**Climate change, urban management and livelihood challenges in low-income neighbourhoods of developing countries**

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**Abstract**

*Increasing rate of urbanization in developing countries has long attracted the attention of urban managers and environmentalists across the globe. Shortages arising from limited finance for urban facilities have necessitated in the need to complement public effort by resident groups like Community Based Organizations (CBOs). Although, high demographic change and the accompanying negative consequences have mainly characterized ill-served enclaves of burgeoning cities, emphases of intervening organizations have largely de-emphasized peculiar self-help efforts in the increasingly diverse segments of low-income cities. This article explores the extent to which urban facility provision and management by ill-served urban residents has been able to tackle lingering challenges of life and livelihood in cities of global south. This study used physical, demographic and social data acquired mainly through the use of social survey methods like Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) and GIS-Based FGDs known for innovative assessment of social groups, intervention strategies and activities of self-help organizations, to explore emerging trends in infrastructure finance and urban management in the era of climate change particularly witnessed in human environments that are already battling fiscal constraints. Results show that while authorities recognize collective effort in addressing urban challenges, there is a serious negation of indigenous coping mechanisms and socio-economic peculiarities of target populations during interventions; and CBOs constantly operate under serious constraints, but, insufficient finance is only one and not the main hindrance to their success. In spite of the administrative, communal and in-appropriate intervention procedures, often overlooked by many assessors, CBOs and the beneficiaries of self-help efforts in ill-served urban residential enclaves of Minna – central Nigeria, has evolved unique membership procedures, organizational structure, decision making mechanisms, fund raising and accounting procedures, whose negation were found to have severely limited the successes of past endeavours by both local and international assistance.*

**Keywords:** CBOs, communities, ill-served enclaves, infrastructure, facilities, urban management

1. **LESSONS OF THE RESEARCH**

* Urban development activities are taken place in poor urban enclaves of developing countries with far reaching consequences on the environment and livelihood of the poor.
* The poor continue to form associations to address inadequacies in sanitation, environmental management, and adequate provision of facilities.
* Majority of the intervening activities in poor areas are carried out by the poor or low income earners to address environment, sanitation and disaster related issues.
* CBOs have evolved different avenues for funding community help projects through different modes of self-finance.
* Majority of these groups receive no inputs or assistance from the government.
* There is hardly any urban development project executed by government in full collaboration with CBOs
* CBOs have established specific areas for collaborations with all external bodies.
* Challenges of bureaucracy place heavy hurdles on the poor and discourage seeking of assistance.
* The State, local governments and their agencies are mostly needed for legitimacy of projects.
* Avenues for collaboration between CBOs and other partners in development are rarely explored.
* Most uncompleted projects suffer from lack of assistance particularly from the government.
* Elected leaders are known to be in office for unspecified period without any strong opposition.
* The selection of sensitive projects of intervention is often the reserve of the leaders.
* There is hardly any regular update on accounts or activities of the associations.

1. **ADDITIONS TO BROADER KNOWLEDGE BASE**

* Democracy should not only be seen or limited to the election of leaders.
* Aspects that make accountable and transparent leadership are also important.
* There exist negative correlations between the number of elected leaders and the number of successful CBO projects.
* Individual and organizations, and not government are needed to finance the maintenance and running costs of projects only when beyond the capacity of the poor beneficiaries.
* Most maintenance of facilities is done through effective user-fee collection and accounting.
* No strict rules for contribution towards a planned or on-going project.
* On-site contributions of cash, materials and labour from beneficiaries, volunteers, individuals and sister organizations are always encouraged.

1. **IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE**
   * There is a strong need to have institutional reforms to accommodate community organizations.
   * The people and the organizations are in constant contact with the vagaries of climate change and are also first-hand witnesses to the demerits of policy fall-out.
   * Policy implementation often suffers due to less regards given to contributions by CBOs.
   * CBOs are more effective in dealing with certain local issues than governments and external organizations.
   * Addressing climate change and other related issues of today is more effective through CBOs.
   * Community organizations need to be on the board of government ministries and local government agencies.
2. **KNOWLEDGE GAPS AND NEEDS**
   * There is the need for additional data on what constraints exist that limited collaboration of CBOs with outside organizations including sister organizations and public agencies.
   * The problem of accurate data is still complex and deserves further attention. The dearth of spatial data has in many instances thwarted the study of the accurate spatial distribution of CBOs in many case studies and further constrained by the limitations imposed by the lack of geo-referenced maps desired by donors and beneficiaries for effective intervention.
   * There is the need for further research on the localization of democratic processes and principles in leadership and related matters.
   * A study is needed to establish achievable process of integrating CBOs in formal urban administration and management.
   * Need to establish acceptable procedures for accepting CBOs especially those from poor areas into city management board.
   * Need to establish powers and limits of community organizations as partners in urban development and management.
   * Need to adapt pro-poor approaches to the entire urban areas forming an administrative entity.