

INCLUSIVE AND HEALTHY URBAN ENVIRONMENT IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH; DEFINITION, CHARACTERISTICS AND BENEFITS

ABSTRACT

The power that develops when communities define their urban planning agendas is now becoming more and more evident, and community-led development may offer long-lasting upgrades to metropolitan areas. A city's social and physical environment can either enable or hinder its residents' well-being and ability to become independent whereas there are still wide gaps between understanding the inclusive urban environment and a healthy environment. There still remains an overwhelming reality of alienation of the users from their environment. The term inclusive cities are widely used to refer to the inclusion of marginalised communities – slum dwellers, migrants, minority groups, women or young people – in urban processes. This paper aimed at defining an inclusive and healthy urban environment in the global south, its benefits and characteristics with a view to redefining the community. An empirical review of literature was conducted to establish the concepts. Findings from the reviews show different indicators of urban environment exclusion and drivers of inclusivity concepts. It is therefore concluded that for urban sustainability each community should be given priority for an inclusive healthy urban environment. Stakeholders of the global south should therefore provide policies and implement programmes for total inclusiveness.

Keywords: Environment, Inclusive urban environment, Global South, Healthy environment.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The urban environment is scattered with various degrees of segregation and discrimination as a result of several factors mitigating urban development (Zabala, 2017). These factors determine the characteristics of the urban forms and what meaning is derived from the urban environment. It is therefore required to examine the various characteristics and engage in proper planning for an inclusive urban environment. A report by Asian Development Bank, (2017) defines inclusive urban development as an integrated strategic approach that addresses issues affecting the urban poor and vulnerable groups by improving their access to urban services and infrastructure through targeted investments. Various researchers have identified rapid urbanization as a major influencing factor that leads to an increase in slum residents, and insufficient and overcrowded infrastructure and services thereby causing an increase in pollution and unplanned expansion (Fainstein, 2016). Challenges in waste management, water and sanitation system and road network attract global attention (Boros, 2017). Despite these challenges, urbanization is expanding the world economy and increasing inequality and exclusion within cities, which could impede growth. In light of this, the global community has realized how crucial it is to build more inclusive cities and make sure that urbanization benefits everyone. Estimates showed that 50% of

the world's population will reside in urban areas by 2030, and by the year 2050, this percentage is expected to reach 70% (The World Bank, 2022). Today, cities account for around 80% of global GDP. Hence the need for inclusive and healthy planning should be considered when planning for urban cities in the global south. Studies showed that one in three people still reside in slums with subpar amenities in developing countries. Furthermore, it is anticipated that the majority of urban growth would take place in Asia and Africa, which are home to some of the world's poorest nations(Bissett-Scott et al., 2015).

Urban sustainability and inclusion may not have a single top-down solution, but many bottom-up options can be used in their place. Cities in both wealthy and poorer nations benefit from their residents' initiative and creativity. Critical thinking, non-market solutions, and active involvement from all stakeholders are needed to seize this opportunity with a proper understanding that the concept of inclusive cities involves a complicated web of various geographical, social, and economic variables which is capable of providing possibilities and better living conditions for everyone. Given this, this study aimed at defining the concept of the inclusive and healthy urban environment with its attending benefits with a view that communities within the global south can maximize its potential. The following objectives shall be considered; defining the concept of an inclusive and healthy urban environment, highlighting its benefits of a healthy urban environment and identifying whether healthy urban development is beneficial to communities in the global south.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Inclusive environment and urbanization influences

Inclusivity and its defining factors have significant benefits in advancing development through urbanization. In order to achieve the inclusivity needs against the prevailing context of weak local government planning capacities, limited financial capacities, and particularly for Sub-Saharan African countries the urban environment should be considered. Cities Alliance, (2015) opined that the lack of capacity has the potential of limiting the effectiveness of consultative planning processes unless it is addressed and this view is supported by UCLG Afrique, (2015).

Inclusivity of urbanization can be achieved through a variety of means, most notably improving access to formal urban services and expanding service provision to include marginalized communities, also through improving access to the economic services of the city, and addressing deficits in rights as citizens (Muchadenyika, 2015).

The changes in approach to urbanization have to be inclusive of the urban poor and offer useful opportunities in inclusive urban development. Urban poor in cities live in a severe state of disenfranchisement, with the constant threat of demolition and evictions, as evidenced by wide-scale demolition engaged in by public authorities in many cities of the global south. The development of urban poor communities can be strengthened significantly through initiatives to

formalize urban services and provide opportunities for development for informal settlement inhabitants in cities.

The primary aims of inclusivity are to provide capacity-building assistance and technical support to ministries, departments and agencies. An important feature of inclusivity is the brokering of civil society/government interactions. Usually, relationships between the urban poor and municipal planners on a planning level are non-existent, and inclusivity aims to foster new working relationships and participatory planning processes through facilitating collaborative planning in solid waste management and planning practices, building capacity to deal with increasing informality in cities habitation sustainably and inclusively.

For example, inclusivity can also mean a direct partnership between international organizations and national organizations, such as municipal governments, or national development organizations. Inclusivity and healthy urban planning create a dialogue between residents of informal settlements and the formal urban governance structure. This consensus-building process between residents of informal settlements and other stakeholders fosters more security for those living in informal settlements.

2.2 Healthy environment,

The concept of healthy environment is to improve the quality of life of every human being when they move to a city as the major concern. This can be evaluated through the nature of employment and the type of accommodation which varies from cities to cities, it is the responsibility of the city managers to make rules and regulations for the proper distribution of land, public spaces, and infrastructures. A proper urban environment is designed to accommodate increasing density in nearby cities and create several attractive points of interest in the city. The authorities are also regularly updating the traffic regulations due to the constant increase in the number of vehicles.

The growth of the community is been supervised by several organisations and authorities and are subjected to certain parameters to ensure safe and healthy lifestyle for everyone.

2.3 Urban environmental threat

Urban communities are moderated by certain factors which constitute threats to both man and the environment, various studies have highlighted some of this factors as discussed below;

2.3.1 Overcrowding and Unemployment

As urbanization progresses overcrowding is inevitable and this put a stress on the urban space thereby creating threat to the existing community or neighbourhood (Dipeolu & Ibem, 2020). Residents battle for scarce and limited resources including electricity, water, transportation, and, most crucially, jobs when a city's capacity is reached or exceeded (Tacoli, 2008). Unemployment challenges is a threat to an urban environment. What's remarkable is that many unemployed young adults come from affluent, highly educated families. Although there are more job

opportunities and higher incomes in urban areas, it is getting harder and harder to find and hold onto a job as the population increases.

2.3.2 Housing problems

Housing issues develop when people relocate to cities and crowd them. If cities are not fully prepared for the influx of people, housing becomes more and more scarce. People who move to cities but cannot find employment or who remain there as immigrants find it much harder to integrate. Some of these people are not even able to pay rent, much less construct their own homes.

2.3.3 Health hazards

People who live in crowded urban areas confront several risks. Living in high-risk areas, such as close to dumpsites, having water restrictions, and poor sanitation all contribute to the spread of numerous diseases. To make matters worse, residents of these areas generally do not have enough access to medical treatment, which makes illness significantly more challenging to cure and, in some circumstances, fatal. In the slums, common diagnoses include infertility, food poisoning, allergies, asthma, cardiovascular issues, respiratory failure, cancer, and mortality. All of this is a result of the overall pollution that permeates these urban areas.

2.3.4 Transportation problems

Many people commute, which frequently causes traffic jams and congestion, between their places of employment and their homes. The number of people who own cars rises every year, especially in urban areas where public transportation is notoriously difficult to use. The state of traffic congestion worsens as more cars are added to the road. In addition to causing traffic congestion, this also raises the possibility of traffic accidents and contributes to urban air pollution.

2.4 Global south

Nations with underdeveloped economies that deal with difficulties including low per capita income, significant unemployment, and a lack of valuable capital are referred to as being in the "Global South." However, few socioeconomic ideas are more vehemently debated, potentially contentious, or frequently misinterpreted. The G S is comprised of Asia's developing countries, including the Middle East, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Pacific Islands, and Asia. Poor or economically underdeveloped countries have traditionally been referred to as being part of the "Global South." Nations with underdeveloped economies that deal with difficulties including low per capita income, significant unemployment, and a lack of valuable capital are referred to as being in the "Global South". However, few socioeconomic ideas are more

vehemently debated, potentially contentious, or frequently misinterpreted. The term "Global South" is often misused and misinterpreted. Because "South" is included, many users mistakenly assume the term is supposed to be geographical. In no way. The term "Global South" is solely economic, even though the majority of the countries in this region are in the tropics or the Southern Hemisphere (hence the fact that Australia is "down under" but not part of the Global South).

2.5 PROMOTING INCLUSIVE PLANNING IN DEVELOPING CITIES.

Several factors had been used to define inclusiveness and its influence on people for this study the UNDP Human Development Index will be adopted which is based on three factors: economic status, access to and state of education, and access to and status of health, is often used to determine inclusiveness (with life expectancy as a metric). The sum of these elements is what is seen as essential for living a full and happy life. However, focusing entirely on this statistic ignores the intricacies of modern city life, including increased migration and transitory populations. It also ignores the major gender disparities that still exist in many developing cities, with women continuing to carry the bulk of unpaid social care, such as for children and the elderly.

To address urban planning decisions that would relieve these inequities, a unified, comprehensive approach is required, accounting for the inequalities that exist in urban environments in all realms. These methods must account for the wide range of conditions that exist within a city's population, and ensure that planned interventions are tailored to the needs of people who would benefit from them.

Interventions in urban planning to increase inclusion can be planned in a variety of ways.

1. Existing urban planning regimes and policies that remove exclusivity can have a big impact. This can involve changing processes to make it easier for residents to obtain formalized land rights, as well as increasing the spatial mobility of groups that previously did not have access to the formal economy due to location. This can also involve better health and social care services to ensure that current informal care duties do not prevent people from working.
2. Improving the flow of information and expertise between disadvantaged communities and urban planners is vital to ensure that development benefits everyone, not just the wealthy. Stakeholder engagement is becoming more prevalent in municipal planning processes, but it must be done with the best interests of marginalized or excluded groups in mind. To achieve maximum growth for the groups concerned, inclusive urbanization does not immediately arise from engaging all groups in urban planning debates, with actions resulting from the participation process.
3. The aspects that may be evaluated and addressed in these procedures can be summed up in terms of accessibility. A basic concept of sustainable urbanization is that all inhabitants have access to city services on a formal, consistent basis. Other key aspects are access to

markets and capital, which gives all residents of a city equal access to labour markets and income, as well as economic services like commerce. Access to places is also crucial since it provides citizens of a city, regardless of their position, with a secure and official place to stay.

2.6 BENEFITS OF INCLUSIVE AND HEALTHY URBAN PLANNING

The real estate business has long recognized the value of diversity and inclusion in the establishment of successful, sustainable cities.

Diversity is a Crucial Aspect in Urban Planning. The following are the primary areas of attention for diversity:

- Inclusionary cities' spatial, social, and economic elements
- Community cohesion and minority participation?
- The difficulties of creating socially inclusive cities

Below are some of the benefits of inclusive and healthy urban planning:

3 Participation in the Community

Engagement with the local community in urban planning procedures is an important aspect of this. Cities are rapidly expanding, and we must:

- Engage with the local community and individuals to have a better understanding.
- Solve the basic needs of small-scale communities.
- Investing in multi-levelled economic scales is a good idea.

4 Incorporation of Low-Cost Housing

Creating inexpensive homes does not imply that architects must utilize low-cost materials or adhere to rigorous design guidelines. Creating affordable housing necessitates a comprehensive approach to community planning that includes:

- Communities benefit from high-quality public places.
- Mixed-income housing, which helps to maintain good economic growth, and lowering building costs via innovation

5 Helps the cities to grow

Due to more work opportunities, better education facilities, and many other reasons, the population in the cities of developing countries is increasing more and more. To accommodate a large population, there have to be some early plans. Utilizing the resources through urban planning, the city would have a strategy to develop its economy

as well as livability conditions. Not only the expansion of residential areas, but urban planning also ensures good transportation, health care, and judicial system. Thus, the city will grow rapidly without having negative impacts on its economy and citizens.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

This research was carried out based on literature reviews of related publications, journal articles, and other sources of online materials. It is a descriptive research design which facilitate answers to the questions of what, where, who, when and how associated with a particular problem. It was used to obtain facts, data and materials concerning the current condition and state of the concept and term; Global south and to describe “what exists?” about adaptable, alterable conditions and descriptions of the global south.

4.0 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

From findings inclusive urban planning is that everyone in society should have an equal opportunity to benefit from economic advancement. Cities are referred to as inclusive if they value each individual's needs and contributions equally. The idea is that "inclusive cities" are places where everyone has a say, especially urban working-class people, in decision-making, planning, and budgeting processes (Singru et al, 2016).

Urban planning is considered to be healthy and inclusive when:

- The city in issue isn't congested or overpopulated.
- There is no housing shortage in that city.
- The city's residents have access to modern medical facilities at reasonable costs.
- Access to economical and simple transportation.
- Everyone who lives in the city has a job.

4.2. Data Interpretation

We concluded from the researcher's results and responses to the research questions that inclusive and healthy urban planning can be achieved under specific conditions, such as:

- Good housing and accommodation planning.
- Low to no unemployment
- Good and economical health care system.
- There are no instances of overcrowding or overpopulation;
- There is a good transit system.

INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The following information was deduced from the researcher's results and responses to the questions that were posed that inclusive and healthy urban planning is possible when certain standards are met such as:

- . Good planning for housing and lodging
- . Low to zero unemployment rates.
- . Optimal and reasonably priced health care.
- . No instances of overpopulation or crowded conditions.
- . Good transportation and road systems.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

By ensuring that all participants have equal chances, inclusive urbanization attempts to address issues such as access to urban services and the equitability of the urban socio-economic structure. This means the same degree of opportunities and services should occur most of the time and manifest itself through ensuring that the rights of marginalized people are protected.

Pro-poor inclusive norms and plans are needed in cities all over the world so that innovative local solutions can be implemented. A city will benefit everyone if it provides great services to its most vulnerable residents, such as children, the elderly, new immigrants, and those with disabilities. Urban sustainability requires that integration and inclusiveness be prioritized. This study, therefore, proposes the following solutions:

- The grassroots of every nation's sustainable development must be democratic.
- Currently used public involvement strategies, such as participatory budgeting, should be used in every community, with the most pertinent resources and urgent Issues being chosen locally.
- Cities should Initiate multiply and apply new approaches to inclusion. That would safeguard an Inclusive and healthy urban environment through holistic urban planning.

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