farmers related to the high cost of firewood

and health hazards from traditional smoking methods. Feedback from local farmers indicates significant improvements in efficiency and economic viability. Similarly, the Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta (PIND) has enhanced agricultural recovery by certifying Cassava Seed Entrepreneurs, addressing low yields and crop diseases through targeted training and improved market access. These actions align with PIND's goal of reducing poverty, mitigating conflict, and improving economic resilience, suggesting that such support significantly impacts sustainable livelihoods in the region.

With a mean of 3.02, this was the strongest rated item, underscoring that employment creation is a major economic benefit of social enterprises. The Niger Delta Youth Employment Pathways (NDYEP) programme, initiated by Aqua-Green Integrated Farming Support Initiative with support from the Ford Foundation, addressed youth unemployment from 2019 to 2021 by equipping over 3,000 participants with skills in agriculture and aquaculture. The programme included intensive training in fish farming, poultry management, and crop production, complemented by the provision of startup packs containing essential farming tools and resources. Ongoing mentorship ensured participants could effectively implement their training and develop sustainable agribusinesses, enhancing local economic activity in the Niger Delta. The mid-term evaluation conducted in 2019 assessed project impact using OECD/DAC criteria, highlighting successful strategic objectives such as understanding the employment landscape and promoting demand-led skills development. The findings indicated a need for tailored training based on employer requirements and the involvement of state actors in promoting youth employment approaches. This aligns with broader development literature arguing that social enterprises fill labour market gaps left by public and private sectors.

Respondents also agreed that social enterprises encourage community participation (2.86) and improve access to essential services (2.90). Community involvement is vital for initiatives like the collaboration between Okomu Oil Palm Company Plc (OOPC) and the Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta (PIND), which has signed a ₦1.2 billion agreement aiming to promote inclusive sustainable development, improve livelihoods, and enhance peace in OOPC's host communities in Edo State. The findings indicate that social enterprises are perceived to perform redistributive functions, as evidenced by mean scores of 2.66 for profit reinvestment and 2.85 for empowering vulnerable groups. Women-focused initiatives, like those by the Women in Energy Network and the Niger Delta Women Entrepreneurship Programme, address community needs, provide microcredit, and boost youth employment. While perceptions of skill development, poverty alleviation, and innovation in post-conflict contexts showed moderate agreement (means of 2.51 to 2.63), challenges such as oil pollution and infrastructural decay persist, complicating the impact of capacity-building interventions like those from PIND's Economic Development Centres. These findings aligned with the works of

Badreddine and Larbi (2024), Volosiuk *et al.* (2025) and Ironbar and Anam (2024).

In table 2, the findings indicate strong consensus that social enterprises positively impact peacebuilding and social cohesion in post-conflict areas, with a grand mean of 2.73. Respondents highlighted contributions to infrastructure rebuilding and economic improvement, each rated at 2.58. Organisations like Stakeholder Democracy Network (SDN) and PIND have aided in rehabilitating fish farms, market stalls, and water facilities in formerly conflict-affected communities. Additionally, support for small business revival, with a mean rating of 2.73, demonstrates the effectiveness of microenterprise grants, vocational training, and agricultural cooperatives in areas impacted by youth militancy. The score of 2.86 reflects increased confidence in social enterprises as viable alternatives to traditional financial institutions, with savings groups, women's cooperatives, and rotating credit associations gaining traction in bank-underprovided areas of Bayelsa and Rivers States. Respondents noted these enterprises aid in restoring essential public services (score of 2.76), with NGOs actively involved in rebuilding schools and clinics, particularly in Ogoni communities and health outreach in Burutu and Ekeremor.

Furthermore, social enterprises are playing a critical role in providing sustainable livelihood opportunities (2.83) and enhancing living standards (2.76), exemplified by aquaculture and cassava clusters in Akwa Ibom and Delta State. Successful partnerships, such as the PIND–Chevron Global Memorandum of Understanding (GMoU), have enhanced reconstruction (2.95) efforts through collaboration with local governments and international donors. These findings correlated with the works of Joseph *et al.* (2022), Joseph (2024) and Sottini and Ciambotti (2021).

Table 3, with a grand mean of 2.72, confirms that respondents perceive a strong link between social entrepreneurship and sustainable development in post-conflict regions. Respondents' consensus indicates that social entrepreneurship fosters peace and reduces youth unrest, aligning with cases where youth enterprise programmes curtail idleness and militant recruitment. Notable examples include the Amnesty Programme's initiatives in Bayelsa and River State which have successfully lowered violent incidents. Introduced by President Yar'Adua in 2009, this critical peace initiative sought to provide militants with peace and training, although its long-term effectiveness remains questionable, particularly due to challenges in reintegration and the legacy of previous failed initiatives like the NDPVF amnesty. Items relating to enhanced trust (2.59), reconciliation (2.69) and greater cooperation (2.66) underscore the social capital-building function of social enterprises.

Many social ventures operate multipurpose community platforms where residents collaborate on economic activities this process indirectly strengthens inter-group relations in formerly divided communities. Respondents agreed that social enterprises provide dialogue platforms (2.76) and contribute to improved security (2.80). Community Stakeholders

Networks (CSN) were organised by PIND in Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers States to combat election violence in the Niger Delta region ahead of the 2015 elections. Composed of diverse community members, including traditional councils and security representatives, CSNs engaged in advocacy and trained as peace champions to combat political thuggery. Their activities included voter education, peace celebrations, and real-time data collection on conflict escalation during elections.

Additionally, "PREVENT" teams were established to enhance grassroots peace-building efforts, addressing local conflicts through trained actors who focused on conflict analysis and mediation. These teams have successfully mitigated potential socio-political crises, promoting stability and economic development in the region. Furthermore, the enhancement of social bonds and collective responsibility (2.83) reflects the participatory models adopted by most Niger Delta social enterprises. The perception that communities involved in social entrepreneurship experience more stable peace (2.61) suggests that such initiatives generate alternative livelihoods, reduce competition for scarce resources, and encourage positive interdependence. The consensus that social enterprises support long-term peace through inclusive economic participation (2.73) is in tandem with the work of Moritz *et al.* (2024), Sauermann (2023) and Lubberink (2019).

Conclusion and Recommendations

It must be pointed out that the findings reveled that social entrepreneurship plays a significant role in economic recovery, peacebuilding, and sustainable development in the Niger Delta. They are pivotal in post-conflict transformation by fostering innovation and strengthening social cohesion. Survey respondents view social ventures as catalysts for socioeconomic renewal, particularly where state capacity and private investment are lacking. Initiatives like PIND and NDYEP enhance agricultural productivity, provide employment opportunities, and improve access to essential services.

They fill structural gaps in agricultural and labour markets, supporting poverty reduction and resilience strategies. Evidence shows social enterprises promote community participation, especially among vulnerable groups. Furthermore, they contribute to peacebuilding through infrastructure rehabilitation, microenterprise support, and restoring essential services, thus gaining legitimacy as development actors in formerly conflict-affected areas. Social ventures also foster long-term peace and stability by strengthening trust and facilitating cooperative economic activities while addressing resource-based tensions. Overall, these findings establish that social entrepreneurship is vital for recovery and stability in the Niger Delta, aligning with scholarly consensus that highlights its importance in building sustainable peace and inclusive economic growth in fragile regions.

The paper therefore recommends that government and other stakeholders should prioritise interventions to enhance the impact of social entrepreneurship in the Niger Delta. Social entrepreneurship should be formally integrated into regional

development strategies, ensuring coordinated support, sustainable poverty reduction and long-term peacebuilding across post-conflict communities. Expanding access to finance through grants, impact investment, and concessional credit would enable social enterprises to scale their economic and peacebuilding activities. Strengthening critical infrastructure such as transportation, energy, and markets is essential to improve productivity and service delivery. Capacity-building and skills development programmes, particularly for youth and women, should be scaled up to foster employment, resilient livelihoods, and local economic growth. Community-based peacebuilding platforms, including stakeholder networks and PREVENT teams, should be institutionalised to facilitate dialogue, mediate conflicts, and enhance social cohesion.

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