

Community Contributions Towards The Development And Implementation Of Low-Cost Housing Policies To The Urban Poor In Kisumu City, Kenya

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to determine the Kenya Government housing policies And strategies for housing the urban poor in Kenya, and how the citizen have been involved in the policy formulation process. Objective of the article was to determine the contribution of the community in the development and implementation of housing policies towards the provision of low-cost housing in Kisumu City, Kenya. The research question was: what contribution has the community made in the development and implementation of low-cost housing policy to the urban poor in Kisumu City? The study adopted quantitative survey research design. Primary data was collected through structured interviews/interview guide, self-administered questionnaires (Delivery and collection questionnaires), observation and check list. Secondary data was collected from Kenya government national housing policies, national development plans, research publications, internet among others. Quantitative data was summarized, categorized, interpreted and analyzed using Tables and percentages. Simple random sampling was used in this study. The researchers' target population of 218,766 and sample size of 384 was ideal for this method of sampling. Statistical package of social sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the data collected from the field. Correlation analysis was done on both dependent and independent variables with supply of electricity as the control group. Findings revealed that 80 (20.83%) the community collaborated with the Government in providing land/materials for Low –cost housing development and lack of good policy/subsidy for the implementation process. Recommendations for policy action included review of the current national housing policy and implementation strategies and further research on urban planning, community participation, county budgetary base and experimental pilot projects in Kenya. Research ethical considerations like plagiarism, confidentiality among others were adhered to.

Keywords: Community, participation, housing policies, implementation, low-cost, urban-poor

I. INTRODUCTION

In the recent past, housing has been a key concern globally. In most cases, public or social housing policy is blamed on shortages of rental stock for low incomes and consequently increased homelessness. According to the Federal Republic of Germany (1988) this has been criticized in Germany, UK and USA for not involving public participation effectively. The reduction in the provision of public or social housing has been seen as the main reason for these shortages. In Germany for instance, the provision of new

social housing virtually ceased in the 1980's resulting in severe shortage of housing in 1990s giving rise to considerable homelessness problem. On the other hand, West Germany attributed the shortages as being consequent upon the influx of refugees from Eastern Europe in the 1980's (Ibid).

The work of Yates, Burke, Jacobs, Milligan and Radolph (2004) in Australia, posited that the growing problem of housing affordability emerged across all housing sector over the last few decades. According to Hall and Berry (2003), it is manifested in the declining access to home ownership among younger generation and a significant loss of lower cost forms

of private rental housing across metropolitan and non metropolitan areas, and the declining viability and residualisation of the public housing sector, which has resulted from the combined pressures of demand from groups with high needs, concentration of public housing in large distinctive estates and constraints on public sector investment. It has however been argued that public policy participation might bring a solution.

The low-cost housing has not been a new phenomenon in South Africa. A survey by the Department of Housing (1994) recommended a community involvement in a new Housing Policy and strategy formulation for South Africa and committed the Government to the establishment of viable, socially and economically integrated communities situated in areas allowing convenient access to economic opportunities as well as health, educational and social amenities. According to the policy, all South Africa's people were expected to have access to a permanent residential structure with secure tenure, ensuring privacy and providing adequate protection against the elements: portable water; and sanitary facilities including waste disposal, and domestic electricity supply.

Similarly, Kenya like other developing countries has put emphasis on providing decent and affordable housing for the low and medium income groups (GOK, 1989-1993). However, in the last two decades, the urban housing scene has deteriorated as a result of Kenya's poor economic performance, resulting in serious housing deficit. Studies done by GOK (2006-2011) and Ondola (2015) found that this deficit has led to the proliferation of informal settlements, poor standards of construction of housing units, construction of unauthorized extension in existing estates, and increasing conflicts between tenants and landlords especially in low-income areas. Consequently there has been a need therefore to involve community in policy formulation and decision making to solve the impasse.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

High rate of urbanization, increasing poverty and escalation of housing costs and prices have made the provision of low-cost housing, infrastructure and community facilities one of the daunting challenges in the socio-economic development of Kenya. The search on low-cost building materials and construction techniques has been limited thus not providing viable guidance to the development of low-cost housing. Moreover, stringent planning regulations and high infrastructural standards has been an impediment in low-cost housing delivery system (GOK, 2004). While in the 1980's the housing short-fall in Kenya was about 60,000 units per year, the number has increased to about 150,000 units per year (Ibid). Increased public and private investment and the escalating Housing costs has tended to push prices steadily beyond the reach of poor urban dwellers country wide. Problems such as proliferation of informal settlements, insecurity, poor standards of construction of housing units, construction of unauthorized housing units, construction of unauthorized extensions in existing estates and increasing conflicts between tenants and landlords was witnessed in estates such as Nyalenda, Manyatta, Kanyakwar (Obunga),

West Kolwa (Nyamasaria), Kogony (Bandani) and Kaloleni due to the failure by the government to provide subsidies and incentives towards provision of low-cost housing (UN Habitat, 2005).

Today there is no physical development of low-cost housing units in Kisumu in the last 20 years or so after the World Bank completed funding the proposed phases of Migosi site and service scheme in the early 1990s. Failure by the government to address the above problems will lead to insecurity, blockage of access roads, water and sanitation problems, increase in public health related diseases among others. The study was therefore intended to determine the contributions of the community in the development and implementation of housing policies towards the provision of low-cost housing in Kisumu City, Kenya in order to solve the above problems.

III. COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF LOW-COST HOUSING POLICIES TO THE URBAN POOR

Ordinarily, citizens are the members of the community as well as the public. The work of Fox and Meyer (2005) labored to explain that citizen participation is the involvement of citizens in a wide range of activities that relate to the making and implementation of policy which include the determination of levels of service, budget priorities, and the acceptability of physical construction of projects in order to orient government programmes including housing.

More studies by Ondola (2014) and Craythorne (2007) articulates that public participation is defined as the sum total of all citizens and communities – deliberately and willingly taking part in a goal-oriented activity for progressive development. Public participation therefore involves the participation of members of the public who are interested in solving issues like provision of low cost housing for citizen. Consequently, public participation towards development succeeds on any particular, in matters of housing the poor urban when interested members of the public are actively involved. This sentiment work well, according to Thomas (2008) when all organized and unorganized, public or private groups of members of the public representatives are involved to deliberate on low cost housing impasse. In a more wider perspective, Hai (2010), Yambo (2016) and Brezovsek (2005), contended that public participation is a process that combines mainly four basic criteria which are including individuals; those who volunteer; and so far identified NGOs and influential government institutions existing in the county. Based on these four facts, research done by Hai (2010) authoritatively asserts that the involvement of businesses and civil society - consumers, private entrepreneurs, students, employees, citizens and community groups, NGOs in designing public policy is critical if the Government of developing countries are to improve the transparency, quality and effectiveness of their policies as well as establishing the legitimacy of the public policy. It is therefore imperative to involve the community/citizens in housing policy formulation for effective implementation. Moreover, the prevailing Socio-economic and political conditions of a country also determine

or shape the network of a particular policy in a country. Lack of accountability to the citizen to predict the policy formulation in developing countries has also deterred and slowed down housing policies on low cost housing.

Community participation in policy making has been popularized. According to Ondola (2015), Baxter (2014) and Yambo (2016) involving members of the community in decision making also mean empowering and enfranchising them for effective participation. As a result, officials of local governments nowadays heavily rely on citizen inputs to stay informed about public concerns as well as to gain insight into citizen preferences especially in matters of housing. In county governments in most countries, citizen/people participation in the decision making and implementation of policy have benefits such as a constructive diverse viewpoints on pertinent issues, sense of ownership of projects, feeling of civic pride and ownership. As put forward by Okewole and Aribigbola (2006), upholding citizen participation, prevents the abuse or misuse of administrative resources, authority and political power including good will.

As much as community involvement has proved to be significant, good in promoting governance in public institutions (Fox & Meyer 2005). On the other hand, it was however, equally found to be derogative. In particular, Ondola (2015) and Yates et al (2004) asserted that shortcomings are also associated with community/public participation, for instance, it is time-consuming, costly, and slow and it can also evoke a negative reaction if citizen inputs are not taken into account considerably. In the rural areas the hardship has been clear in that some rural folks are semi-literate and lacks exposure to policy issues. This shortage manifests itself in the poor quality of the housing fabric and lack of basic services such as clean drinking water. The policy aims at enabling the poor to access housing and basic services and infrastructure necessary for a healthy living environment especially in urban areas, encouraging integrated, participatory approaches to slum upgrading, including income generating activities that effectively combat poverty (Baxter 2014). In Kisumu County, Kenya as revealed by Ondola (2015) the government has been promoting and funding research on the development of low cost building materials and construction techniques, harmonizing existing laws governing urban development and electric power to facilitate more cost effective housing development. This has been done by involving members of the community, formal and informal private sector in the process financed through budgetary allocations and financial support from development partners and other sources. The Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Empowerment creation launched by the Government in June 2003 was intended to off-set the negative effects and impacts to the vulnerable groups of our society created by reforms and liberation programmes in the economy. In its commitment to improved housing, the Government introduced a National Policy that comprehensively addressed the shelter problem (GOK, 2004).

IV. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted quantitative research design (Creswell, 2002). This method was adequate to this study because it

generalized from a sample to a population so that inferences were made about some characteristics, attitude, or behaviour of the target population (Babbie, 2001). From table 1, the target population was 218,766. It was from this total population that the study sample was draw

Area	Male	Female	Total	Area in sq km	Density pp/sq km
Manyatta	31,591	31,346	62,937	5.3	27,327
Nyalenda	25,669	23,706	49,375	8.9	12,679
Kanyakwar (Obunga)	4,380	4,196	8,576	8.5	1,009
Kogony (bandani)	7,150	6,811	13,961	13.1	1,066
West Kolwa (Nyamasaria)	36,560	33,842	70,402	12.2	5,771
Kaloleni	6,467	7,048	13,515	2.1	6,436
Total	111,817	106,949	218,766	50.1	54,288

Table 1: Target Population

Table 1.1: Sub location area population including the informal settlements in Kisumu. (Source: 1999 GOK Census)

Simple random sampling was used in this study. The researchers' target population of 218,766 and sample size of 384 was ideal for this method of sampling. The Pearson product moment correlation coefficient which the test yielded was + 0.86. The correlation was high enough to judge the instrument as reliable for use in this study (Mangal 2004).

Data collection procedure involved delivery and collection of the questionnaires through meetings or face to face contact and ensuring use of structured interviews. Both quantitative and qualitative data was analyzed by summarizing, categorizing and interpreting the data using tables. Frequencies and cumulative frequencies were calculated and correlation analysis done using SPSS.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Kenyan central and county government housing policies has not met the objectives due to low community participation and policy implementation strategies. Policy formulation has been adopting up-bottom approach instead of bottom –up approach thus excluding the community in low-cost housing needs assessment.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE COMMUNITY IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF HOUSING POLICY

The following factors were given by the respondents as the basis of community contribution in the development of low-cost housing:

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

According to sessional paper No.3 on National Housing policy for Kenya, the Government was to facilitate Community groups willing to contribute their labour resources towards the improvement of on-site infrastructure by community labour constructing for infrastructure development and maintenance work and establish a slum upgrading and low

– cost Housing and infrastructure fund under the Ministry in - charge of Housing financed from the exchequer and development partners for funding shelter related infrastructure. The Community and NGO among other things were expected to: Encourage community savings for housing construction, promote small – scale building materials industries; organize seminars/workshops on housing development issues, promote proper book keeping and accounting system and assist members to acquire land for housing development (Gok, 2004). Out of 384 respondents sampled for interviews on community participation on low – cost Housing development, 80 (20.83%) said they collaborate with the Government by providing land/materials for Low – cost Housing Development. This finding was supported by the work of Ondola (2014) and Craythorne (2007) who postulated that that the community contributions reduced the housing cost drastically. Further, 47 (12.24%) said they offer labour, 30 (7.81%) said they manufacture bricks using locally availability resources, 84 (21.88%) said they have been forming CBO’s to collaborate with the Government and other donor agencies to fund low – cost housing development, 63 (16.41%) said they usually build temporary Houses, 48 (12.50%) were not aware that the community should participate in low – cost Housing development whereas 32 (8.33%) were missing due to non response. This is summarized in table 2.

Role	Frequency	Percentage	Cummulative Frequency
Provide land /material	80	20.83	20.83
Offer labour	47	12.24	33.07
Making bricks	30	7.81	40.49
Form CBO for funding	84	21.88	62.76
Build Temporary Houses	63	16.41	79.17
None	48	12.50	91.67
Missing	32	8.33	100.00
Total	384	100.00	

Table 2: The role of the community in low-cost Housing Supply

Correlation analysis carried out on the variables with electricity as the control group yielded the following results: coefficient (0.8296366), P value (0.000); 95% C.I (0.3840608 – 1.275212). The result showed a strong positive correlation and hence did not come as a very significant variable in low – cost housing development. The Government should encourage community participation by adopting bottom – up approach through keen needs assessment in order to facilitate low – cost housing development in Kisumu (Yates et al 2004).

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