



UNDERSTANDING RESIDENTS' PERSPECTIVES ON RECREATION, LEISURE, AND TOURISM

The Lagos Island Project: Insights into tourism
and Urban planning





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The Sahara Centre

This report was prepared by The Sahara Centre, a not-for-profit organization working at the intersection of research, policy, and development to drive social change through the power of creative industries.

The Centre integrates sociocultural factors that contribute to the Nigerian society's true sense of itself – who it is and its ways of life that can chart an evolution founded on belongingness. The Sahara Centre works closely with the cultural, creative, and tourism industries to ensure this anchoring, participation, and evolution.

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The Lagos Urban Development Initiative (LUDI)

LUDI is a non-governmental organisation that uses collaboration, research, and dialogue to bring organisations and people together to advocate for a more inclusive, liveable, and sustainable Lagos. LUDI was founded as Future Lagos in 2013 and more recently transitioned to Lagos Urban Development Initiative.

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Introduction

“Cities are the absence of physical space between people and companies.

They are proximity, density, closeness. They enable us to work and play together, and their success depends on the demand for physical connection.”

Edward Glaeser (2011:6)

Lagos is one of the world’s fastest growing megacities and the commercial nerve centre of Nigeria. The city’s population grew from an estimated 7.2 million in 2000 to 14.68 million in 2021. The World Population Review reported in 2021 that by 2022 an additional 525,528 will be added to the estimated 20 million people in Lagos State and is projected to grow by 100 per cent by 2050. wake of COVID-19, but from a manageable, contextual perspective.

Reasons for this population surge are detailed as “push and pull factors” (see Table 1).

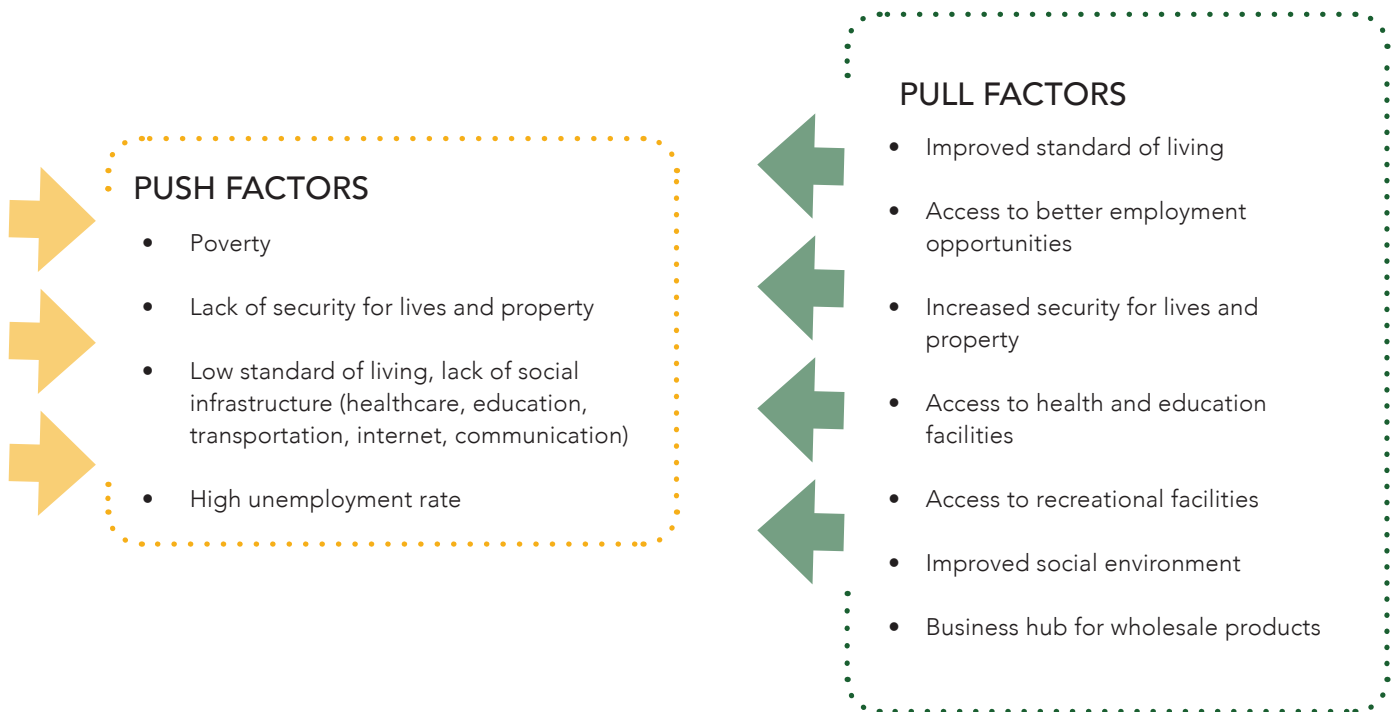


Fig 1: Pull and push factors for population increase in Lagos

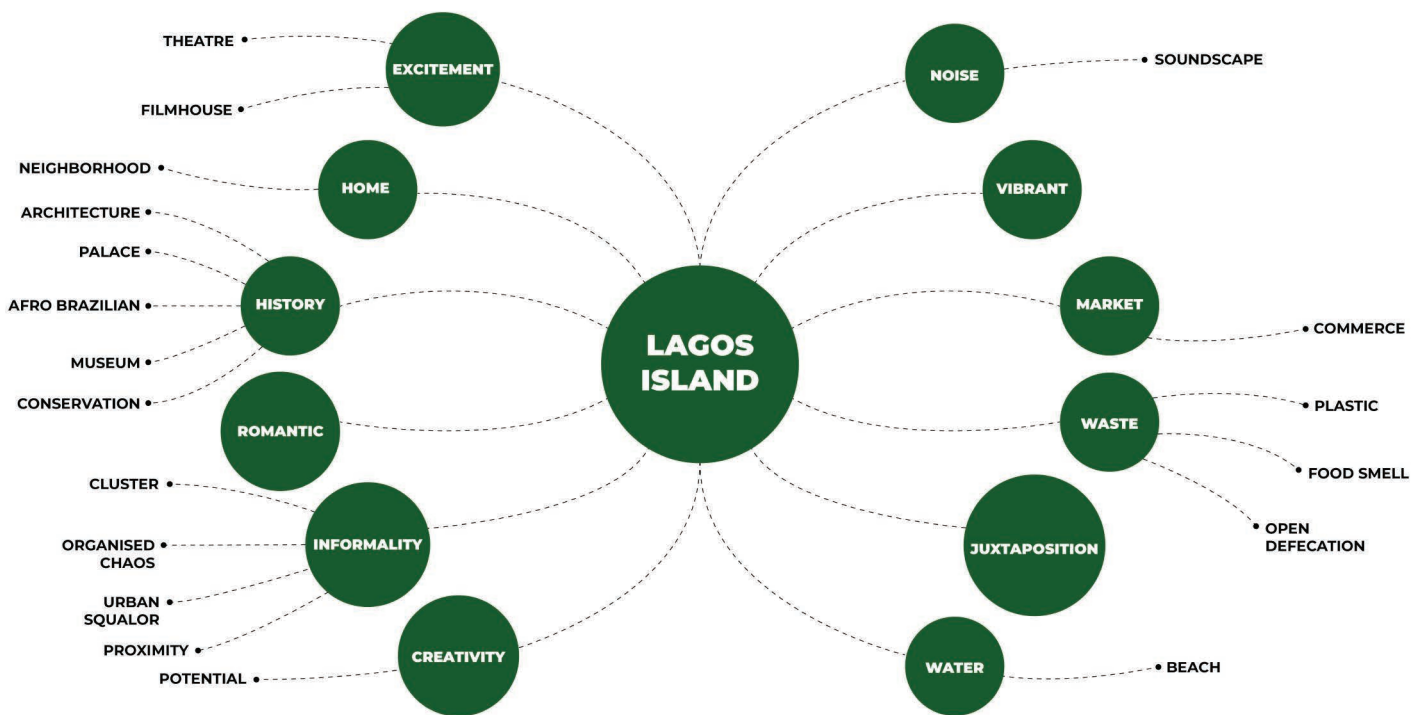


Figure 2: Participants shared what Lagos Island meant to them as presented in the mind map above

In the mid-20th century, the Lagos metropolitan area’s infrastructure could support the needs of its population. Over the past 20 years, real estate developments in the residential and commercial areas of the city have struggled to meet the growing demands of the city’s inhabitants and an already over-extended urban infrastructure. Lagos is challenged to become a more resilient city – a smart city – infusing technologies to create efficiencies for the city’s inhabitants.

One area the city’s planners appear to have overlooked until recently is the contribution of leisure to the socio-economic development of the city. Cities are for both work and play; Lagos has become a place for work, for commerce. Opportunities for play and recreational activities would create a balanced life for the city’s inhabitants and make an important contribution to the city’s social, cultural, and economic development. Recreation, leisure, and tourism enhance quality of life as the public experiences, through diverse cultures and locales, an exchange of goods and ideas. The economic sector benefits from revenues generated by both internal and external sources.

In July 2021 Lagos State announced its commitment to tourism development as a major revenue earner with the launch of the community-based Lagos State Tourism Master Plan 2020-2040. This plan focuses on inclusive tourism principles anchored to domestic tourism.

The perspectives of community stakeholders on plans for recreation, leisure and tourism are important, especially as these perspectives may be diverse and sometimes include competing needs which have to be appropriately managed.

Tourism planning is an important component of integrative urban planning when consideration is given to the environmental and social impact of tourism activity and the economic benefits for all stakeholder groups. Community stakeholders include current and future residents, business owners, visitors, and policymakers whose perspectives on recreation, leisure, and tourism will vary with their commitment to social, cultural, environmental, and economic priorities.

Plans for sustainable tourism activity need to be driven by provisions for residents, themselves the key stakeholders. Tourism opportunities, whether for domestic or international visitors, should not be limited to tourist villages, many of which have been criticized for their lack of authenticity, but compatible with and representative of recreational activities enjoyed by members of host communities.

Lagos Island has received urban development attention from the private and public sectors. The Lagos Island pilot project described in this report was designed to gain an understanding of the residents' perspectives on recreation and leisure and gain insights into appropriate development of tourism sites. This report is a timely contribution to future development efforts.

Lagos Island



The selection of Lagos Island for this study was based on its attributes as a commercial and residential location, a transport hub, and its position as a central business district. The Lagos State government aspires to make it the cultural centre of Lagos.

Numerous historical precedents establish the location's social, cultural, historical, and commercial significance:

- Lagos Island was the settlement place for the Yorubas, the Benin, the Portuguese, the British and thereafter the slave trade returnees from Brazil.
- Government buildings located on Lagos Island mark a district where the British established the administrative capital of Lagos and Nigeria during the colonial era.
- Lagos Island West was home to the Brazilian Quarters where the majority of the slave trade returnees from Brazil settled. The main markets and housing settlements are situated to the east.
- The Oba (King) of Lagos resides on the Island in Isale-Eko.
- The Eyo Festival is celebrated on the Island.
- Commercially, Lagos Island is home to head offices of banks, offices, and retail shops, and during the week, is a vibrant and busy place which contributes to its uniqueness.
- Onikan, which is to the south-east, is solidifying its identity as a cultural centre in Lagos with Freedom Park, the MUSON Centre, Onikan Stadium, and the Yoruba Tennis Club among several tourist attractions. The planned JK Randle Centre for Yoruba Culture and History will contribute to the cultural scene.

Lagos Island is inhabited mostly by low-income residents in the new buildings, older Afro-Brazilian styled buildings, and old bungalows. Some historically important buildings were demolished recently. The 2016 demolition of the Ilojo Bar, known as Casa da Fernandez, and Olaiya House brought to the fore the need to conserve Lagos Island monuments.

Lagos Island has several educational centres including the Eko Akete Grammar School, Edward Blyden Memorial High school, King's College and Junior High School, Eko Boys' High school, and Adam and Eve Missionary School.

Lagos Island gentrification: Inevitable? What form should it take?

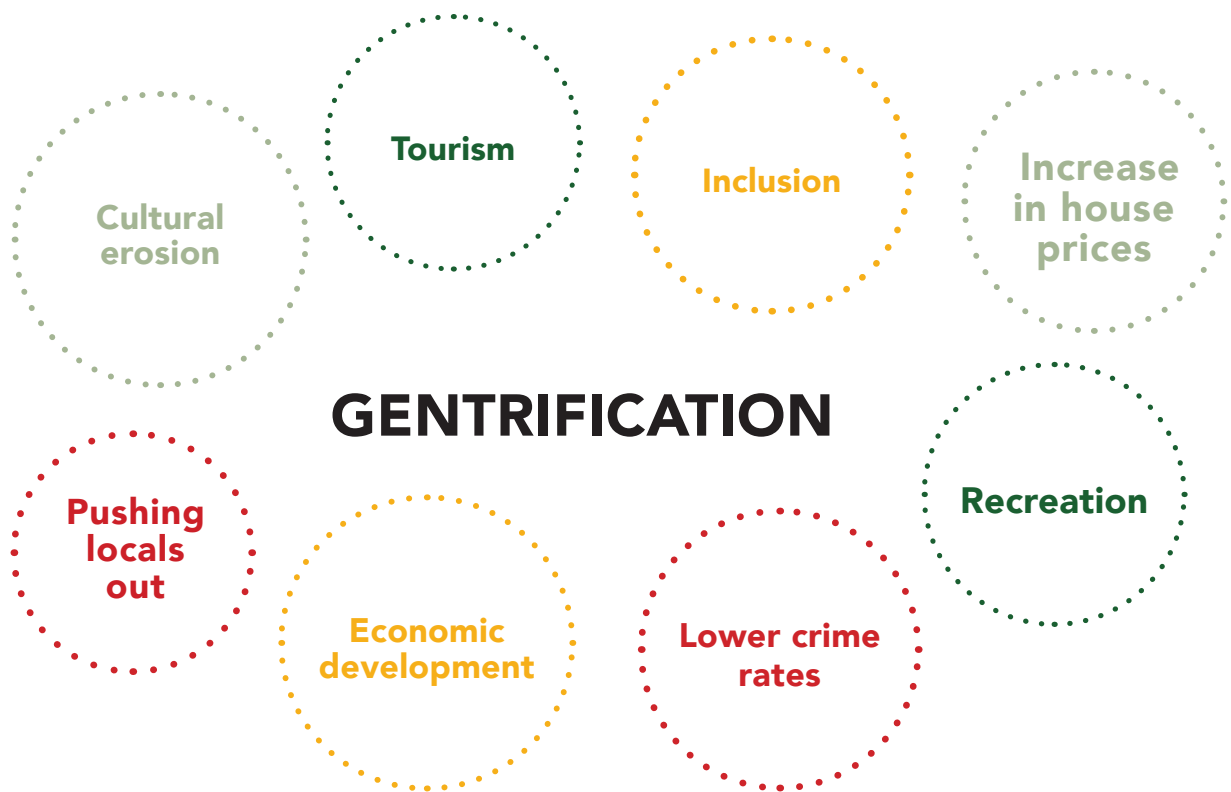
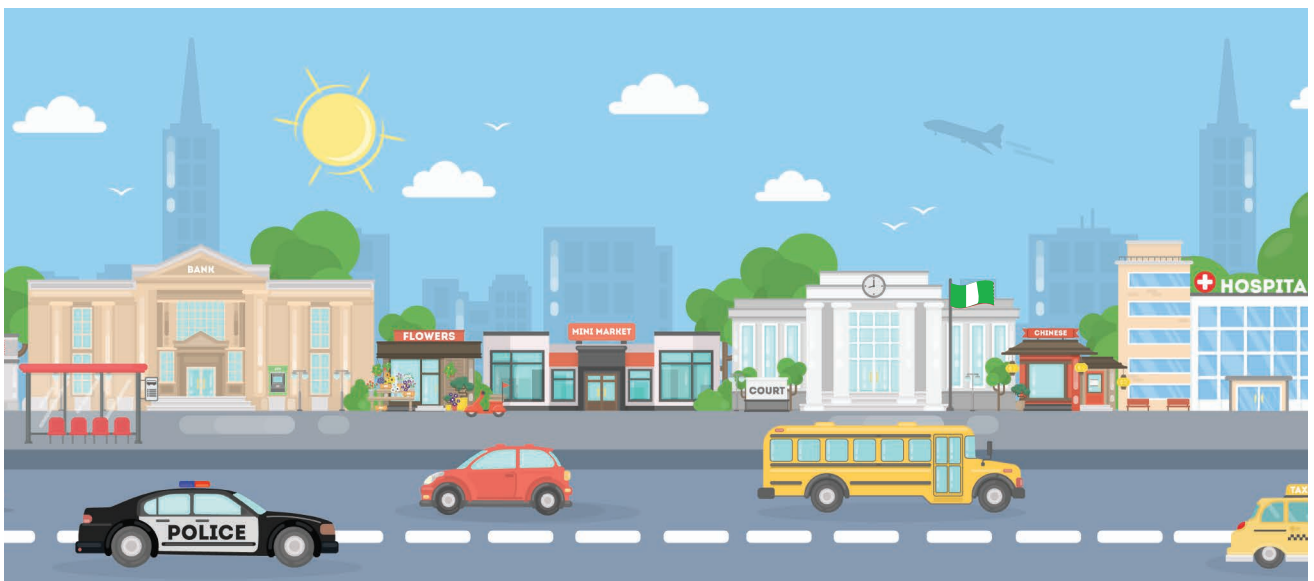
Urban regeneration plans for Lagos Island have been developed to upgrade dilapidated structures, boost the commercial activities of the central business district, and stress the value of beautification. With the rising rates of urbanization and demand for residential and commercial spaces around Marina, the central business district, low-income communities in Lagos Island are at risk of displacement to make way for new ultra-modern structures. Inhabitants of low-income communities in Lagos are not new to the consequences of gentrification. The government forcefully evicted Maroko's 300,000 inhabitants in July 1990 to develop the highbrow neighborhoods of Oniru Private Estate, Victoria Island Extension, and some parts of Lekki. Residents of Otodo-Gbame, Badia, and Kosofe met a similar fate.

While gentrification's benefits and consequences have become widely accepted by residents and other community stakeholders as a part of urban development, a more inclusive approach could address challenges related to mixed-income neighbourhoods; foster social cohesion; and extend gentrification benefits of economic growth, lower crime rates, better employment and educational opportunities.

Certain communities have tried out inclusive gentrification strategies to provide residents with access to financial assistance to redevelop their spaces by providing affordable housing units, funding incremental urban development, and, where necessary, appropriate resettlement packages.

The Lagos Island pilot project efforts to understand residents' and other stakeholders'

perspectives on tourism, recreation, and leisure found congruence with issues related to urban planning, inclusion, economic development, agency, and heritage. Residents were given the opportunity to identify challenges they experienced in their communities, then engage in solution-oriented approaches to addressing those challenges.



The Lagos Island pilot project research question: How can tourism and urban planners create cities that are responsive to residents' needs for work and play?

Our research question was anchored to the premise that a city is designed primarily for its inhabitants, and then marketed to its visitors. Three goals guided the research:

1. Understand the perspectives of stakeholders (residents, business owners, and visitors) on recreation, leisure, and tourism.
2. Explore the spatial structure of recreation, leisure, and tourism in Lagos Island at the neighbourhood level to identify the locations of distinct nodes and precincts dedicated to attractions, shopping, and businesses (i.e., the central business district).
3. Bridge the gap between urban planning and recreation, leisure, and tourism by investigating the relationship between these phenomena to assess how residents and visitors experience Lagos Island across various dimensions – physical environment, locations, infrastructure, accessibility, rent and entry fees to available attractions.

The Lagos Island pilot project contributions

The insights from this pilot project are relevant to tourism and urban planning in Lagos Island, Lagos State, and other cities in Africa. Our findings and recommendations can contribute to decision-making by policymakers, NGOs, private sector organizations, development companies, and destination management companies.

By presenting the representative perspectives and needs of Lagos Island's diverse population, this report contributes to the conversation on sustainable urban development vis-à-vis recreation, leisure, and tourism planning. The authentic voices of residents in the development trajectory of their communities will shape urban planning processes in the future.

Methodology

The aim of this pilot project was to understand the perspectives of residents, visitors and business owners in Lagos Island on recreation, tourism and leisure. The overall aim of the project was to attempt to identify the factors that influence the interplay of recreation and tourism as activities and at the destination level. Before the

commencement of the fieldwork, a review of extant literature conducted to inform the design of the survey found that tourism as an element of urban planning in Nigeria is underexplored in the academic and grey literature.

The research team went on a familiarization tour to gain an in-depth understanding of the geography of Lagos Island and its land-use activities. The tour provided an overview of the cultural, historical, and recreational sites in Lagos Island. A survey was designed and conducted across various locations to capture the residents,' business owners', and visitors' perspectives of recreation and leisure in Lagos Island; 188 people completed the survey.

Interviews conducted with tour guides and attraction centre managers gathered detailed visitor numbers and feedback. Representatives from relevant urban planning and tourism planning state parastatals shared their tourism development plans for Lagos Island.

The survey data collected was analysed and the results were presented at a one-day focus group discussion with residents, business owners, and visitors who were invited to amend or validate the fieldwork findings. The focus group discussion enabled us to further engage with these stakeholders to illuminate the survey findings and better understand the future they seek for their communities.





Findings

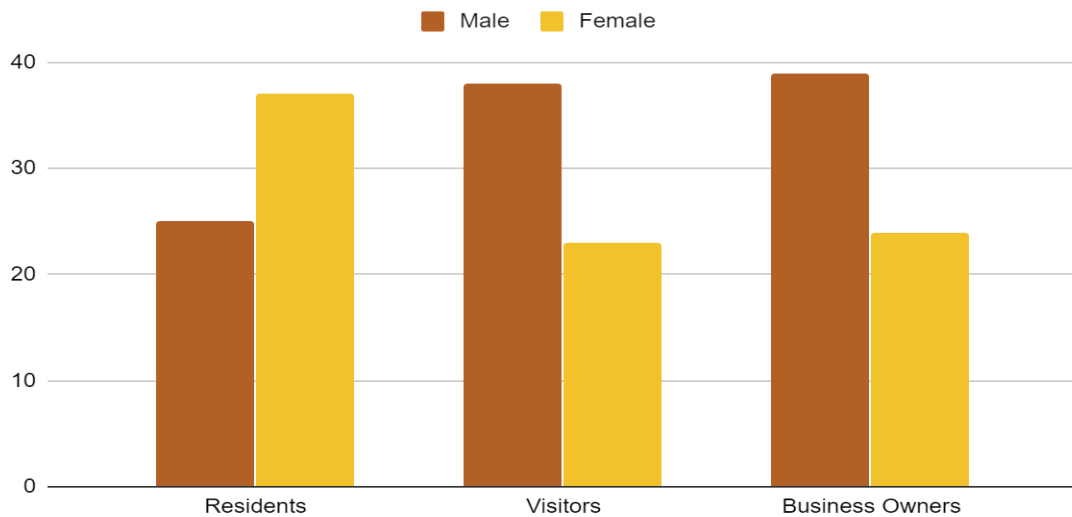
Survey Responses

We present in this section demographical information from the 188 survey respondents.

Table 1: Respondents

	Residents %	Business Owners %	Visitors %
Male	27	39	38
Female	37	24	23
Total	64	63	61

Chart 1: Gender of Respondents





Of the Lagos Island residents who completed the survey, 32% were self-employed, 31% were students or apprentices for businesses, 11% worked with private companies, 6% were employed within the public sector, 10% were retired, and 10% were unemployed.

It was not surprising that most business owners in Lagos Island were self-employed, although 11% of businesses owners reported that they were employed in private sectors and 5% worked in the public sector, and also had side businesses. Most visitors to Lagos Island (44%) reported being self-employed.

Table 2: Occupation of Respondents

Occupation	Residents %	Business Owners %	Visitors %
Self-employed	32	74	44
Student/apprentice	31	8	16
Private company employee	11	11	23
Public employee	6	5	3
Retired	10	1	5
Unemployed	10	1	7
Sports	0	0	2
Total	100%	100%	100%



Over 80% of Lagos Island residents earn below N54,000 monthly. This is about US\$100 a month, which confirms its classification as a low-income community. Low-income families are less likely to participate in recreational and sports activities because of the associated costs – programme fees, equipment prices, transportation, and availability to attend activities.

Residents who participated in the focus group discussion explained that “time is money”, and they would choose spending their free time to work and earn money rather than engage in recreational activities.

Table 3: Average monthly income of respondents

Average Monthly Earnings	Residents %	Business Owners %	Visitors %
Below 18,000	17	14	16
18,001 - 30,000	41	22	20
30,001 - 42,000	14	23	29
42,001 - 54,000	12	16	15
Above 54,001	16	25	20
Total	100%	100%	100%

Findings revealed that the average level of education for respondents was the secondary school leaving certificate. This finding aligns with the income levels reported in Chart 2, which for secondary school leavers, means that employment opportunities are limited to low-skilled, low-paid, entry-level jobs that are seldom full-time but rather casual work arrangements. Attainment of bachelor’s or post-graduate degrees was reported by residents (37%), business owners (28%), and visitors (48%).

Chart 2: Educational qualification of respondents

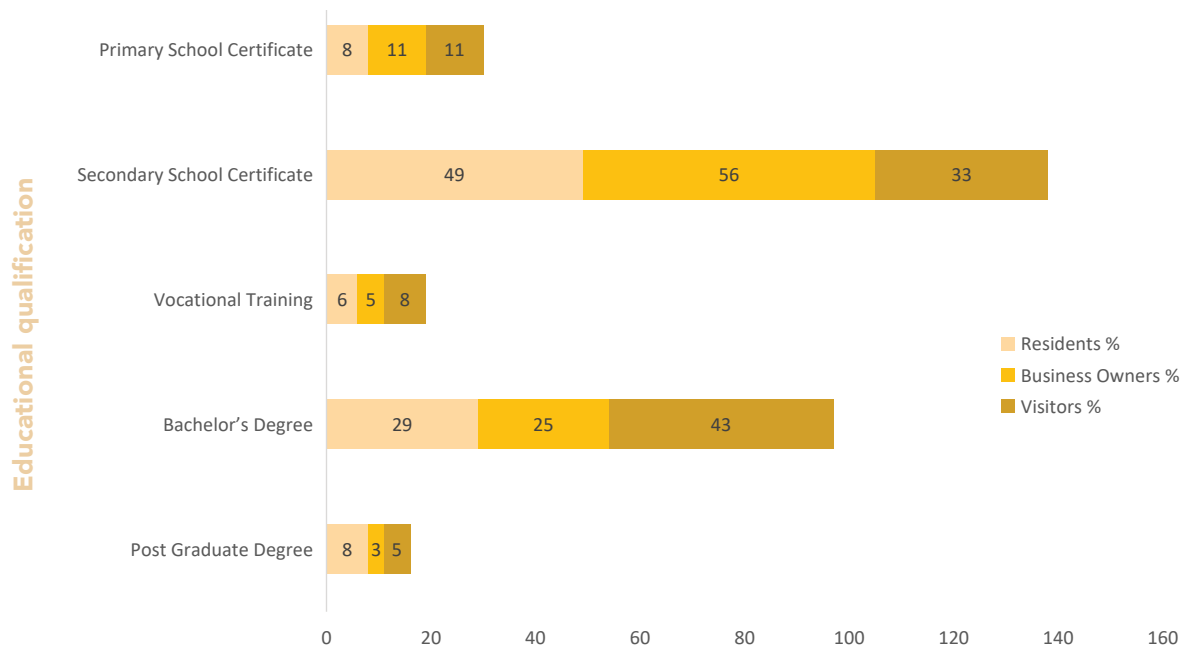


Table 4: Age range of respondents

Age Range	Residents %	Business Owners %	Visitors %
Below 18	11	3	3
18-29	36	20	38
30-39	23	39	36
40-49	18	26	16
50-64	8	12	7
65-74	2	-	-
75 and above	2	-	-
Total	100%	100%	100%

The Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports' Nigerian Youth policy categorizes persons 18–29 of age as "youth". Of Lagos Island residents, 36% are classified as youth; 4% are 65 and older; 39% of business owner are between 30 and 39, and 74% of visitors are 18 to 39 years old.

The demographic findings recorded in Tables 3 to 7 add context to the survey responses. When asked about their perceptions of residents, recreation, tourism, and leisure, 52% of residents said that it meant spending time with friends and family at home or outdoors (see Table 7). When prodded further during the focus group discussion, residents explained that, to them, outdoors meant visits to local restaurants (bukkas), going to buy sandwiches and pastries from local vendors, hanging out on the streets with friends and families after work to play games such as draughts, and going to bars. Their busy schedules limited these activities to the weekends.

For 46% of business owners, the terms, recreation, tourism, and leisure were understood as a time to relax after work; 11% did not have a clear understanding of what it meant. Interestingly, none of the respondents in the business owner and visitor categories reported going to parties in their leisure time due to their understanding of parties as social engagements and different from leisure activities. This confirms Jackson’s (2005) definition of leisure as a time free from obligations and necessities. In Nigerian culture, social engagements are seen as obligations.

However, the responses suggest that the residents, business owners, and visitors to Lagos Island do not necessarily follow Alla and Ajibua’s (2012) explanation of leisure as a choice to spend time pursuing interests such as engaging in experiences for wellness or personal growth. Overall, the findings confirm Gani and Awhang (2011)’s observation that individual perceptions of leisure time play and relaxation is confined to the free time available before and after work.

Table 5: The perception of tourism to respondents

Average Monthly Earnings	Residents %	Business Owners %	Visitors %
Hanging out with my friends and family at home or outdoors	52	34	34
Coming out to visit new places	16	9	22
The only time I relax at home after work	24	46	39
Going to parties	2	-	-
I do not understand what it means	6	11	5
Total	100%	100%	100%

Respondents were asked to identify which of the several recreational spaces in Lagos Island places they had visited. The Campos Memorial Mini Stadium on Igbosere Road was the primary recreational space for 27% of the residents. The Campos stadium has a mini football pitch, a lawn tennis court, and a mini beach ball pitch with a seating capacity for up to 5,000 spectators. The stadium hosts tournaments and competitions all year round and has become a viewing centre with large television screens for football matches in other places. Weekly football matches between clubs from different Nigerian communities are played at the stadium.

Campos Mini Stadium is a free open space and the majority of people we interviewed at the location were residents.

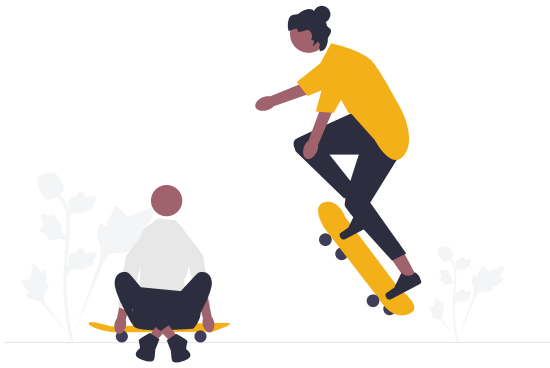
Lagos Island is strictly a place for commercial activity for 30% of the business owner respondents who said they had never visited even one of the designated recreational areas. Twenty-five percent had visited Freedom Park and 2% reported going to other recreational spaces such as the beach. Visitors to Lagos Island reported going to the Campos Mini Stadium (43%) or the Shitta Bey Mosque (11%) with its Afro-Brazilian architecture. Surprisingly, only 2% of business owners had visited Oba's Palace, and neither residents nor visitors reported visiting the palace.



Table 6: Spaces visited by respondents within Lagos Island for leisure

Average Monthly Earnings	Residents %	Business Owners %	Visitors %
Campos Mini Stadium	27	19	43
Freedom Park	15	25	22
MUSON Centre	5	2	3
Tinubu Square	19	13	10
National Museum	15	2	7
Bars	2	3	-
Jolly Jokers Club	2	-	-
The Beach	-	2	-
Shopping Malls	-	2	-
Oba's Palace	-	2	-
City Hall	-	-	2
Shitta Bey Mosque	-	-	11
Never visited	15	30	2
Total	100%	100%	100%





Tinubu Square



City Mall



National Museum



Campos Stadium



Oba's Palace



City Hall

Discussion

Recreation and leisure were understood by residents, business owners, and visitors to be the opportunity to relax, spending time outside of work alone, with friends or family engaged in outdoor or indoor activities.

Residents shared that safe and secure recreational open spaces, parks, or playgroups within close proximity to their homes would contribute to a strong feeling of community and belonging.

Older residents gathered at Campos Square reported a feeling of nostalgia, recalling that Lagos Island enjoyed community swimming pools and horse racing during the colonial era and post- independence period.

Of the business owners interviewed, 74% were self-employed and craftsmen. Those respondents shared that they were not able to engage in recreational activities for several reasons: inadequate funds, lack of time, security concerns, lack of awareness and lack of accessibility to the recreational facilities. They pointed out that the expenses related to accessing recreational spaces and paying for round-trip travel from their residences were barriers to visits with friends and family. There was a real sense that the business owners preferred to engage in their work because they did not perceive recreation as vital to human health and well-being.

Respondents were asked to identify spaces in Lagos Island that they associated with recreation, leisure, and tourism. Interestingly, the majority of respondents reported that open spaces, parks, and playgrounds were preferred locations, which captures a sense of the type of recreational activities in which residents, business owners, and visitors engage. The next most popular category for recreational activity was arts and cultural spaces such as the MUSON Centre and the National Museum. Some residents and most business owners shared that they were aware of these spaces but did not relate to the spaces as being designed for them or create a sense of belonging compared to spaces like the Shitta Bey Mosque or the Campos Mini Stadium (which, incidentally, was once a burial ground).

Table 7: Suggested recreational activities in Lagos Island

Activities for recreation, leisure, and tourism	Residents %	Business Owners %	Visitors %
 Open spaces, parks, or playgrounds	37	48	28
 Arts and cultural spaces	26	16	24
 Film screening	8	7	8
 Swimming	11	10	7
 Bars	8	10	10
 Game centres	8	9	16
 Music shows and concerts	2	-	-
 Sports (tennis and swimming)	-	-	2
Never visited any other location in Lagos Island	-	-	5
.....			
Total	100%	100%	100%



BRT LAGBUS Ticketing Booths , in front of Tafawa Balewa Square

In spite of the numerous leisure and recreational sites on Lagos Island, data showed that some respondents preferred hanging out with friends at home outside of working hours. This is partly due to the considerable traffic congestion in Lagos, making a return home a more attractive choice. Given the distance from Lagos Island residential areas to most recreation sites, weekends were devoted to nearby activities.

This finding emphasizes the need for adequate planning in Lagos for places where people can live, work, and play. Other factors that affect the use of recreational and leisure centres on Lagos Island were gender (men were more likely to use recreational spaces than women), marital status, single people were more likely to engage in recreational activities than married people, although families (with children) shared the interest in child-friendly recreational activities, personal interest, duties and obligations, time, and income.

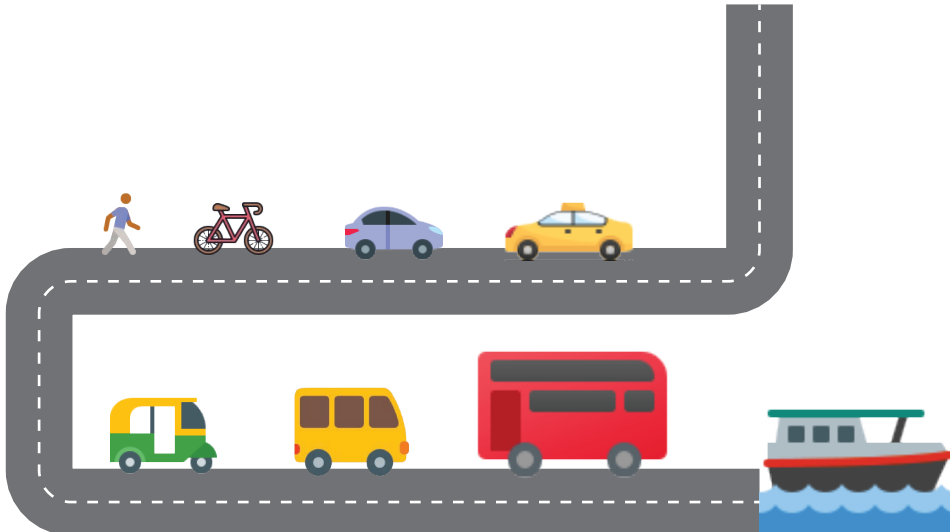
When interrogated further during the focus group discussion session, business owners reported their lack of free time due to the demands of their work as one of the factors that inhibits their recreational and leisure activities. Income was seen as a priority over leisure.

This finding reveals the need for awareness programs on the value of leisure and recreational activities for personal growth and community development, with benefits including the opportunity to unwind, relax, and re-energize which can contribute to improved physical and mental health and wellbeing. Time spent on leisure pastimes can expand personal horizons, build a broader worldview, and contribute to community building and productivity.



Infrastructure

Recreational and leisure activities in Lagos will increase when amenities and infrastructure are put in place for users. Our findings showed that road rehabilitation and effective traffic management were the topmost concerns for respondents. Along with security and affordable housing development, safe and reliable transportation routes are fundamental to increased participation in recreational activities and at the same time assure accessibility to trade and other forms of exchange that are synonymous with economic and social growth.



The modes of transportation in Lagos island include walking, cycling, tricycle units also known as Keke Marwa (three-wheeled motorized tricycles), Danfo (a minibus seating 14-18 passengers), the Lagos Bus Rapid Transit System (BRT), ride-hailing apps, private cars, and the Lagos Marina water transportation. However, to get the maximum benefits from these modes of transportation, the road network and mobility needs for all users including those with disabilities will need to be improved.

Open and free access, as well as awareness, were noted as important for visitors to ensure they can safely enjoy the Lagos Island recreational spaces, including access to the cultural and historical spaces by walking, bus, and motorcycle.



Security

Residents are often familiar with the secure areas of their neighbourhoods and the appropriate times to visit them, but security emerged as a strong concern for business owners and for visitors who shared a lack of familiarity with neighbourhoods. Lagos Island used to be perceived as safe, even at night, however, there are threats of street crimes and armed robberies and organized crime in the area.

Adequate and effective security can serve to prevent harm to the lives and property of residents, business, and visitors, and assure a timely response to security alerts. Like mobility, safety and security are key to the demand for risk-free recreational activity on Lagos Island.



Housing

The quality of available housing and plans for future housing development were sources of concern for respondents. Lagos Island has had several cases of building collapse and demolitions; rent prices are also rapidly rising. Much needed improvements identified by respondents included the need for adequate storm and waste-water drainage, dependable water and power supply, and new or improved recreational schemes and facilities. Housing needs to be developed in ways that encourage residents' participation in communal living, for example, buildings with courtyards, children's' neighbourhood parks and playgrounds, and open spaces for recreational activities would foster more inclusive leisure activities even at a residential street level.



Power supply



Water supply



Drainage system



Recreational facilities

Respondents shared that in addition to high rent costs for poorly maintained housing, Lagos Island suffered from poor resource and space management, poor sanitation and waste management, lack of security, traffic congestion, disturbance from task force units and low incomes as factors they faced on a day-to-day basis that had a negative affect on their ability to engage in recreational and leisure activities.



Community Associations

Most of the focus group participants belonged to at least one community association. These associations provide residents, business owners, and other stakeholders opportunities for collective engagement to address community issues, contribute to the social capital of their members, and provide economic and social benefits. Community associations engender cohesive communities as they collectively make informed decisions and pursue strategies to improve the quality of their members' lives. Examples of their efforts include ensuring the installation of a needed electrical transformer and employing local security operatives to guard the community. The members of the associations are kept aware of the decision-making processes at their street/neighbourhood/area level and are able to participate in coordinated activity to execute plans for the maintenance of the communities.

In Lagos Island, the recreational spaces are either provided by the government through the local authorities, donated by private organizations, or provided by the collective efforts of the community. These spaces are seldom sufficient or accessible for a large part of the population.

Exceptions are Campos Mini Stadium, Tinubu Square, and Freedom Park which stand out as recreational centres used frequently by the people of these communities.

Gentrification of Lagos Island, if not undertaken responsibly will lead to the further disintegration of the socio-cultural characteristics of the area.



Social cohesion

Strategies that foster social cohesion contribute to the socio-economic health of a community. Socially-cohesive communities cooperate in the optimal distribution and use of public resources, thereby reducing the costs and inequities associated with provision of public goods and services such as healthcare, education, roads, and waste disposal. Communities that demonstrate a high degree of trust are less susceptible to violence and conflicts that may arise over access to scarce resources.

Cultural patterns, values, and norms are embedded within communities. However, over time these have shifted as a result of urbanization, industrialization, and the struggle for economic survival. The provision of spaces for recreational activities, affordable and inclusive arts, and cultural events will contribute to the valued benefit of social cohesion.



Managers and policy makers

Managers of cultural and historical attractions shared that visitors to their spaces came from outside of Lagos Island for their social development and creative art services. None of the respondents had been invited to participate in community or policy-making discussions focused on urban or tourism development in Lagos Island, but they stated their willingness to engage and participate in such activities.

We reached out to government policymakers to learn their perspectives on Lagos Island development. Representatives from three ministries (Ministry of Transportation, Ministry of Tourism & Culture, and Ministry of Urban Development & Physical Planning) participated in this study. Lagos Island was seen as the cosmopolitan centre and business hub of Lagos. Lagos is an important landmark with immense tourism potential. When asked about the extent to which they engaged with Lagos Island communities, the ministries reported regular interactions with the local government chairmen and chiefs (traditional rulers) when conducting community projects. The representatives noted some regular interaction with residents but did not say how often. They confirmed that while they did not speak to all residents, they did interact with Baálès, Chiefs, and Local Government Chairmen when conducting projects in communities. They also agreed on the goal to make Lagos Island safe and secure for all with the elimination of touts that dissuade visitors from the area.



Vision for Lagos Island

Lagos Island will grow economically and socially with the adoption of much needed changes:

A revival of obsolete community centres, previously a support system for residents and business owners.

Provision of affordable, quality housing; consideration of options for rent prices to be capped or frozen.

Investment in accessibility and mobility schemes to improve traffic flow. Include provisions for certain areas to be set aside for pedestrian and cyclist traffic.





Installation and maintenance of inclusive recreational spaces for all, including residents and visitors with disabilities.

Investments in lighting, community policing and police stations, and safe and secure environments for events where people can get to know each other and build community bonds.



Recommendations

Based on the findings from the Lagos Island pilot project, the research team offers the following recommendations: for consideration by private, public, and third sector organizations.

- Cities need to meet the diverse and sometimes conflicting needs of residents, businesses, and visitors. This will require collaborative planning efforts to ensure that the priorities of the various stakeholder groups are considered, and compromises, where required, reach a consensus among all stakeholders. Expectations for change need to complement Lagos' development trajectory.

- Community engagement needs to be fostered. Workshops and advisory sessions at schools, universities, workplaces, and residents' associations will build trust and strengthen social cohesion in a way that empowers the public to contribute to socially relevant issues, including development of the recreation sector.

- Public and private sector participation is required. Tourism, as a component of Lagos State urban planning efforts, will shed light on the socio-economic benefits of recreation and leisure.

- Encourage private and public institutions to promote work-life harmony by assuring that work schedules protect opportunities for leisure time and supporting recreational outlets for their employees.



- Offer Lagos Island stakeholders cultural awareness sensitization workshops and activities. Focusing on the island's unique heritage as a valued resource will reassure residents of the socio-economic benefits of the leisure economy.

- The provision of public spaces, well-planned roads and traffic patterns, sanitary and healthcare facilities, emergency response providers, and welcoming and well managed recreational and tourist sites that accommodate the needs of all visitors are infrastructure improvements that will bolster the social, cultural, and economic welfare of all stakeholders.

Concluding Remarks

The Lagos Island pilot project confirmed the value of understanding the perspectives of diverse stakeholders about tourism and urban planning.

Unanimously, and perhaps surprisingly, participants shared that this was the first time that their feedback had been requested for a project that affected them directly, a choice that made them feel recognised and valued. They also shared that they would like to continue to be a part of future work that arises from this project. The project revealed that interested participants from various stakeholder groups are passionate about their environment and willing to contribute to its advancement and development if and when they are allowed to do so. Their efforts will build confidence and social cohesion into the anticipated success for sustainable tourism development outcomes. Such engagement carried out in the early development stages of a tourism project will contribute to the quality of the tourist experience, as well as the resident experience, whilst also identifying ways to contribute to socio-economic development for businesses in the environment.



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