



# Green Entrepreneurial Opportunities in Environmental Photography for Sustainable Development in Nigeria

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**Abstract:** Nigeria is a country which has the abundance of human and natural resources, including skills and talents which are needed to maximize her green entrepreneurial opportunities. This study explores the green entrepreneurial opportunities in environmental photography for sustainable development in Nigeria. It highlights the fact that recognizing and maximizing the green entrepreneurial opportunities in environmental photography is a climate change adaptation and mitigation strategy to ensure sustainable development in Nigeria. This study is so important as climate change poses an immediate and long-term threat to our environment, our people and our planet. This study further identifies environmental photography as one of the veritable tools for climate change education. It further highlights the socio-economic, psychological, and health benefits of environmental photography in Nigeria. It further explores how environmental photography and climate change education can work together towards achieving sustainable development in Nigeria. It concludes by identifying the innovative ways of enhancing green entrepreneurial opportunities in environmental photography across various communities, cities and campuses in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Climate Change, Education, Green Entrepreneurship, Environmental Photography, Sustainable Development

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Photography has been known for centuries to be a powerful instrument of communication. When employed in communicating environmental issues of concern, it can elicit varied reactions. These reactions may include empathy, pity, awe, fear or skepticism about the issues projected in pictures (Corbett, 2006; DeLuca, 1999). Photographers have long used the camera to bring to light issues afflicting people, places, and spaces. Past nature photographers captured the pristine and beauty of land and nature, they conveyed a world that needed to be preserved (Alinder, 1996; Blewitt, 2010). Outside of the traditional media (e.g., newspapers, television, radio) and politics over the

environmental issues, a growing group of photographers have recently cultivated media partnerships and alliances with specialized entities to tell stories through niche media channels and emerging media platforms (e.g., email, blogs, websites, podcast, social media) (Archibald, 2009a, 2009b; Blewitt, 2010; Braasch, 2002; Blue Earth, 2013). “An environment is something that is external to a living being and it is simply all the physical, chemical, and biological factors surrounding it. This includes all living and non-living things” (Ambrose, 2021). Environmental photographers use photography to demonstrate the harm society places on open spaces and all Earth’s inhabitants. Since the turn of the century, these photographers have documented the impact of our

actions on the environment such as global warming, loss of open spaces, drought, impoverished human life, endangered animals, rising sea levels, deforestation, over-development of land, and other threats to the environment(Seelig,2015).

Nature and environmental photography consist of strong images of the natural world, ranging from plants, animals, ecosystems, land, water, and remote cultures. Different, however, is the purpose behind constructing such photos. Nature photographers capture the beauty of the natural world, while environmental photographers show the “damage, human impact, pollution, solutions to these problems and in a sense a warning cry about the impact of humanity on our earth as well as the power of the natural world” (Seelig,2015). Nature photographs reveal the aesthetics and beauty of all that inhabits the natural world, whereas environmental photographers seek to protect nature and all the inhabitants of Earth. Environmental photographers certainly depict the beauty in the natural world, but it turns into something much more (Ambrose,2021).

Environmental photography is a diverse niche covering many topics including plastic pollution, waste management, etc. and plays a vital role by helping to draw attention to the environmental issues our world has to face every day. Photography of natural settings can inspire feelings of wonder. Similarly, photography of settings of plastic wastes and plastic pollution both in the terrestrial, celestial and aquatic environment can inspire awe, ecstasy and a sense of urgency towards eradicating plastic pollution. The trend of environmental photography has grown along with wider consideration for environmental concerns, but people are drawn to the practice for many different reasons(Adobe,2021)In this study, we will have a close look at what is environmental photography, its purpose, importance and its green entrepreneurial opportunities for sustainable development in Nigeria.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

This paper examined the “Green entrepreneurial opportunities in environmental photography for sustainable development in Nigeria” through existing literature review and data collection from relevant agencies. The main purpose of this research work was to survey theoretical backgrounds and previous studies on the above subject matter and the current progress with the implementation of green entrepreneurship through environmental photography for sustainable development in Nigeria.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Climate change has been described as an existential threat to human well-being. Globally, it affects the social and environmental determinants of health: clean air, safe drinking water, sufficient food and secure shelter. The effects of climate change are far-reaching and include heat waves and severe weather, deteriorated air quality, displacement and migration of vectors resulting in increase of a range of diseases related to water and ecological factors. Increasing incidences of mental health issues are being recorded and identified as a consequence of environmental change(Lu, 2016; PAHO, 2013). Climate change is a global challenge which we must of necessity tackle with urgency for our sustainable development in Nigeria (Anabaraonye, Okafor & Hope, 2018).

Our climate is changing and impacting every aspect of society and livelihoods. How do educators convey these messages? They can achieve this through sensitization and awareness creation or through classroom instructions (Orji, Bichene & Obi, 2022). This sensitization also includes the use of newspapers, magazines, television and social media. From any of these media, pupils and students and the ordinary people get to know and become empowered on knowledge about their environment and how to protect it. Education continues to be an instrument for effecting desirable behavioural change and removing ignorance about events and happenings in our society.

Awareness of climate change, adoption of climate change mitigation measures, is low among many citizens in Nigeria especially in rural areas. Climate change education is to ensure that people understand issues of global concerns(Anabaraonye, Okafor & Hope,2018). The intricate nature of the global climate as an interconnected system, comprising earth and socio-ecological systems, necessitates critical enquiries coupled with reflexive and transformative educational methods (Vogel et al.,2015).

Educated people are more aware of the risks climate change poses and are better equipped to make informed decisions about responses at local, national and international scales (Luetz and Beaumont, 2019). Climate change education tailored to different target groups aims at creating awareness of climate change and fostering the willingness to engage in climate change mitigation, adaptation, and transformation, thus fostering a development towards a low-carbon society (González-Gaudiano and Meira-Carrea,2010). The issue of climate change affects every society. Communities, cities and campuses in Nigeria need to be well informed about these climatic events

#### 4. UNDERSTANDING ENVIRONMENTAL PHOTOGRAPHY

Environmental photography refers to photographs of the natural environment for artistic, research, or monitoring purposes (Encyclopedia, 2019). "Environmental photography can be done and will be helpful for various reasons such as research, monitoring the environment, creating awareness, sending out a message to the public, or purely for artistic purposes" (Ambrose, 2021). Environmental photography deals with documenting and introducing our surroundings. It's often a tool for raising awareness of important environmental and conservation issues like climate change (Jakobovits, 2022).

"Environmental photography can seem quite confusing and challenging for some photographers but it is easy to photograph an environment once you know the importance and the story behind it. It can overlap most genres of photography and hence can be done by anyone who has some awareness and interest about their environment. One can easily become a photojournalist, landscape photographer, wildlife photographer or a research person, conservationist, etc., and capture environmental photographs" (Ambrose, 2021). An environmental photograph is a photograph that describes an environment, its happenings, scenes in and around it and it can be photographed in many ways and for many reasons. To explain in the simplest form, any photograph that you capture of an environment is called environmental photography, but make sure it is meaningful, addresses an environmental issue, tells an environmental story or gives an environmental message.

Environmental photography is most often used as a tool to raise awareness and educate humans on the impact they cause on the environment. Being a diverse genre, it helps to draw the attention of the audience across the planet to the issues the world faces every day. Climate change poses an immediate and long-term threat to our environment, our people and our planet. Environmental photography may be beneficial if the presentation is one that allays fears, help people relax and keep them hopeful. Information about ecosystem conservation can enhance adaptive behaviours that benefit the environment and human. There is growing evidence that many communities have experienced some climate disasters that threaten the well-being of people and the environment. The resulting climate shocks and environmental changes are adversely impacting the economic livelihoods, health and water and food security of the region's most vulnerable populations.

Environmental photography can be innovatively used in mitigating the negative impacts of climate change in Nigeria. It is a veritable tool which can be used to

document photos of environmental degradation scenes across communities, cities and campuses in Nigeria. Another use of environmental photography has been to document the effects of climate change on natural features. A well-known example is the series of pictures taken of various glaciers in the United States, Canada, and elsewhere. The pictures document the retreat of the glaciers as a consequence of a warming environment, and are evocative evidence of the reality of global warming (Encyclopedia, 2019). Environmental photography encompasses any presentation and documentation on the environment using photographs to communicate environmental concerns more vividly. Environmental photography focuses on education about the environment using visuals as instructional media and serves as a method for educating people about significant environmental concerns. Photographs can be in form of illustrations, drawings or paintings. However, there are green entrepreneurial opportunities in environmental photography for sustainable development in Nigeria.

#### 5. GREEN ENTREPRENEURIAL OPPORTUNITIES IN ENVIRONMENTAL PHOTOGRAPHY IN NIGERIA

Anabaraonye et al. (2022) defined green entrepreneurship as that "entrepreneurship that seeks to solve environmental problems while generating income for sustainable economic growth". Green entrepreneurs are perceived to have interest in environmentally friendly activities and practices that maximally protects the environment. There is need for continuous sensitization and awareness on adoption of positive attitude towards ecosystem conservation and climate change mitigation behaviours (Orji, Bichene & Obi, 2022).

Green entrepreneurship education involves the strategic training and enlightening of individuals across communities, cities and campuses on the role of green entrepreneurship in achieving sustainable development (Anabaraonye et al., 2022). Unemployed and under-employed youths in Nigeria can be gainfully employed through the green entrepreneurial opportunities in environmental photography thereby helping to eradicate poverty and enhance sustainable economic growth in Nigeria. Green entrepreneurship education across communities, cities and campuses is vital to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of entrepreneurs and systems for sustainable economic growth and development in Nigeria.

As Ogbonna and Anosike (2018) explain, "green entrepreneurship is not just about creating sustainable businesses, but also about fostering a culture of sustainability that can have a positive impact on the wider community" (p. 103). Green entrepreneurship education which can be enhanced through

environmental photography is therefore very important for establishing business support and laying a structure for entrepreneurs who desire to manage sound businesses with a special focus on environmental and social impact (Anabaraonye et al, 2022). Environmental photography which is a form of art just as poetry and music, can be used innovatively and therapeutically in green entrepreneurship education across communities, cities and campuses in Nigeria (Anabaraonye et al, 2020).

Environmental protection, ecosystem conservation and green lifestyle are some of the trendy issues of life globally. Hence, the quest for a green economy for sustainable development worldwide, should turn on the entrepreneurial interest of many especially the youths towards green entrepreneurship in Nigeria. Environmental photography can be used innovatively and effectively in environmental education programme across various communities, cities and campuses in Nigeria. Environmental photography specifically presents a green entrepreneurial opportunity in the positive modification of behavior on climate change matters. Through incorporating photography in environmental education, salient information about the negative impacts of human activities on the ecosystem and the possible solution to the people using pictures or videos of life events and occurrences are clearly expressed.

Activities supporting ecosystem conservation, and paths to meeting some of the agreements entered into by the Nigerian government for climate action can be presented to citizens by innovatively utilizing the power of visual effects of environmental photography. This is with the view to modify people's intention, elicit their empathy and thereby in general, encourage sustainable lifestyle, livelihoods and development. Some green entrepreneurial opportunities in environmental photography in Nigeria could take the form of:

**Documentary journalism** which deals with facts and real life events. These real life happenings can be captured in videos or photos like droughts, land slides and flooding with associated devastating effects on humans, plants and animal species. The purpose of a documentary is to inform, educate and make clearer sense of some ambiguous situations in one's environment or elsewhere. People earn a living from this type of journalism.

**Photojournalism:** This is the process of story-telling using the medium of photograph as your main story telling device. In photojournalism, images created using cameras are used to report events whether in the newspaper, magazine, television or any other media of mass communication.

Environmental conservation activism using environmental photography. This can be achieved

further by engaging trailers, movies and drama promoting environmental photography for sustainable development in Nigeria.

## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF ENVIRONMENTAL PHOTOGRAPHY?

The Adobe Communications Team (2021) enumerated the benefits of environmental photography as follows:

- i. **Showcase natural beauty:** One of the most common reasons for pursuing environmental photography is the simple desire to capture and display how beautiful nature is — whether it's landscapes, plant life, animals, or even people interacting with their environment.
- ii. **Expose environmental issues:** Environmental photography is a powerful conservation tool. There are many ways you can raise awareness about the importance of protecting our environment, but the most popular strategy is often through showcasing natural beauty. Environmental photography can assist in demonstrating a visible problem. For example, you might depict litter negatively impacting the environment — or create side-by-side images that demonstrate the effects of climate change over time.
- iii. **Research and monitor:** Environmental Photographers are famous for their independence. But if you hope to have an impact on a specific issue, finding teams already engaged in addressing it can reduce the chance that you're simply duplicating someone else's work. Reach out to non-profits and research institutes to see how you can support their ongoing efforts to document and monitor environmental changes in a specific region or environment.
- iv. **Support your own personal growth:** Not everyone picks up a camera to fight climate change — and that's okay. Photography can serve as a much-needed creative outlet or a means of discovering a new community. Environmental photography can also help you educate yourself about the environment, and give you an opportunity to spend more time in nature, which can support your mental and physical health. Social awareness about impacts of climate change in different parts of the country and how people are adapting. This can generate business ideas that lead to production or trading in such items that enhance adaptation. Awareness about opportunities for livelihoods in green businesses and enhanced awareness of the opportunities in green entrepreneurship in Nigeria and beyond. It can also be used to create awareness and solicit financial support from government, non-governmental organizations and multilateral organizations like the World Bank Group, United Nations Environment, etc. towards mitigating the negative effects of climate change in Nigeria.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Through this study, it is clearly seen that green entrepreneurial opportunities abound in the environmental photography industry which should be recognized and maximized for sustainable economic growth and development in Nigeria. There is also need for further research on the subject matter of environmental photography which should be undertaken by researchers in the field of environmental sustainability across various communities, cities and campuses in Nigeria.

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