

Slum Settlements Regeneration in Lagos Mega-city: an Overview of a Waterfront Makoko Community

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Abstract

Urban degradation is caused principally by urbanization process, however, most of the environmental problems in Lagos suburbs result largely from its unplanned landuses, swampy nature of built areas and weak development control. Other critical problems that bother minds also include lack of open space, poor management of flood channels and substandard housing. This paper discusses the possible intervention strategies in the regeneration effort of Makoko - a submerged residential enclave located in Yaba local government area of Lagos.

The research method which is both narrative and statistically descriptive in nature enables the author engage in a detailed literature study of the chronological development of Lagos with view to determining how the mega city came about the current level of degenerating infrastructural facilities. The study found that the principle of cooperative leadership by government at all levels is fundamental to making important difference in qualitative development controls of the study area. It however concluded that the duo role of the public and traditional power structure of the community leaders must be involved in the conception and implementation of Makoko's environmental planning programmes.

Keywords: Community, Slums, Regeneration, Urbanization.

1.0 Introduction

The process of urbanization which means specific changes in the distribution and structure of population as well as in a size and character of a settlement, their network or system, has many sided relationship with slums formation. The rapid rate of urbanization witnessed in the last century has produced more slums in the major cities of the world, particularly in developing countries where thousands of rural people move into the major cities at large proportion. According to the available statistic, an average of 6,000 people move to Lagos every day, thereby adding to its already bursting population of 18 million people(George, 2002). Coincidentally, the United Nation has estimated that the city of Lagos will swell to 25 million by 2015. The consequence of this is unabated gross degradation and decay of all the constituent fabrics of the city.

The prediction that half of the world's population will live in urban area by the year 2007 is a serious matter that can make minds to wary. First, the forecast is a huge jump from the 30% of people living in urban areas in 1950. Some 3.2 billion of the world's 6.5 billion people live in cities today, and the number will increase to 5 billion –an estimated 61% of the global population by 2030(UN Commission on population and Development). In sub-Saharan Africa, it is observed that traditionally rural based society is fast disappearing, with more than half of its roughly 700 million people projected to be living in urban areas by 2030, United Nations has warned; and Africa will cease being a rural continent. Base on the present trends, urbanization in Africa is neither orderly nor sustainable. Squatter settlements and informal sector enterprises proliferate despite numerous urban development plans.

It is worthy of note that Lagos being one of the fastest growing cities in the world has witnessed some of the earlier predicted increases and its attendant consequences. Its current patterns of urban development and human activities have led to environmental degradation, and have created a serious threat to continued human existence, and to the sustainability of life on earth. Urban growth and land conversion involving human activities are major threats to the ecosystems, and modify energy flow and nutrient cycles (George, 2002). Planning resources and strategies are needed to address these diversities of urban problems and more importantly slum development. Many planners are calling for slum improvement, particularly the Commonwealth Association of Planners.

It is very much possible to make cities more habitable through effective planning (implementation and monitoring of planning projects and policies) and community action. This aspect is fully discussed at the later end of this paper.

2.00 Reviewed Literature

Urban regeneration is often defined in relation to some basic elements including urban sustainability. In a more critical outlook, Robert Peter (2006), an advocate of city reformation has defined urban regeneration as “comprehensive and integrated vision and action which seeks to bring about a lasting improvement in the economic, physical, social and environmental condition of an area that has been subject to change”. This simply implies that regeneration or revitalization of any part of urban area will entail a well detailed and precise approach.

Lichfield (1992) has identified major themes (concerns) that have dominated previous eras of urban change and policy. These include: the relationship between the physical conditions evident in urban areas and the nature of the social and political response; the need to attend to matters of housing and health in urban areas; the desirability of linking social improvement; with economic progress; the containment of urban growth; and changing role and nature of urban policy. More often than not a particular chosen approach of tackling the problems of that sort is constructed with a long-term strategic purpose in mind.

Fig. 2 provides an illustration of the interaction between these themes and many other factors. It also indicates the variety of issues involved in urban regeneration and the multiplicity of interrelated outputs.

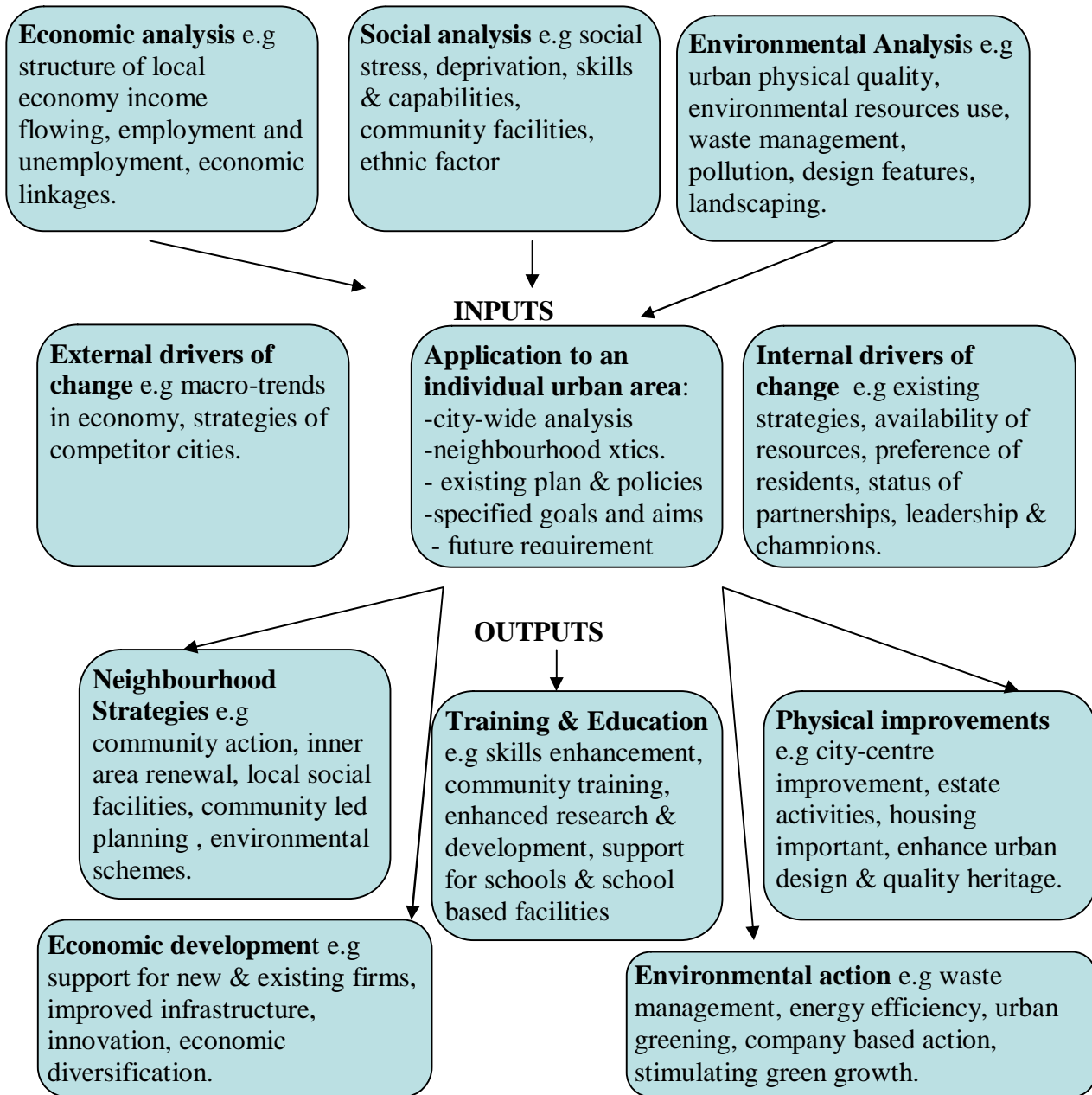


Fig. 2.The Urban Regeneration Process according to Robert, P and H. Sykes (2004)

According to literature, the earliest use of the word ‘slum’ is reported as having occurred in the year 1812 and the introduction of slumming as a fashionable pursuit in 1884. Going by history Britain was affirmed the first country to have formed a definition under section 1 of the Housing Act, 1930 for administrative purposes.

The UN-Habitat (2007) simply defined slum as “a heavily populated urban area characterized by substandard housing and squalor”. This straightforward definition reflects the essential physical and social features of slums. Generally, slums in the traditional sense includes housing areas that were once desirable but which deteriorated after the original dwellers moved on to new and better parts of the city. The condition of the old homes declined as they were progressively subdivided and rented out to lower income people.

A slum is also a heavily congested and often poorly built temporary human settlement, mostly with no security of tenure and prone to antisocial activities, which is characterized by a shortage of safe drinking water, inadequate power supply, lack of proper sanitation and scarce medical and social facilities. The settlements are mostly erected using plastic sheets, mud walls, tin sheets or cardboards which often leak during rains and are very risky in case of fire outbreaks. These settlements are also destroyed by local authorities or land owners at frequent intervals.

The narrow and winding paths of slums provide a favorable environment for criminal and antisocial activities because the area becomes almost inaccessible to security forces. Chasing and capturing criminals in slums is difficult, as they have better knowledge of the escape routes and hideouts. Utilities are mostly non-existent and there are often pools of stagnant dirty fluids along with rubbish dumps. The drainage system is open and poorly maintained and that often mixes with drinking water due to leakages in pipes. This exposes the residents of slums to various ailments and diseases.

The definition also encompasses housing areas that were once respectable or even desirable, but have since deteriorated, as the owners have moved to new or better areas of the cities. The quality of dwellings in such settlements varies from the simple shack to permanent structures, while access to water, electricity, sanitation and other basic services and infrastructure tends to be limited (Alagbe, 2005).

A slum household is a “group of individuals living under the same roof that lack one or more of: access to safe water, access to sanitation, secure tenure, durability of housing, and sufficient living area.” (Uduak, 2009). Slums have come to include the vast informal settlements that are quickly becoming the most visible manifestation of urban poverty in developing world cities. Such settlements are known by many different names and are characterized by a variety of tenure arrangements. In all cases, however, the buildings found there vary from the simplest shack to permanent and sometimes surprisingly well-maintained structures, but what most slums share in common is a lack of clean water, electricity, sanitation and other basic services.

The United Nation Expert Group (UNEG) recently recommended to policy makers and international bodies what they considered to be a more “operational definition” of a slum, one that is intended to enable better targeting of improvement programs aimed primarily at resolving the physical and legal problems faced by slum dwellers. According to the UNEG, a slum is an area that combines, to great extent, the following characteristics: inadequate access to safe water; inadequate access to sanitation and other infrastructure; poor structural quality of housing; overcrowding; insecure residential status.

The characteristics are being proposed because they are largely quantifiable and can be used to measure progress toward the Millennium Development Goal to significantly improve the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020 (United Nation Habitat, 2007).

3.0 Makoko, the study area in focus

Metropolitan Lagos which takes up about 33% of the area of Lagos state has a total area of 1,183 square kilometers. A total of 455sq. km. of the 3,577sq.km of the entire state land is water body, wet land and mangrove swamps. From a land area of 4sq.km on the island, and an estimated population of 28,518 in 1871, the population of the city grew to 126,108 in 1931 and the land area expanded to 62.8sq.km. by 1952, the population of Metropolitan Lagos, (whose boundary had expanded to include some rural settlements) had reached 346,137. By 1978, the population of metropolitan Lagos had risen to 3.8 million, and in 1979 it was 4.13 million. The rapid urban growth which Nigeria has experienced is well manifested in Lagos, the major parts of which are the product of modern economic, social and political forces in interaction with traditional culture which was the factor that distinguished life in the city from that in the countryside. Lagos was the capital of Nigeria from 1914 up to 1991. The city was stripped of its status when the Federal Capital Territory was established at the purpose-built city of Abuja. Lagos population was projected to 11.85 million by 1997; and 13 and 24.4 million in 2001 and 2015 respectively. This without prejudice to the national population census figure of over 5.5million recorded for the ever growing mega city.

The riverside settlement of Makoko is located in Yaba local government area of Lagos metropolis. Makoko lies within the south-eastern part of Metropolitan Lagos. It is bounded on the North by Iwaya and University of Lagos, at the West by Ebute-Meta, South by the Third Mainland Bridge and East by the Lagos Lagoon. Makoko community sprang up in the early nineteen century. The settlement is surrounded by mass of abundant Akoko trees, wild swamp vegetation and animals. The community is dominated by the Ilajes and Eguns, there are also Yorubas with few Igbos and other ethnic groups. Land ownership is vested in two families namely: the Oloto and Olaiye family. The residents of the area are confronted with severe flooding especially during the wet season (Oduwaye, et al 2010)

Figure 1.0 depicts the location of Makoko within Lagos metropolis. The settlement which is partly on water and land has a shifting population of about 100,000 by estimation. It is being described as a hiding place for people from all over Africa. This suggests that the community is occupied by migrants, majorly from the coastal communities of the Niger delta, Benin, Togo and Ghana. The major occupation of Makoko residents fishing and trading. The settlement remote location around the lagoon coupled with the poor status of its inhabitants have made the community suffered from serious environmental and infrastructural deficiencies, including inadequate access roads, schools, health care facilities and housing. Most of the houses are made up of planks and other weak materials (see Plates I and II). The socio-economic characteristics of the residents ,quality and type of buildings and environmental situation of the study area

have shown that the urban poor are at the mercy of the government and have little or no powers to alleviate their present situation.

The settlement's major problem is linked to inadequate shelter and services (lack of a safe water supply, sanitation, and drainage; inadequate solid waste management; use of low-grade domestic fuels; health risk from overcrowding and the occupation and degradation of the environment. This range of urban environmental problems is being experienced in many other places in Lagos

for two reasons mainly. The first reason has to do with location- the neighbourhoods or areas where poor people can afford to live are often undesirable places of real estate because they are located near industrial area, some near water front as in the case of Makoko settlement. They are exposed to high levels of air and water pollution, and are more subject to damages by natural hazard. Second, poor communities often lack political power to pressure government for a cleaner environment or to obtain environmental services such as a clean and reliable water supply, sanitation, waste collection, and drainage.



Fig.1: Map of Yaba Local Government area council showing Makoko community

Source: Wilbur Smith & Associates and UNDP.(1980): Master Plan for Metropolitan Lagos.

Research Methodology

Primarily, the data used in this paper were synthesized through series of surveys carried for a period covering 22 months (December 2009 and October 2010) by the authors and other researchers. Furthermore, the secondary data helps to build up on the preliminary work carried out on the environmental degeneration of some parts of Lagos .Majorly, the researcher made several field trips to the study area to carry out survey on physical environmental appearance and existing

infrastructural facilities of the community. Many photographic shots taken are as seen in Plate i and ii which revealed the deplorable environmental condition of the study area. Moreover, the historical facts of the area were revealed through the segmented oral interviews conducted with the community stakeholders. This combination provides a more reliable explanatory technique which allows a cross-fertilization of idea from researchers, residents and stakeholders in Makoko development effort.

As a result of poor nature of the study area's terrain, which hinders easy access to the study area, a sample frame of the entire residential area was not covered; however, the chosen sample frame was adequately substantiated with recent socio-economic determinants of housing surveys carried out in the year 2010. The random selection of the population was achieved by subdividing the entire area into four clustered population samples viz:

- Makoko North
- Makoko Central area
- On Water residents
- South-East Makoko

From this subdivision a total of 50 dwelling units were selected to find out their conditions vis-à-vis the terrains nature of the house vicinity and the availability of some basic house facilities.

The house types comprises of cement bungalows, brick bungalows, plank/bamboo bungalows, terrace buildings and storey buildings. A reconnaissance survey of the study area revealed the total housing units in the study area to be 1,059.

<i>Housing type</i>	<i>Number of units</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Plank/bamboo bungalow	550	52
Cement bungalow	265	25
Storey building	138	13
Brick bungalow	74	7
Terrace building	32	3
Total	1,059	100

Table 1: Population of Housing types in Makoko.

Source: Oduwaye L. et al(2010)

House Characteristics (status, type and number of rooms per dwelling unit).

From table 1, the study carried out by Oduwaye (2010) reveals that a total of 141(55.5%) of the houses are owner occupied houses and 113 (44.5%) rented houses.132(52.0%) of the houses are plank/bamboo bungalows, 64(25.2%) cement bungalows, 32(12.6%) storey buildings, 18(7.1%) brick bungalows and 8(terrace buildings).87(34.3%) of the buildings have above 8 rooms, 58(22.8%) 8 rooms, 38(15.0%) 7 rooms, 34(13.4%) 6 rooms 14(5.5%) 5 rooms 13(5.1%) 4 rooms and only 10(3.9%) less than 4 rooms.

This reveals the fact that majority of the houses in the community are owner occupied. Most of the plank/ bamboo houses have about 6 or more rooms.

Further enquiries through direct interview and personal observation revealed that cheap and readily availability of plank/bamboo as building materials and culture attributed to the choice of this type of dwelling unit.

Living conditions within Makoko are not good. The huts stand on stilts over stagnant, sewage-filled marsh water and are connected by rickety, perilous plankways. The area is also crowded, with five or six people to every dwelling and an average of 3.5 persons per room

Household Characteristics Survey

The study carried out established that majority of the residents are poor, lack basic infrastructural facilities, live in precarious situations and engage majorly in informal activities as a source of income.

Table 2.0 depicts the sorry state of the household infrastructure of the study area (Makoko settlement) a habitation that was situated within a metropolitan setting yet still have to exhibit deplorable state of environmental decay. As revealed in the table, quite over 80 per cent of the sample population lived in area below 30 sq m and majority of which have lived in Makoko continuously for over 10 years whose accommodations lacked water supply and without separate kitchen or basic household facilities.

Table 2.0: Makoko slum: Household characteristic

Household characteristic	Percentage of total
Living area below 30 m ²	80
Living in 1 or 2 rooms	40
Two or more households per unit	20
Less than 10m ² per person	30
Without own water supply	90
Without own separate kitchen	70
Without separate washroom	28
Owner occupiers	50
Residents in Makoko over 10 years	80
Formal occupation	30

Source: Field Survey, 2010

Despite the obvious presence of modern planning principles at a closer proximity within the same local council area, the community has continued to characterize poor government responses to inadequacy of good infrastructure and housing needs of the community. However, over the last few years it has been argued that a cheaper, more practical and more satisfactory way to improve the

living standards of the Makoko is to use the energies of the people themselves in aided self-help schemes.

The aided self-help concept, or indigenous approach, is based on the premise that all non-conventional housing is a normal response to housing shortages and indicates the determination, effort and ability which the urban poor invest in order to consolidate and improve their life in the city. It is possible to argue with this premiss on the grounds that it is immoral to consider as normal the unequal distribution of economic and social resources which gives rise to squatter settlements, and that aided self-help programmes simply maintain this inequality.

4.0 THE REVIEW OF SOME PLANNING EFFORTS IN LAGOS

Various efforts have been made in time past by government and individual corporate entity to improve the physical environmental condition of Lagos. Few of such commendable efforts are outlined below.

4.1 The Lagos Central Planning Scheme (LCPS of 1951)

This scheme was to involve the re-housing of about 200,000 persons over a period of 5-7 years. The scope of the scheme comprises the clearance and redevelopment of 70 acres of built-up land bounded approximately by Board Street, Balogun Street, and Victoria Street (now Nnamdi Azikiwe Street). The two main objectives of the Scheme are: First, the owners were promised that the plots would be re-allotted to them. Without this promise the scheme would not have been approved. To enable them to repurchase their land, cost of redevelopment was to be subsidized from public funds. The owners themselves were to bear a rate assessed at 20% of the compensation paid for each plot when it was vested in Board. For example, if the owner of a house received 1,000 pound when he was dispossessed, he would be offered a freehold of a redeveloped plot in the area if it were of the same size for 1,200 pounds. He then had to find the money to rebuild it. Second, the Board accepted the responsibility to re-house those who had to be moved. It built a housing estate at Surulere (a residential segment of Lagos metropolis) where terraced bungalows of 1-4 rooms were provided at a subsidized rent of 25 shillings a month. The estate was to re-house the displaced persons only temporarily. After the original owners had returned there, the houses on the estate would be available to receive those to be moved under the next phase of the scheme. The scheme came into operation in October 1955 under vehement protests. An association of the residents listed 22 objections ranging from demolition of 3 mosques to the fear that all old people were to be sent to an asylum. In spite of these protests, slums clearance proceeded and by March 1959, six thousand persons had been moved and 1.4 million had been paid in compensation and about 90,000 pounds in awards for hardship.

4.2 The Post Independence Era with Urban Renewal in Lagos Metropolis

Lagos State government within the past 30 years had taken decisive step to solving the numerous slum cases within the metropolitan areas like Maroko, Ajegunle, Bariga, Ijora-badiya, Okokomaiko. The lack of basic services and infrastructures that make for decent living condition in these areas, the substandard housing units, filthy and unplanned society and of course the high rate of crime makes it to be of concern to the Lagos State government. The consequence of this is the frequent demolitions of houses and properties of the urban squatters on government land whenever such landed property is needed by the authority concerned. The case of Maroko is still fresh on the mind of Lagosians, particularly on the minds of those whose houses were not spared by the effect of the demolitions. Maroko was regarded as a 'free-land-for all' by urban squatters and urban poor, so it became a sprawling settlement for them. In no space of time the area became the largest slum in the nation, and the poor living condition of the inhabitants become a source of what seemed to be a genuine concern by the then Military Administrator of Lagos State. There were overwhelming support for the demolition of the squatter settlement by environmentalists, but on the condition that the affected squatters will be relocated by the government (Agbola, et al, 1997). The resettlement of Maroko residents was not organized and, by July 1990, the residents who were in dire need of shelter forcibly moved into uncompleted government houses at Ilasan and Epe. They claimed to have waited in vain at Eti-Osa Local Government Offices for members of the State Resettlement Committee.

4.3 The Olaleye-Iponri Urban Renewal Scheme

Situated close to the city centre, the composite village of Olaleye and Iponri was settled on by different families for over a hundred years. It is bounded to the north-west by Western Avenue, on the west and south by a railway track, to the east by a large earth drain and to the north-east by Alaska Estate. The implementation of this scheme was unique as it involved the collaboration of Lagos State Government and an international agency, United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat). It also introduced new methods of consultation and community participation. Its approach was basically that of rehabilitation rather than of total clearance. The rehabilitation involved upgrading, renovation and provision of adequate facilities for the area- in terms of financial costs, administrative responsibilities, social and physical costs, this proposal was preferred.

5.0 FINDINGS FROM MAKOKO ENVIRONMENTAL SURVEYS

The followings are findings emanating from Makoko environmental and facilities surveys.

1. That the state of the physical environment of Makoko settlement has reached an epidemic proportion which needs an immediate intervention of either the state government or the federal government.

2. That it is possible to successfully implement a sustainable environmental programme in Makoko settlement through community and stakeholder participation
3. Government (whether state or federal) should take a proactive role and provide adequate support (technical/policy) to local authorities when implementing environmental programmes, that are supported by community efforts. With continued support the community has the potential to lead its own development.
4. Planning and implementation of any Programme in the settlement should involve the community (bottom-up approach) right from inception and through all the project phases. A bottom-up approach fosters a smoother flow of information about a development programme in any community and leaves little room for misinformation
5. There is need to review governance institutional framework in the country in order to incorporate community structures into the national institutional framework
6. To maximize development benefits, there is a need to optimize, integrate and coordinate activities of the local government council, agencies and partners within the community.
7. Political will from government level to community level is fundamental in the planning, execution and success of any development programme.
8. Capacity building programmes and community physical infrastructure construction that is planned for the settlement may require adequate time to implement and should take into consideration inherent existing constraints in an implementing institution
9. The concept of recognizing contributions by various actors enhances participatory development
10. Entry into development programmes intended for informal settlements of this nature should always enjoy the local authority and such programme processes should be absorbed within the working structure of the local authority to foster sustainability

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MAKOKO SLUM REHABILITATION

Usually slums are often "fixed" by clearance. However, more creative solutions are beginning to emerge such as Nairobi's "Camp of Fire" program, where established slum-dwellers promise to build proper houses, schools, and community centers without government money, in return for land on which they have been illegally squatting on for 30 years (TCSM, 2004). The "Camp of Fire" program is one of many similar projects initiated by Slum Dwellers International, which has programs in Africa, Asia, and South America. Here different approaches have been put forward to help to redeem Makoko's degenerated environment and indeed will serve as a planned action renewal strategies for other similar slum areas in Lagos metropolis.

6.1 Two- levels Bottom-Top Approach

One of the viable approaches in mitigating the Makoko environmental degradation is a bottom-top approach rather than the traditional top-bottom approach. Policies should be made and executed at the three levels as follows:

At the local level, where planning is brought to the grass roots through public enlightenment programmes, public participation needs to be effected by regular consultations between state and local governments, stake holders, religious leaders, community groups and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). The local government authority should provide action plans for public/private partnerships in the delivery of prioritized urban basic services and facilities. Monitoring of development through effective development control is crucial at this level.

At the state level, the policies should deal with the distribution of population and economic activities within the state, including decentralization policies. The functions and responsibilities of State government organs, Lagos State Development and Property Corporation(LSDPC), Lagos State Ministry of Housing need to be examined and their resources harmonized. More importantly, the overlapping roles of Lagos State Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, the Urban and Regional Planning Board and the Urban Renewal Board need to be streamlined to ensure a comprehensive management procedure for the environment of the area.

6.2 The Community Development Approach

This neglected age long method otherwise known as a participatory approach has been proved to be effective to slums upgrading. This is a source of citizens' empowerment as it builds community, maximize local control and let the people decide. A neighbourhood level community development in most nations of the world is spearheading the drive to decentralization, focuses on economic revitalization and providing inner city residents with a range of services that government do not provide. This resident's initiative support programme as a model for rebuilding slum settlement will go far to creating new and diverse economic opportunities; mobilizing residents to become involved in the process and in short encouraging a holistic approach to community development. This must seek to ensure consensus through the fullest possible participation and co-operation of all stakeholders with a legitimate interest in the renewal of the area.

More importantly, this study also recommends that the water front and its appropriate setbacks in which majority of the buildings in the study area are situated should be reclaimed. A larger portion of the reclaimed land should be developed to a profit making recreation center (eg Lagoon front, resort center, water front charlets, etc).

7. 0 Conclusion

The active and vibrant metropolitan Lagos is a sprawling settlement located partly on poorly drained swamps, with a high water table, poor soils and inadequate drainage. These environmental features coupled with an unprecedented rate of urbanization, have made Lagos' slums a peculiar one and therefore impose an ineffective applicability of western assumptions in its urban regeneration. In the context of Makoko slum community clearance as highlight in this paper, western approach to regeneration will not totally work bearing in mind the differences in cultural values and resources availability. As such this study has recommended strongly the strategy of cooperative leadership both at governmental and community level. For a good urban renewal to emerge in Makoko settlement, the following steps must be reconsidered: first relocation of residents on the Lagoons to a more befitting area, should be made mandatory and legal for the affected people. Structures clearance must commence after details quality assessment of those structures have been carried out.

The rehabilitation of Makoko settlement would be aimed at the simultaneous adaptation of the physical fabric, social structure, economic base and environmental condition of the area. This simultaneous adaptation through the generation and implementation of comprehensive and integrated strategy that deals with the resolution of problems in a positive manner (Agbola and Jinadu,(1997). The entire scheme will ensure that the planned strategy and the resulting programmes of implementation are developed in accord with the aims of sustainable development. In summary therefore it is a recommended that the public and traditional power structure of the community leaders be involved in the conception and implementation of the marked plan area.

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Appendices

Photo plates: Makoko Environmental condition in Pictures



Plate I: Poor environmental condition in Makoko
Source: Uduak (2008)



Plate II: An Aerial view of the market extension on water in Makoko
Source: Author's Field Survey 2010