COMMUNITY CONSULTATION IN RISK MANAGEMENT: EXAMPLES FROM NIGERIA

By Bolanle Wahab, Ayobami Abayomi Popoola, Samuel Medayese

ABSTRACT

Disaster and risk experience remains a global pandemic. However, community as an embodiment of stakeholders is an essential aspect to managing the global risk exposures. The argument is that the immediate community plays a vital role in risk management. The study methodology used in exploring community consultations in risk management was through the triangulation of researchers' experience and a sectoral approach which entail the convergent parallel mixed-method of community consultations. Secondary data was obtained from some selected community consultation programmes on risk management organised by selected risk management agencies in Nigeria's South-Eastern and Northern regions. The Youth Transformational Leadership Collaborative Initiative within the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), National Youth Service Corps and the NEMA-Military Joint Task Force, and the Borno State residents' programme reports iterate that communities are frontline stakeholders in risk management.

A case study of community disaster risk management in some African countries was also documented. Extensive consultations with critical stakeholders coupled with a healthy sustained collaboration among the stakeholders led to improved coordination in the fight against insurgency in Borno state communities. It was identified that coordinated information dissemination between communities and the Task Force was an effective mechanism for community policing and risk reductions. It was identified that a low level of public awareness of disaster risk, unavailability of relevant data, weak capacity and inadequate personnel, lack of political will, amongst others, were the challenges to community consultation in risk management in Nigeria. The study proposed a community-based disaster risk management approach, which entails intensive and extensive consultation to build people's capacity of coping with disaster risks towards creating safer and resilient communities.

KEYWORDS Communities; Community Consultations; Participation; Risk management

Corresponding Author: Ayobami POPOOLA, SARChI Chair for Inclusive-Cities, University of KwaZulu Natal, Durban,
E-mail: bcoolay2@yahoo.com

Bolanle WAHAB, Department of Urban and Regional Planning, University of Ibadan, Nigeria

Samuel MEDAYESE, Department of Town and Regional Planning, University of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa

1. INTRODUCTION

With the global increase in disaster and environmental incidence and issues, the emphasis has been placed on community consultation as a strategic mechanism and support risk management to ensure sustainable development. Stakeholders have increased their momentum in disaster risk awareness, sensitization, and consultations owing to the impact of various risks, disasters, and hazard anomalies on over 200 million people (FAO, 2015; UNISDR CRED, 2015). One of the factors identified as contributing to frequent natural disasters is climate change (Wahab and Popoola, 2018; Adeleye et al., 2019). Across the globe, cities in African (Ibadan, Lagos, Durban) and other developing nations (India, Bangladesh) are classified as more vulnerable and are at high risk to climate change realism (Nkomo et al., 2006; Betsill and Bulkeley, 2007, Lwasa et al., 2015; Connolly-Butin and Smit, 2016).

The realities of changing climate are evident in several Nigerian coastal and inland cities where flooding has become more frequent, intense, and occurring in locations previously not at risk (Adewole et al., 2015; Adeleye, 2019). The coastal communities in Lagos, Ondo, Bayelsa, and the Rivers States are highly vulnerable to climate-induced risks such as sea-level rise, storm surges, and flooding. Simultaneously, the inland cities are equally exposed to temperature increases, flooding, and windstorms. Studies have reported that the increased risk exposure and multiple hazard incidence can be attributed to poverty, space pressure, overcrowding, and weak adaptive capacity (Cutter et al., 2012; Shepherd et al., 2013; Pourazar, 2017; Wahab and Popoola, 2018; Thomas et al., 2019). In 2012, twenty-nine out of thirty-six states in Nigeria experienced flooding (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), 2012; Ebuzoeme, 2015; Adeleye et al., 2019, Oduah, 2019; Akukwe, 2019; Xinhua, 2020). However, in all of these, experiences have indicated insufficient information and preparation to combat disasters, thereby making Nigerian stakeholders' responses to be reactionary to provide relief materials to the affected population.

The role of community consultation in eliminating reactive risk management approaches cannot be downplayed. Bahir (2010) iterates that risk management consultations proffer communities a better understanding of the livelihood stress created from the risk exposure and how best to manage the exposure towards improved wellbeing. Community consultations are the keystones for achieving futuristic socio-economic sustainability. Mclaughlin (2007) recognised that maintaining safety and reducing communal vulnerability is dependent on a collective habit among dwellers through consultation. Whatever the effects of the identified risks may be, it would be essential to determine effective ways of informing and sensitising communities about the causes and the solutions if the right measures could be taken on time and long-lasting. The perception is that collective reasoning through consultation amongst societies of the same goal can be critical to risk management sustainability.

This paper examined the significance of community consultation, sensitisation, and engagement in risk management and how it can be undertaken. It explains the underlying concepts of risk, community risk management, community consultation, and sensitisation. Relying on secondary data, the paper discusses the principles of and steps in community consultation and answers why encourage community consultations in risk management, the stages in the consultation and sensitisation process, the requirements and advantages of community involvement in risk management. It also presents the types and levels of community involvement, the affected population's roles, community consultation tools, and risk sensitization activities. Finally, the paper presents community consultation and sensitisation challenges in risk management and offers suggestions on addressing them. It encourages risk management agencies to offer affected communities a range of options for preparedness, mitigation, adaptation, and reconstruction and recovery activities.

2. CONCEPTUAL UNDERPINNING

2.1 COMMUNITY AND COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

The meaning of the term "community" is vital to the proper understanding of this paper. Various scholars have defined community in various literature ways (Gbefwi, 2004; Olise, 2007; Pradeep and Sathyamurthi,2017). The concept of community ranges from micro-systems (which include small groups, extended family units, clusters of isolated homesteads, clans, villages, neighbourhoods, or small towns) to macro systems (such as cities, countries, regions, states, nations, or the entire human population) (Thomas, 1973). According to the World Health Organization (2008), a community consists of people living together in social organization and cohesion. Its members share in varying degrees political, economic, social, and cultural characteristics and interests and aspirations, including health. The definition of community as a group of individuals and households living in the same location and having the same hazard exposure, who can share the same objectives and goals in disaster risk reduction (Victoria, 2009), remains very important to this study. The organizational structure of most communities is as follows: (i) Village Head (Paramount Ruler); (ii) Village Council (Chiefs); (iii) Quarter/Ward Chiefs (Baale); (iv) President/Chairman (Community Development Committee); (v) Compound Heads (Baale) (vi) influential Leaders, and (vii) Members of the Community (the people). In every community, there are three groups of leaders: formal leaders, informal leaders, and opinion leaders. This structure allows the community to identify the starting point in their consultation, mobilisation, and sensitisation processes on risk management issues.

3. FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Community Liaison Committee (CLC) (2005) identifies ten basic principles fundamental to any practical consultative, participatory, or consensus process. These are:

- Purpose Driven – For any effective community consultation, people need a reason to participate in the process. They need to know what they stand to gain by participating in the process.

- Inclusive, not Exclusive - All parties with a significant interest in the issue (irrespective of age, literacy level, and gender) should be allowed to be involved in the consultation without bias or discrimination by the facilitators.

- Voluntary Participation - The parties who are affected or interested must participate voluntarily. No party should be forced into the process without their consent.

- Self-Design - The participants should be allowed to design their process regarding when, where, and how to meet.

- Flexibility – The process should be designed flexibly to allow for the opportunity to cross-breed ideas to arrive at the most effective decisions.

- Equal Opportunity - all parties must have equal access to relevant information and the opportunity to participate effectively throughout the process.

- Respect for Diverse Interests - Acceptance of the diverse values, cultures, interests, and knowledge of the parties involved in the consensus process is essential.

- Accountability - The parties are accountable both to their constituencies and the process they have agreed to establish.

- Time Limits - Realistic deadlines are necessary throughout the process to prevent any delay that might be costly to the concerned communities.

- Implementation - Commitment to implementation and effective monitoring are essential parts of any agreement.

4. COMMUNITY CONSULTATION IN RISK MANAGEMENT: TOWARDS A SAFER AND INCLUSIVE SPACE

Active participation through consultations remains a critical success factor in community risk mitigation programmes. This is because the residents are first-hand victims of societal risk exposures and incidence. The community would not participate actively in any risk management programmes that are alien to them or have no idea, information, or experience. Effective community consultation and sensitisation on risk management will ensure the success and sustainability of any risk management project or programme to be put in place. It can also ensure a reduction in the number of casualties and damage likely to occur due to the risk. The community's ability and capacity to mitigate, adapt, and recover from a hazard's impact would be ascertained through consultation. According to UNISDR (2004), collective capacity can be physical, institutional, social, or economic. These dimensions of capacity were why Holzmann and Jha (2008) advocated for a collective balance between community and government priorities towards disaster-risk-reduction outcomes. Also, community members may be unaware of specific hazards, especially if they have never experienced one (e.g., flooding). In such situations, the government needs to organise a comprehensive engagement with communities inform of elaborate dialogue and information-sharing with them at each stage of a risk assessment process (Holzmann and Jha, 2008).

The need for community participation as a driving force for spatial empowerment remains critical to urban sustainability (Aigbavboa and Thwala, 2011). The argument is that without prejudice to the communal skill and capacity contributions of participating residents in projects, they remain critical to policy and development sustainability and inclusive space production. Aigbavboa and Thwala (2011) exemplified that community participation as a process of coming together of various stakeholders and actors in the built environment can be maximised in the production, planning, and management of housing development towards ending exclusion. The World Bank (1996) points out that participatory action among stakeholders is critical to achieving fairness in managing the public good within a space. Recognising the need for communal safe space, Archer et al. (2014) argued that local people and other actors such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are critical to the governance of emergency management, infrastructure provision, and urban servicing.

Arguing from the climate change vulnerability adaptation within the urban space, the view that urban poor integration and participation was undoubtedly needful in community-based adaptation to climatic solution goals (Forsyth, 2013; Archer et al., 2014) and urban adaptation to be inclusive to local perspectives. Thus, urban resilience, which gives more room to community voices, can reshape the definition of climate-related problems (disaster-related) and, hence, solutions to them so that urban governance becomes more inclusive, transparent, and accountable (Archer et al., 2014). Recognising social equity, justice, and participatory governance to community sustainability, Cuthill(2011) alluded that inclusiveness and communal sustainability are interwoven (Conole, 2012; Amado et al., 2013; Bhorat, 2020). Summing this, Burr (2011:1) mentioned that the local lens and perspective to public policy and planning could not be ignored in configuring for a progressive response. This is because contemporary planning theories acknowledge the value of community participation in the development process of our built environment, suggesting that community

involvement has the potential to achieve a more sustainable outcome (Van Empel, 2008:549).

5. TOOLS OF COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Cuthill (2001) cued that community consultation approaches, relying primarily on formal hearings and public meetings, slowly evolve into a diverse range of interactive methods being used early in the planning and decision-making sequence. Direct community participation is educative, developmental, therapeutic, and integrative, legitimising instrument and a necessity to bring about the desired change. However, the need for effective community consultation and sensitisation requires selecting appropriate tools to achieve the required results in terms of risk management (IFRCS, 2011). The following tools are suitable and appropriate for effective community consultation. Their selection depends to no small extent on the results the facilitators want to achieve, the social and economic status of the target community, and available resources for the exercise (IFRCS, 2011):

a. Publications, Audios and Video Materials, and Social Media Publications:

Publications in print or digital materials are a means of promoting public awareness and disseminating public education messages about the effects of risks, especially in literate communities. Professionally produced and pre-scripted videos are tools that can be used for community consultation about risks. The videos are essential for documentation, public relations and an essential means of tapping into the community's indigenous knowledge and practices, stimulating local creativity, sharing stories, and disseminating peer-to-peer education on various aspects of risk management. Social media includes Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube that permit people to communicate and network online without needing traditional organizational support. They can be used to disseminate information, build trust and cohesiveness and reach out to others on risk management. It is a trendy yet inexpensive medium of communication for millions of people in today's world. They promote knowledge sharing and are an effective way to deliver public awareness or sensitization.

b. Curricula, training modules, and presentations:

The development of curriculum and the Africanisation of modules to speak to Africa content has remained essential to responding to the Africa planning problem. Identifying this, Nkoane (2006) presented that recognising the local community problem and its adequate engagement cannot be sustainably achieved without the communities presenting the narrative. This presents a divergence away from the Europeanisation of the experiences of the local African people. Mheta et al. (2018) emphasised that the curriculum's decolonization needs to embrace the meaning of an educational problem. It is this study a disaster problem from the perception of local stakeholders. This is because it presents a paradigm shift away from the criminalisation of the local and indigenous content and approaches of the people and local universities. For example, as Mheta et al.(2018) narrate, modern built environment spaces and their configuration have continued to reflect the European experience and rigid educational templates. Iterating on the South African experience, Knight (2018:273) opted that "...decolonization and transformation at the local level, speaks to wider issues relating to the institution and post-Apartheid..." This points at a local spatial limitation emerging towards the solving of local problems. The notion was that there had been the flaw of incorporating relevant and emerging local issues in the training spaces of African schools, Polytechnics, and universities. Important information such as those on disaster risk management can be conveyed through events such as meetings, seminars, workshops, webinars (online seminars), and face-to-face training for community members. Participant interactive exercises, such as learning by doing and social networking, can also be conducted in face-to-face instruction to facilitate community-based intervention and provide standalone guidance to users. Presentation materials such as cue-cards, flipcharts or boards, consultation plans, and policy display through video and animation are also useful.

c. Performance and the Arts:

The role of indigenous knowledge such as poetry reading, storytelling, singing, and dancing remains important to community consultation. These can involve volunteers and community members, including males and females, the youth and elderly, as performers and audiences. Mheta et al. (2018) advocated embracing multilingual signage to better integrate the local content into problem-solving.

d. Games and Competitions:

Sporting events, games, and competitions offer a powerful, useful, and engaging route to what IFRCS (2011) calls' edutainment.' Soccer, lawn-games, inter-house competitions, quizzes, and debates can be arranged between school-based, community clubs within local government areas or state-based teams to disseminate risk management messages and maximize community sensitization involvement. The Oyo State Universal Primary Education Board organises regular quiz competition amongst public primary schools on risk management under the "Education in Emergency" programme. Games such as traditional chess (*ayò*) are top-rated in south-west Nigeria and usually attract a crowd of adults. Roleplay, problem-solving, and simulation games can also help people learn about complex information such as risk management.

e. Radio, Television, and Early Warning Telecommunication:

Are essential to disseminate information such as early warning messages to communities, especially on impending flood disaster. Radio jingles, short plays on local radio and television are being used extensively in Nigeria at the moment by the National and State Emergency Management Agencies, Ministry of National Orientation, State Ministry of Information, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Physical Planning, and Urban Development to warn people of the danger of building on flood plains and dumping of solid waste in drains and watercourses. Irregular supply of electricity is, however, a challenge. Early warning systems can also be developed through text and voice messages to targeted populations. Text messages are proven to be valuable in Sri-Lanka for delivering early warning messages.

Box 1: Sustainable Project's (SIP) Community Participation Approach

SIP-facilitated projects are Community-Driven Development (CDD) Projects where the control of decisions and resources for projects is anchored on the community. Project initiation rests with the community, with state and local government, private sector, and development partners playing the role of facilitators and enablers. To initiate community-driven projects are community organizations made up of community associations, traditional institutions, age grades, women organizations, youth associations, faith-based organizations, cooperatives, business-oriented associations, and professional associations.

All the programmes and projects undertaken by the SIP are a community- and participation-driven based on the following strategies (Wahab, 2007):

- "Bottomup" participatory, inclusive and collaborative approach as opposed to "topdown" technocratic approach
- Healthy and mutual working relationship between local communities, the private sector, local and State governments, and development partners.
- Initiation, design, implementation, and management of selfsustaining, peoplecentred development programmes and projects with sufficient inputs (information, ideas, and resources) from relevant stakeholders.
- Efficient and sustainable utilization/operation, management, and maintenance of physical and social infrastructure provided in communities.
- Encouragement of beneficiary participation in development projects to ensure project benefits, project continuity, and replication in other community parts.
- Routine preparation of project-specific strategy and actorspecific action plans on every community development issue facilitates healthy and sustainable project development and management.
- Development of community-based planning process builds local capacity to plan sustainable development and benefits from the insights, knowledge, and support of local communities.
- It is strengthening the local government's community development unit to mobilize communities for participatory grassroots development effectively.

There is a continuous dialogue, interaction, and close cooperation between project communities and relevant stakeholders through the SIP Technical Unit on each of the SIP-facilitated projects. However, the tempo seems to have gone down lately due to the paucity of funds for monitoring. The interactions must be sustained for project continuity in the overall interest of the communities.

Table 1: Tools for Facilitating Community Participation

Contextual analysis	Understanding stakeholders	Identifying assets and vulnerabilities	Defining needs, demands, and projects
• Interviews with key informants • Storytelling • Focus groups • Timelines • Mapping damage, risks, land uses • Activity or climatic calendars • Community mapping	• Socio-anthropological analysis • Participatory stakeholder analysis • Interaction diagrams • Venn diagrams • Proximity-distance analysis • Wealth ranking	• Capacity and vulnerability analysis • Proportional piling • Institutional analysis • Cultural asset inventories	• Surveys • Hearings • Participatory planning • Design charts • Participant observation • Preference ranking • Information centres and fairs

Source: ALNAP, 2003

6. FORMS AND LEVELS OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN RISK MANAGEMENT DECISIONS

Forms of community involvement differ in citizen involvement in decision-making about risk management and the desired outcomes. Mercy Corps (2009) identifies seven levels or forms of participation: passive participation, participation in information giving, participation by consultation, participation for material incentives, interactive participation, active participation, and self-mobilization. At the lowest end of the spectrum is "passive participation," in which community members participate by being informed about something that will happen or has already happened; at the upper end of the spectrum is "self-mobilization," when communities organize and take the initiative independent of any external actors. ALNAP (2003) summarizes community involvement levels in decision-making into seven types, as shown in Table 2.

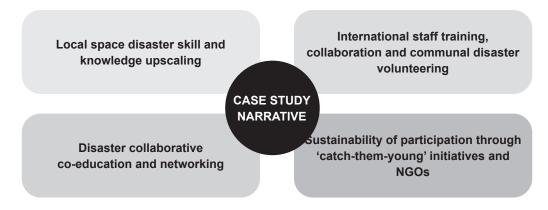**Table 2: Types and Level of Community Involvement in Decision Making**

Type of participation	Role of the affected population	Level of control
1. Local initiatives	Conceives, initiates, and runs projects independently; agency participates in the community's projects.	HIGH
2. Interactive	Participates in the analysis of needs and programme conception and has decision-making powers.	
3. Through the supply of materials, cash, or labour	Supplies materials and labour needed to operationalise an intervention or co-finances it. It helps decide how these inputs are used.	
4. Through material incentives	Supplies materials and labour needed to operationalise an intervention. Receives cash or in-kind payment from the agency.	
5. By consultation	Asked for its perspective on a given subject but has no decision-making powers.	
6. Through the supply of information	Provides information to the agency in response to questions but does not influence the process.	
7. Passive	I was informed of what is going to happen or what has occurred.	LOW

Source: ALNAP (2003)

7. CASE STUDIES OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN DISASTER MANAGEMENT IN NIGERIA

Drawing from case studies in Nigeria's community participation activities, the researchers identified four main pointers that define community roles and interactions in disaster management (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Thematic Narrative of Community Participation in Disaster Management in Nigeria

Source: Authors' Technical Constructs

Local Knowledge Upscale and International Staff Training through International Collaboration with Bournemouth University Disaster ManagementCentre (BUDMC), Nigerian Red Cross Society (NRCE), and Administrative Staff College of Nigeria (ASCON).

The collaborative network between the Nigeria National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and the Bournemouth University, United Kingdom, was held from 1st to 5 March 2010 at Liyafa Palace Hotel, Katsina, North-Western Nigeria. The sensitization workshop aimed to acquaint the local participants and stakeholders with disaster management's fundamental knowledge and skills. This was focused on the knowledge that disasters usually occur in the local environment (community) (NEMA, 2010). The programmes also made particular emphases on disasters that are most prevalent in the North-West of the country. At the end of the workshop, participants were equipped with hands-on information about disaster management and how to prepare for, mitigate and respond to disasters in their respective areas.

International Staff Training and Collaboration with ASCON

Recognising the need for improved staff capacity (Olaniyan et al., 2008; Oteng-Ababio, 2013; Shah et al., 2019), recognised that improving staff intellectual capacity is critical to improving disaster responsiveness, policy formulation, and planning. The technical report by NEMA (2010) posited the existing transnational knowledge interaction between the Administrative Staff College of Nigeria (ASCON), Topo, Badagry, and NEMA in the training of both the staff of the agency as well as stakeholders on purely administrative, finance, and sensitization of the public on disaster management programmes. In the year 2010, there was no collaboration between the agency and ASCON; however, it is on record that the agency nominated twenty-eight (28) staff for training into various courses/ programmes at the college.

Collaboration with the Nigerian Red Cross Society (NRCE)

During the year 2010, the training department also organized the first ACEL training in collaboration with the Nigerian Red Cross Society (NRCS), as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: NEMA Collaboration Programme with NRCS

S/No	Programme/ Activity	Date	Venue	No. of Participants
1.	First-aid at work for newly recruited staff	6th-7th Aug. 2010	NEMA Headquarter, Abuja	105
2.	Advanced train the trainers on the first aid at work	21 August 2010	NEMA Headquarter, Abuja	10
3.	Intermediate disaster Management for volunteers	21st-22nd Aug. 2010	NEMA Headquarter, Abuja	102
4.	First-aid at work for AsstantDirectors and above	6th-7th Sept 2010	Onitsha Hotel Nasarawa	29

Source: NEMA Report, 2010

Volunteer Training

Disaster Management requires a multi-sector approach, and thus the need for volunteer participation and training cannot be over-emphasized. Technical participant observation reveals that the agency's staff cannot handle the emergency cases above. In this report, the training department commenced the training of volunteers on disaster management and casualty control. It is also imperative to note that NEMA has different volunteers, ranging from executive volunteers that marvel officers of different disciplines, e.g., medical doctors, nurses, engineers, and lawyers. The offer is the grassroots volunteers that are at the community level. For this purpose, the agency commenced the training of at least two hundred (200) grassroots volunteers for each local government area. A total of one hundred and two (102) executive volunteers were trained in intermediate disaster management in 2010. These sets of volunteers participated in the basic disaster management programme organized by the department. In this regard, over five hundred volunteers have been trained on first-aid and casualty handling in the local government areas.

8. NEMA/NYSC COLLABORATION PROGRAMME (SOUTH-EAST ZONE)

The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) scheme was established by decree No.24 of 22 May 1973 to reconstruct, reconcile and rebuild the country after the Nigerian Civil war. The scheme was created with a view of the proper encouragement and development of common ties among Nigeria's youths and promoting national unity (NYSC, 2017).

The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) was established in Act 12 of the Federal Republic of Nigeria's constitution as amended by Act 50 of 1999, with the sole agenda of managing disasters in Nigeria. The agency has been tackling disaster-related issues through the establishment of its formidable structures within its organization Elubeku and Fatoki (2018:1)

Urban Gateway (n.d) reported that youths' collaboration and training on disaster prevention aim to improve participants' essential mobilisation and sensitisation skills on disaster reduction. It was envisaged that the corps members' training would promote community resilience to disasters at the grassroots. The programme was designed to empower the youths with community engagement skills to create disaster awareness among the people in their communities.

Quoting Elubeku and Fatoki (2018:1), "...The NEMA/NYSC partnership is intended to reduce disaster risk at the grassroots and give Emergency Management Vanguards (EMVs) a platform to enter the communities and work with the people more formally and collaboratively. The major target of the EMV is to reach out to schools, communities, motor parks, churches, and markets to propagate the message of Emergency/Disaster Management, adding that membership of EMV is open to all genuine members of the NYSC that enthusiastically offer their skills to promote emergency and disaster management principles..." Revealing this collaboration's essence, Nigeria's South-east zone participated in the 2010 NYSC orientation programme in all the states within its jurisdiction. The corps members were trained in disaster management practices and provided with training materials and kits. They were subsequently recruited as volunteers for NEMA/NYSC Emergency Management Vanguards (EMDS). The NYSC orientation exercise programme breakdown for 2010 (Batches A, B, and C) is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: NEMA Collaboration Programmes with National Youth Service Corp

State	Batch			Total	Venue			
	A	B	C		A	B	C	
Abia	100	66	280	446			10/11/10	NYSC orientation camp beside LGA
Anambra	121	58	43	222	16-19/3	23 -	11/11/10	NYSC permanent orientation camp umuiaya, Oyi
Enugu	118	150	33	301	2010	24/7/10	9/11/10	NYSC orientation camp Agwu
Imo	110	86	90	286			10/11/10	NYSC Orientation camp Umuchi, Nkwere LG
Ebonyi	0	100	86	273	Nil		10/11/10	NYSC Orientation camp McGregor
Total	**449**	**460**	**532**	**1528**				**Afikpo**

Source: NEMA Report, 2010

Grassroots Emergency Volunteer Corps (GEVC)

The NEMA Zonal Office in Ebonyi State organized and inaugurated the grassroots emergency volunteer corps programme at two LGAsinthe State, namely Ezza North and Ivo. The breakdown is shown in Table 5.

Table 5: NEMA Grassroots Volunteer Corps Programme in Ebonyi State

State	LGA	Date	No. of recruited volunteers
Ebonyi	Ezza North	13-14/01/10	154
	Ivo	26-27/01/10	146

Source: NEMA Report, 2010

9. EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AS A COLLABORATIVE NETWORK: COLLABORATION WITH NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) is partnering with six Nigerian Universities selected from each geo-political zone of the country to undertake postgraduate programmes in Disaster Risk Management and Development Studies. This collaboration with the universities has brought significant benefits to disaster risk management and the academia in the country as some of the universities are partnering with foreign institutions in capacity building and research and encouraging their students to undertake to research Disaster Risk Reduction. The Universities are:

University of Ibadan	South West
Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria	North West
The University of Nigeria, Nsukka (Enugu Campus)	South East
Federal University of Technology, Minna	North Central
University of Port-Harcourt	South-South
University of Maiduguri	North-East

10. NEMA'S INTERVENTION ON BRIDGING COMMUNICATION GAPS BETWEEN THE BORNO RESIDENTS AND THE MILITARY JOINT TASK FORCE TOWARD RESTORATION OF PEACE AND SECURITY IN THE STATE

The activities of gunmen within Maiduguri City and the Military Joint Task Force (JTF) to locate the gunmen and their weapons led to severe disruption of commercial activities within the Fish Markets, Motor Park notorious Jajere Wards. These actions led to the severe displacement of people and subsequent sufferings followed by NEMA's evacuation of the vulnerable people, especially women, children, and the aged out of the areas.

Due to NEMA's previous activities in the areas, several residents made passionate calls to NEMA to come to their rescue. The noticeable trust and confidence in NEMA by residents of the Old City and NEMA's ability to read the trends of unfolding events in consultations among youths and other market associations in Baga Market led to effective community consultation. Afterward, all drivers, wheelbarrow pushers, and other stakeholders had open field meetings with more than 20 people expressing their minds on the danger they were exposed to in how JTF was carrying out its operations. In response, the JTF told the gathering that many gunmen, after assaulting people, ran into the market and motor parks. However, no one in these places volunteered to cooperate with the security agencies in fishing out the gunmen. It was agreed that JTF would extend market closure to 6:00 p.m. from the last 2 to 4 p.m. closure time. It was also agreed that a security centre is established in the market to ensure that they would not harbour criminals anymore.

Jajere Push

Starting from the Baga market's success, NEMA Officials proceeded to Lajere ward, one of the most notorious flashpoints, to carry out consultation and initiate meetings between the residents and JTF. Officials met various community segments, and, in the end, the people agreed to meet the JTF if NEMA ensured their safety against arrest and harassment. The trio of NEMA, NPF, and JTF, represented by the Sector Commander, LT. Col. Eteng, met the residents of the Jajere for about 3 hours when youths and community leaders informed the JTF of harassment and floggings by JTF men. The JTF informed the people that the military got angry when residents attacked their men on patrol, and the gunmen ran into the areas without residents disclosing their identity. Above all, the JTFassured, the people in Maiduguri, only to restore security, and the residents must assist in peace restoration through Community Security by identifying criminals.

Transmitting/Dissemination of Information to JTF

Lt. Col. Eteng told the residents that their identity, either names or phone numbers, should be hidden before making calls to him on any susceptible activities or anyone in their area. He instructed NEMA to publicly dictate his phone numbers to the residents he implored to call him if any of his men misbehaved. The JTF re-deployed and transported more than 100 men from the area to other areas immediately after the meeting. Due to the flow of information around the city about NEMA initiatives and the JTF's new friendly disposition 2and rapport, a foiled attempt at robbing in the Sanari ward was successful. Community policing and the fast flow of information to the JTF encouraged the JTF to further consult in other city wards.

Challenges of Community Consultation in Risk Management in Nigeria

a. Public's low level of awareness of disaster risk

This is, perhaps, the greatest challenge facing community sensitization in risk management in Nigeria. There is generally a low level of awareness among members of the society of what constitutes a risk.

b. Unavailability of relevant data

There is presently a dearth of relevant data at the level of communities in Nigeria on the effects of various hazards that cause risk and the statistical analysis to predict future events' probability. Data gathering is still the lowest ebb for lack of funding for the necessary research and disseminating results. Several Planning, Research, and Statistics departments do not have the ability and capability to engage in meaningful data generation activities and have no fund to commission consultants to undertake it for them.

c. Inadequate budgetary allocation and funding for prevention

There is no budget dedicated to DRR in some states in Nigeria, and where there is, the budget is paltry. Adequate budgetary allocation and timely disbursement are critical for meaningful and successful consultation programmes in risk management at all levels. Across the globe, weak political will and policy direction to provide funds for disaster risk projects and plans remains a limitation towards a commitment to collective management of disasters (Cardona and Yamín, 2007; Colombia Ministerio, 2009; ISDR, 2011). The commitment of government and public stakeholders in funding communal disaster risk reduction has been critical to evaluating government commitment to place sustainability and responsive governance (UNDP, 2007; Benson, 2009) in both risk reduction plans and disaster response.

d. Lack of Disaster Management Equipment

At the state level, DRR issues are not formally taken as state responsibilities but passed on to State Emergency Management Agencies (SEMAs) with little support. The issue of equipment is accorded low priority. The emergency management agencies at the federal, State and local levels lack the necessary equipment and facilities for risk management operations, including sending early warning signals, transportation, logistics, rescue, recovery, and rehabilitation operations. The consequence of this is the inadequate, low, and ineffective mobilisation of stakeholders for risk management operations.

e. Inadequate Personnel

Risk management agencies are short-staffed (Akujobi, 2013). NEMA has little capacity to coordinate DRR issues at the state and community levels. Available personnel is grossly inadequate, not only in number but in the right category. Critical personnel, especially those with fire-fighting and swimming/diving skills, are too few. In 2011, the Disaster Vanguards and Community Support Clubs were formed in the FCT to improve resilience, reduce vulnerability, and prepare teams for disaster response at the community level. In Oyo State, Emergency Volunteers are just being established in some LGAs.

f. Unintended Consequences of Community Participation

Community consultation and eventual participation in disaster risk management empower communities, but the outcomes can be unpredictable. The participatory process may give rise to new actors or interests or create conflicts between organizations that previously worked together harmoniously (World Bank, 2010). Guiding the participation process includes making sure that people's expectations are realistic, especially if they believe that large amounts of funding are available.

g. Non-establishment of State, Local and Community Emergency Management Agencies

Some states in Nigeria have not established their SEMAs. Simultaneously, the Local Emergency Management Agencies and the Community Emergency Management Committees (the organs that should drive community activities in disaster management) have also not been established. This continually incapacitates local communal response to disaster management. Reasons for this range from lack of resources to cover costs related to start-up, continuous operations, disaster risk reduction projects, response recovery, and rehabilitation activities, weak political will, and lack of appropriate training and capacity building programmes. Consequently, many such states and local governments, and grassroots communities do not have disaster risk reduction plans and cannot organize stakeholder consultation. States have also not established a DRR Platform for coordination of mechanisms between stakeholders engaging in DRR activities. The various warnings about impending heavy rains that would result in flooding in specific towns and cities are not adequately relayed to the grassroots people, and the required sensitization programmes/activities are not conducted.

h. Building Public Understanding and Political Will

Understanding the community consultation targeted at solving public interest is critical. Bahir (2010) argued that public understanding is an imperative mechanism in disaster management's participatory development approach. Achieving this participatory synergy is, however, dependent on an active political will. There are inadequate attention and a seeming lack of interest on both the elected and career officials in prioritising risk reduction and management programmes in Nigeria. Continuous consultation in risk management programmes for sustainable community development is not given adequate and priority attention. The required strong and sustained political will on the federal, State and local governments in Nigeria is near absent.

i. Lack of Synergy and Cooperation among Emergency Management Agencies

NEMA and some SEMAs are operating as rivals and competitors trying to outdo one another instead of cooperating on risk management aspects. The Channels Television's breakfast programme, Sunrise Daily, on Thursday, 25 July 2013, reported the South West Zonal Coordinator of NEMA, Iyiola Akande, as saying that officials of his agency had been repeatedly chased away each time they attempted to undertake any form of emergency activities in parts of Lagos by LASEMA officials on more than four occasions in recent times and some NEMA officials were allegedly arrested on the instruction of LASEMA officials at the site of a collapsed building. Perhaps, LASEMA should invite NEMA and not the latter rushing to a disaster location. This situation clearly shows no good working relationship between the two agencies, which is not healthy for a sustainable risk management program.

j. Poor utilization of ICT

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) have shaped how information is disseminated to citizens and how people are connected within and between communities in all nations of the world. However, governments in Nigeria and their agencies are not taking

maximum advantage of the ICT in the risk management process, especially community mobilisation. Concerted efforts by all stakeholders are required to build on these communication tools and use them in promoting the active participation of the media for high-level mobilisation and support of the civil society.

k.   Lack of Partnership

For an effective community engagement in risk management, a partnership is very crucial. Well-structured partnerships with civil society organisations, the private sector, and the three government levels are a reliable way to mobilise support and secure/attract resources for risk management programmes in Nigeria. The Sustainable Ibadan Project (SIP) established partnerships with Oyo State Ministries, Departments and Agencies, the eleven local government councils in Ibadan region, the organised private sector and philanthropists, academia and community development councils in each local government area to mobilize residents' energy and resources including funds, technical and managerial skills required in its water and waste management projects. As UN-Habitat (2013) rightly observes, partnering communities enables better response to hazards. Communities exposed to risks have a detailed knowledge of how natural hazards affect their neighbourhoods and, if so empowered, can undertake risk mapping exercises, identify cost-effective actions, protect locations within their communities, and recommend affordable and acceptable materials to build sturdy shelters.

11.   CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The increasing urbanisation in Nigerian has continually put at the fore vulnerability and risk management thinking. The risk management approach provides a more systematic and integrated approach to the prevention of incidents. It enables more significant innovation and efficiency in the design and delivery of services to the community. This paper recognises that increasing the safety of communities involves developing a broad range of strategies to increase the communities' capacity to deal with risks. These strategies are the

responsibility of both the emergency service and risk management agencies, other stakeholders, and the community. The key to fostering responsibility and ensuring the sustainability of plans, policies, and strategies is dependent on the involvement of all actors in the risk management process.

The forward argument is that the government in Nigeria should embrace a risk-management process as a matter of necessity. Thus all stakeholders, led by the public risk management agencies, should adopt a community-based disaster risk management approach, which entails intensive and extensive consultation to build people's capacity of coping with disaster risks. This will reduce people's vulnerability, thereby developing safer and more resilient communities.

The government at all levels should adopt climate-related risk reduction strategies which involve protecting critical infrastructure. For risks that cannot be reduced cost-effectively, risk transfer measures such as insurance and catastrophe risk pools/bonds should be introduced in all the 36 states of the federation and the federal capital Abuja as a way of mitigating disaster impacts on physical assets. In all of these approaches and activities, adequate consultation and mobilisation of all rural and urban communities are germane to practical, proactive, and sustainable risk management. They should be accorded priority backed by strong political will and adequate funds. As a lesson of experience and best practice, the SIP framework of community consultation and sensitisation should be replicated in other communities across Nigeria.

In collaboration with the organized private sector, the three government tiers in Nigeria should tap the enormous resources available in the communities and deploy them on risk management projects. Effective collaboration is required between communities, local and national governments, NGOs, and the private sector to initiate, nurture, replicate, and upscale risk-management interventions.

All stakeholders should make conscious efforts to sensitise, educate and motivate children and youth on disaster risk reduction to meet their needs in terms of school safety, child-centred risk assessments, risk communication, and critical elements of disaster management to enable them to function as the drivers of change in the communities.

The success of any risk-mitigation programme at the community level depends on the community members' active participation who are first-hand victims of any dangers of risks. The public organised private sector and civil society groups need to collaborate to routinely empower rural and urban communities through information on how to handle the events that may occur in their communities due to disaster risks. The information should be passed across to the affected community's people through the communication channels available in their areas and in the language they speak and understand. By this, the people would protect their communities against any risk based on the acquired information, thereby reducing the number of casualties and damages likely to occur due to any risk.

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