

INSTITUTIONAL APPROACHES TO SLUM UPGRADING FOR SUSTAINABLE HOUSING DELIVERY: A CASE STUDY OF LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Fast-paced urbanisation and persistent socio-economic inequality have made slum upgrading a central strategy in achieving sustainable housing and urban development globally. International policy frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Target 11.1 of SDG 11, call for the upgrading of slums and access to adequate, safe, and affordable housing for all by 2030, emphasising participation, tenure security, and integrated service delivery. Drawing from comparisons between programs in Asia, Africa, and Latin America that highlight institutional coordination, community engagement, and sustainability as key determinants of success, this study explores the institutional processes guiding slum upgrading for sustainable housing delivery in selected communities in Lagos State: Ajegunle, Bariga, and Isale Gangan. Using a qualitative approach, data were obtained through in-depth interviews and analysed thematically. The study identifies six major themes: community engagement and participation, sustainability practices, institutional and policy frameworks, challenges in project execution, impacts on living standards and economic opportunities, and long-term sustainability. Findings reveal that strong participatory governance, supportive institutional frameworks, and sustainability-oriented interventions have improved housing conditions and socio-economic outcomes. Nonetheless, persistent challenges related to financing, land tenure complexity, and community resistance underscore the need for innovative governance strategies. This study links global slum upgrading debates with a detailed Lagos State case, which is found to be relevant to policymakers, urban planners, and development practitioners working toward equitable and sustainable urban transformation in rapidly growing cities.

Keywords: Communities, Lagos State, Slum upgrading, Sustainable housing; Urban governance;

INTRODUCTION

Rapid urbanisation has transformed cities worldwide, particularly in the Global South, where informal settlements and slums continue to expand in both scale and complexity. The continuous emergence of informal settlements, slums and poor residential neighbourhoods has become a global phenomenon accompanying the growth of urban populations. The demand for housing increases in response to several factors, notably urbanization and population growth (Jiboye et al, 2020). According to UN-Habitat, the persistence of slums

remains one of the defining challenges of 21st-century urbanisation, affecting billions of city dwellers who lack adequate housing, water, sanitation, secure tenure, and sustainable livelihoods (UN-Habitat, 2022). In recognition of this, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11, which is to “make cities inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable”, with Target 11.1 explicitly calling for the upgrading of slums and access to adequate, safe, and affordable housing for all by 2030. In tandem, the New Urban Agenda emphasises integrated, participatory approaches that align urban planning with social, economic, and environmental sustainability.

Slum upgrading has thus emerged as a dominant global strategy to address urban informality and housing deprivation. Scholars and practitioners highlight multifaceted interventions that go beyond infrastructural enhancements to encompass tenure security, community participation, institutional coordination, and sustainability outcomes (Zhao *et al.*, 2025). Comparative case studies from Indonesia, Brazil, India, Kenya, and Morocco show that strengthening institutional frameworks and inclusive governance systems significantly improves the effectiveness and sustainability of slum upgrading initiatives, yet persistent barriers such as financing constraints, weak policy integration, and social resistance, continue to hinder progress (Zhao *et al.*, 2025).

Despite substantial academic and policy attention, there remains a need for contextualised studies that connect global slum upgrading principles with detailed empirical evidence from specific cities. Lagos State, Nigeria’s largest and fastest-growing megacity, exemplifies many of the global challenges associated with rapid urban growth, including informal housing, inadequate infrastructure, and environmental degradation. Institutional responses to these challenges have taken shape through agencies such as the Lagos State Urban Renewal Authority (LASURA), which implements slum upgrading interventions with an emphasis on sustainability, community participation, and institutional coordination. This study contributes to the global discourse on slum upgrading by examining how institutional frameworks influence sustainable housing delivery in selected slum communities in Lagos State: Ajegunle, Bariga, and Isale Gangan.

Historically, the agency evolved from the Lagos State Urban Renewal Board (established in the early 1990s) into its current form, with a legislative mandate to tackle urban regeneration and slum upgrading under the Lagos State Urban and Regional Planning and Development Law (Lagos Diaspora, 2020). LASURA’s intervention framework reflects the Lagos State Government’s response to the persistent challenges of inadequate housing availability, poor environmental conditions, and socio-economic vulnerability in densely populated low-income communities such as Ajegunle, Bariga, and Isale Gangan. The continued existence of slum settlements in Lagos State has necessitated deliberate policy-driven interventions focused on upgrading rather than demolition in line with global shifts toward in-situ improvement and participatory renewal approaches (Adama, 2020). LASURA’s approach to slum upgrading prioritizes in-situ improvement, provision of basic infrastructure, housing enhancement, and community engagement, with the objective of achieving sustainable housing delivery while minimizing displacement. This approach is evident in its ongoing and

completed projects across different parts of the state, where upgrading initiatives have been tailored to the specific socio-spatial realities of each community (Lagos Diaspora, 2020).

In Ajegunle, Bariga, and Isale Gangan, LASURA has implemented targeted upgrading programs aimed at improving housing quality, sanitation, drainage, access roads, street lighting, and overall environmental conditions. These interventions are guided by sustainability principles that integrate environmental protection, efficient resource use, and social inclusion. The Authority's emphasis on sustainability is reflected in the adoption of eco-friendly building materials, solar-powered street lighting, and sanitation management systems designed to reduce environmental degradation and improve public health outcomes. Beyond physical improvements, LASURA's slum upgrading initiatives are shaped by institutional and regulatory frameworks that define project selection, funding mechanisms, stakeholder collaboration, and implementation processes. The Lagos State Urban and Regional Planning and Development Law (2019) provides the statutory basis for LASURA's operations, enabling coordinated action with other state agencies and facilitating public-private partnerships for housing delivery. (Punch, 2023)

Despite these structured interventions, LASURA's slum upgrading programs continue to face implementation challenges, including funding constraints, land tenure complexities, and community resistance to relocation or redevelopment. These challenges reveal the need for systematic evaluation of LASURA's upgrading processes, outcomes, and sustainability mechanisms. This study therefore focuses explicitly on LASURA's institutional role, strategies, challenges, and impacts in slum upgrading for sustainable housing delivery in Ajegunle, Bariga, and Isale Gangan, drawing directly from insights provided by senior officials of the Authority.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Slum upgrading has increasingly become a central component of inclusive urban development policy, particularly in rapidly urbanising regions of the Global South. It is defined as a set of in-situ interventions aimed at improving the physical, social, and economic conditions of informal settlements without displacing residents (Ahmed, 2017). This approach reflects a paradigm shift from slum eradication to recognition of informal settlements as integral parts of urban systems (Cities Alliance, 2021; UN-Habitat, 2020).

Contemporary scholarship conceptualises slum upgrading as a multidimensional process that integrates infrastructure provision, governance reforms, and socio-economic inclusion (Amorim & Faria, 2023; UN-Habitat, 2020). Its alignment with Sustainable Development Goal 11, particularly Target 11.1, reinforces its global policy relevance (ACASH, 2022). However, recent studies argue that implementation often remains overly technical, with insufficient attention to structural inequalities and informality dynamics (Satterthwaite, 2020; Franklin, 2025).

Sustainable Housing Delivery

Sustainable housing delivery extends beyond shelter provision to incorporate environmental sustainability, economic affordability, and social inclusiveness (Oni-Jimoh & Liyanage, 2018). In slum upgrading, sustainability is achieved when housing solutions are resource-efficient, culturally appropriate, and financially accessible to low-income households.

Recent literature emphasises the role of energy-efficient housing and locally sourced materials in addressing housing deficits in developing countries (Asikhia, 2025). Studies further indicate that sustainable construction practices can significantly reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions while lowering long-term household costs (Obakin, 2018; Obi et al., 2026; IEA, 2021).

However, sustainability in slum upgrading is often constrained by affordability challenges and weak maintenance systems. Without institutional mechanisms to ensure long-term upkeep, infrastructure and housing improvements may deteriorate, undermining sustainability outcomes (UN-Habitat, 2020).

Institutional Frameworks and Governance in Slum Upgrading

Institutional frameworks are critical in shaping the effectiveness of slum upgrading initiatives, not merely as administrative structures but as systems of rules, norms, and governance processes that influence how urban interventions are designed and implemented. Drawing on contemporary institutional perspectives, governance in slum upgrading can be understood as a multi-level system involving formal regulations, organisational arrangements, and informal practices that collectively determine development outcomes. In Lagos State, urban renewal and housing interventions are guided by established planning laws and policies (Lagos State Ministry of Housing, 2020); however, the persistence of institutional and regulatory constraints highlights deeper structural inefficiencies within these governance systems (Adeyemo & Ajayi, 2025; Ogunbiyi & Adeyemo, 2024; RICS, 2024).

From a governance theory perspective, effective slum upgrading depends on the degree of coordination and alignment among multiple actors, including government agencies, communities, NGOs, and international organisations (Cities Alliance, 2013). This reflects a network governance model, where outcomes are shaped by interactions across institutional levels rather than by a single authority. Empirical evidence indicates that well-coordinated institutional arrangements enhance efficiency, reduce duplication of roles, and improve project sustainability (Cities Alliance, 2021; Hasanawi et al., 2019).

Conversely, fragmented governance structures, characterised by overlapping mandates, weak inter-agency collaboration, and policy inconsistencies, undermine implementation effectiveness in many developing contexts (Rusdiyanto & Pariyanti, 2025). Such fragmentation reflects broader institutional weaknesses, including limited capacity, poor accountability mechanisms, and misaligned incentives among stakeholders. In response, recent literature advocates for integrated governance frameworks and collaborative institutional models, including public-private partnerships, as mechanisms for improving

resource mobilisation, enhancing service delivery, and strengthening policy coherence (World Bank, 2020).

Overall, this perspective shifts the analysis from viewing institutions as static entities to understanding them as dynamic systems whose structure, coordination, and governance logic critically determine the sustainability of slum upgrading interventions.

Community Participation

Community participation is widely acknowledged as a cornerstone of sustainable slum upgrading. Participatory approaches enable residents to contribute local knowledge, influence project design, and foster a sense of ownership (Iweka & Adebayo, 2015).

Recent empirical studies show that higher levels of community engagement are associated with improved sustainability outcomes and resilience in upgrading projects (Terdo, 2024; UN-Habitat, 2020). Participatory upgrading initiatives in Africa, Asia, and Latin America demonstrate that community-led approaches often outperform top-down interventions in terms of long-term success (Faras, 2022).

However, participation remains complex and context-dependent. Poorly structured processes may reinforce inequalities or be dominated by local elites (Njati et al., 2025). Thus, effective participation requires inclusive frameworks, transparency, and institutional support to ensure equitable representation.

Tenure Security and Land Rights

Tenure security is a fundamental determinant of successful slum upgrading, as it influences residents' willingness to invest in housing improvements (Humphrey, 2011). Recent studies reaffirm that secure tenure enhances access to finance, promotes incremental housing development, and reduces vulnerability to eviction (UN-Habitat, 2020; Payne et al., 2019).

Despite its importance, tenure formalisation remains challenging due to legal complexities, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and political resistance. Contemporary literature emphasises the need for flexible and context-specific tenure arrangements that balance security with affordability and social equity (GLTN, 2020).

Such approaches include incremental tenure systems and community-based land management models, which are increasingly recognised as practical solutions in informal settlement contexts.

Infrastructure, Sustainability, and Multi-Sectoral Integration

Infrastructure provision remains a central component of slum upgrading, with improvements in water supply, sanitation, drainage, and electricity significantly enhancing living conditions (Cities Alliance, 2021). However, recent scholarship emphasizes the integration of environmental sustainability into infrastructure development for enhanced values. (Adeyemo, 2024; Ogunbiyi & Adeyemo, 2024;)

Studies highlight that slum upgrading can contribute to climate adaptation through flood control measures, sustainable construction, and renewable energy integration (IIED, 2025;

Satterthwaite, 2020). Additionally, improved infrastructure has important public health benefits, reducing disease burdens associated with poor environmental conditions (Corburn & Sverdlik, 2017).

This evolving perspective positions slum upgrading as a multi-sectoral intervention linking infrastructure, environmental management, and socio-economic development.

Regional Practices and Comparative Insights

Comparative studies of slum upgrading provide rich insights into the diversity of strategies and outcomes across contexts. In Latin America, programmes such as Favela-Bairro in Rio de Janeiro and community programmes in Colombia emphasised participatory planning and social integration with significant success, illustrating how upgrading can transform informal settlements into more inclusive urban neighbourhoods (Faras, 2022). Asian examples, such as Thailand's Baan Mankong secure housing programme, emphasise community-led planning with financial and technical support, enhancing both tenure security and housing quality (Faras, 2022). These cases highlight that slum upgrading models are context-sensitive; while common principles like participation and sustainability recur, implementation mechanisms vary in relation to governance systems, socio-economic conditions, and political commitments.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in sustainable development theory, participatory governance theory, and institutional governance frameworks. Recent literature conceptualises sustainable development as the integration of environmental, economic, and social systems within urban policy (UN-Habitat, 2020). Participatory governance theory emphasises inclusive decision-making and collaborative planning as essential for achieving sustainable urban outcomes (World Bank, 2020).

However, beyond this descriptive framing, institutional and governance theories provide a more analytical lens for understanding how outcomes are shaped in practice. Drawing from institutional theory, particularly the insights of formal and informal rules, norms, and enforcement mechanisms, slum upgrading can be interpreted as a product of institutional arrangements that either enable or constrain effective implementation. In this regard, the effectiveness of upgrading initiatives depends not only on policy intentions but also on institutional capacity, inter-agency coordination, and the alignment between regulatory frameworks and local realities. Weak institutional capacity, fragmented governance structures, and inconsistent policy enforcement often lead to suboptimal outcomes in many developing urban contexts.

Furthermore, participatory governance can be analysed beyond its normative appeal by examining the depth, quality, and power dynamics of stakeholder engagement. Rather than merely promoting inclusion, the theory raises critical questions about whose voices are represented, how decisions are negotiated, and the extent to which community inputs influence final outcomes. This highlights the importance of accountability mechanisms, transparency, and the distribution of decision-making authority within governance systems.

Institutional governance frameworks also draw attention to issues of policy coherence and multi-level governance, emphasising how interactions between national, state, and local institutions shape urban interventions. The concept of institutional fit is particularly relevant, as it underscores the need for governance structures to be context-sensitive and adaptable to the socio-economic realities of informal settlements.

Together, these perspectives move the analysis beyond a descriptive mention of institutions to a more critical interrogation of how governance systems, institutional arrangements, and power relations influence the planning and implementation of slum upgrading initiatives in developing urban contexts.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is based on the interaction between four key variables: institutional frameworks, community participation, tenure security, and infrastructure provision. These variables operate within a broader sustainability context encompassing environmental, economic, and social dimensions.

Institutional frameworks provide the enabling environment, community participation ensures relevance and ownership, tenure security promotes investment, and infrastructure provision directly improves living conditions. External factors such as funding availability, environmental risks, and political commitment moderate these relationships.

Gaps and Emerging Directions in Slum Upgrading Research

Empirical studies highlight the diversity of slum upgrading approaches across regions, with programmes in Latin America and Asia demonstrating the effectiveness of participatory and integrated strategies (Faras, 2022; UN-Habitat, 2020). However, despite these advances, important gaps persist in the literature, particularly in relation to the focus of this study.

First, existing studies tend to prioritise technical and physical upgrading solutions, with insufficient attention to the dynamics of institutional performance among government agencies, private actors, and community organisations, which are critical to implementation outcomes (Franklin, 2025). Second, there is a notable lack of in-depth qualitative evidence from implementing agencies, limiting understanding of operational challenges, decision-making processes, and institutional constraints in practice. Third, while global models of slum upgrading are widely documented, empirical research in Lagos State remains limited, particularly studies that examine how local governance structures, land tenure complexities, and socio-political conditions shape upgrading outcomes.

Additionally, there is limited longitudinal evidence assessing the long-term sustainability of interventions, especially within rapidly urbanising African contexts. Persistent challenges, such as funding constraints, insecure land tenure, community resistance, and environmental risks, further underscore the need for more context-sensitive and institutionally grounded research.

This study therefore addresses these gaps by focusing on institutional coordination mechanisms, drawing on qualitative insights from key implementing actors, and situating the analysis within the specific socio-political and urban context of Lagos State.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a qualitative research design to examine slum upgrading practices in Lagos State. Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on their expert knowledge and involvement in upgrading initiatives. The most senior official of the Lagos State Urban Renewal Authority (LASURA) was selected due to their strategic oversight of policy formulation and implementation. Additional participants included LASURA departmental heads, project contractors, and Community Development Association (CDA) representatives in Ajegunle, Bariga, and Isale Gangan, ensuring both institutional and operational perspectives.

Data were collected through face-to-face semi-structured interviews conducted at participants' offices and agreed community venues. Interviews lasted 30–90 minutes (average ≈45 minutes) and were scheduled at participants' convenience. With consent, interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim; where consent was not granted, detailed handwritten notes were taken. Transcripts and notes were cross-checked to ensure completeness. Data collection continued until data saturation was achieved. To enrich and validate the interview data, at least two site visits were conducted in each study area to observe physical upgrading works and engage informally with residents. Observations were documented using a structured checklist. In addition, in-depth interviews with CDA representatives and long-term residents, selected through snowball sampling, were undertaken to provide contextual narratives on the upgrading process, perceived impacts, and community–agency relationships

Data were analysed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework. Transcripts were carefully reviewed and coded using qualitative analysis software, with codes generated both inductively and deductively. Codes were organised into themes, which were iteratively reviewed, refined, and clearly defined to ensure they accurately represented the dataset. This process resulted in six major themes that underpin the study's findings.

Section A: General Information

1. Please introduce yourself and describe your role within the Lagos State Urban Renewal Authority (LASURA)?
2. How long have you been involved with slum upgrading programmes in Lagos State?

Section B: Housing Availability and Condition

3. What strategies is the Lagos State government and Lagos State Urban Renewal Authority employing to increase the availability of housing options, especially for low-income residents?
4. How are principles of sustainability (environmental protection, resource efficiency, and community empowerment) integrated into the slum settlement upgrading programmes in Isale Ganga, Ajegunle and Bariga area
5. What role does the private sector play in ensuring sustainable housing delivery in Isale Ganga, Ajegunle and Bariga upgraded area?

Section C: Urban Slum Upgrading Programme Process

6. Can you give an overview of the urban renewal and slum upgrading initiatives currently being implemented by LASURA?
7. What are the main goals and objectives of these initiatives?
8. How does LASURA identify and prioritize areas for urban slum upgrading projects?
9. What are the key components and activities involved in these projects?
10. How does LASURA ensure community participation and engagement in the planning and implementation process?
11. What strategies are employed to secure funding and resources for Isale Gangan, Ajegunle and Bariga settlements slum upgrading projects?
12. What policy and institutional frameworks support LASURA slum upgrading programmes and how they utilised?

Section D: Institutional and Regulatory Framework and Process of Slum Upgrading

13. Can you describe the key regulatory frameworks and policies that guide the slum upgrading process in Lagos State?
14. What are the main institutional roles and responsibilities of LASURA for implementing slum upgrading projects?
15. What criteria or processes does LASURA use to identify communities or areas eligible for slum upgrading?
16. How does LASURA address challenges related to land tenure and property rights in the course of slum upgrading?
17. What monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are used by LASURA to assess the progress and effectiveness of slum upgrading projects?

Section E: Challenges of Slum Upgrading Programmes

18. What are the challenges faced during the planning and implementation of urban slum upgrading projects in Isale Gangan, Ajegunle and Bariga settlements?
19. How does LASURA address issues related to land tenure and property rights in Isale Gangan, Ajegunle and Bariga settlements slum upgrading projects?
20. What measures are taken to ensure the sustainability of improvements made through Isale Gangan, Ajegunle and Bariga settlements slum upgrading projects?
21. How can urban renewal policies and strategies be improved to support more effective urban slum upgrading programmes for sustainable housing delivery?
22. What are the key lessons learned from Isale Gangan, Ajegunle and Bariga settlement urban slum upgrading projects?

Section F: Slum Upgrading Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability

Relevance

23. How well does the slum upgrading project address the housing needs of the target communities in Lagos?
24. In what ways is the slum upgrading project aligned with the broader goals of sustainable urban development in Lagos?

Effectiveness

25. To what extent has the project achieved its objectives in terms of improving housing conditions and infrastructure in the targeted slum communities?
26. How does LASURA measure the progress and outcomes of the slum upgrading exercise?

Efficiency

27. How efficiently were the resources (financial, human, and technical) utilized to complete the project within the planned timeframe?
28. Did the project experience any significant delays or cost overruns? If so, what were the causes and how were they addressed?

Impact

29. What long-term improvements in living standards and economic opportunities have been observed in the upgraded areas as a result of the project?
30. Have there been any unintended ripple effects, such as displacement or environmental changes, as a result of the slum upgrading project?

Sustainability

31. What measures have been put in place to ensure the long-term sustainability of the benefits provided by the slum upgrading project?
32. Is there a structured plan for the maintenance of the infrastructure and services provided by the project?

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings provide important insights into the institutional approach to slum upgrading in Lagos State, particularly in relation to the study's objectives of examining institutional coordination, community engagement, sustainability practices, and implementation outcomes.

Community Engagement and Participation

The findings suggest that LASURA adopts structured participatory mechanisms, including stakeholder meetings and needs assessments, which align with existing literature emphasizing the role of participation in enhancing project relevance and acceptance. Evidence from interviews (e.g., "*residents were involved in identifying priority needs*") and field observations support the claim that participation influenced project design, particularly in Bariga.

However, while LASURA presents participation as inclusive, insights from CDA representatives and residents indicate that engagement is sometimes consultative rather than fully collaborative, with final decisions remaining institutionally driven. This partially supports, but also nuances, participatory planning theories by highlighting the gap between formal inclusion and actual decision-making power. Thus, the study extends existing literature by showing that participation in Lagos operates within institutional limits rather than as fully bottom-up governance.

Sustainability Practices

The integration of environmental, social, and economic sustainability, such as solar lighting and affordable housing, supports prior studies advocating for multi-dimensional upgrading approaches. Observational data (e.g., presence of improved drainage and lighting systems) and resident feedback on improved sanitation provide empirical backing.

Nevertheless, the findings reveal tensions between sustainability goals and financial constraints, with some projects scaled down or inconsistently maintained. This contradicts idealised sustainability models in the literature, suggesting that in practice, sustainability is often selective and resource-dependent. The study therefore contributes by demonstrating the contextual limitations of applying global sustainability frameworks in resource-constrained urban settings like Lagos.

Institutional and Policy Frameworks

The study confirms that strong policy frameworks, particularly the Lagos State Urban and Regional Planning Law (2019), play a critical role in enabling coordinated interventions. Interview data highlight how inter-agency collaboration supports integrated service delivery.

However, the findings also reveal institutional fragmentation and bureaucratic delays, especially in land tenure regularisation. This reflects broader governance challenges identified in the literature and suggests that while policy frameworks exist, their implementation is uneven. The study thus extends knowledge by illustrating the disconnect between policy design and operational realities in slum upgrading.

Implementation Challenges

Consistent with existing research, funding limitations, land tenure complexities, and community resistance emerged as major constraints. Evidence from interviews and field interactions (e.g., reluctance toward relocation and tenure disputes) confirms these challenges.

Importantly, resident narratives reveal concerns about displacement risks and livelihood disruption, which are less emphasized in LASURA's institutional account. This highlights a divergence between official perspectives and community experiences, reinforcing critiques in the literature regarding the social risks of upgrading interventions. The study therefore contributes by foregrounding these tensions within the Lagos context.

Impact on Living Standards

The findings indicate improvements in infrastructure, housing conditions, and local economic activity, supported by observational evidence and survey data on resident satisfaction. However, these benefits are not uniformly distributed, with some residents reporting limited economic gains despite physical improvements.

This challenges the assumption that infrastructure upgrading automatically translates into broad socio-economic transformation, suggesting instead that outcomes are context-specific and mediated by local economic structures. The study thus refines existing claims by demonstrating uneven impact patterns.

Long-Term Sustainability

LASURA's establishment of maintenance funds and community-based management structures aligns with best practices in sustainable upgrading. Evidence from Bariga and Makoko shows some level of community involvement in maintenance.

However, findings from residents and observations suggest that sustainability remains fragile, often dependent on continued institutional support and community capacity. This indicates that while institutional frameworks for sustainability exist, their effectiveness is contingent on long-term governance commitment and local engagement. The study therefore extends the literature by highlighting the conditional nature of sustainability in slum upgrading projects.

Overall, the findings move beyond a purely institutional narrative by incorporating community-level insights and highlighting areas of convergence and divergence between

policy intentions and lived experiences. The study contributes to knowledge by demonstrating that while institutional approaches in Lagos are structured and policy-driven, their effectiveness is shaped by implementation constraints, stakeholder dynamics, and contextual realities, thereby emphasizing the need for more adaptive and inclusive upgrading frameworks.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the Lagos State Urban Renewal Authority's (LASURA) approach to slum upgrading embodies a multidimensional strategy that combines participatory governance, sustainability, and institutional coordination. Residents are actively engaged in planning and decision-making processes, enhancing ownership, social cohesion, and the contextual relevance of interventions. Sustainability is integrated through eco-friendly materials, renewable energy applications, and improved infrastructure, supporting environmental, economic, and social resilience. Strong institutional and policy frameworks enable coordinated implementation, legitimacy, and alignment with broader urban development agendas such as SDG 11 and the New Urban Agenda.

While LASURA was the primary respondent due to its statutory mandate and central role in slum upgrading, the study employed triangulation through field observations, interviews with CDA representatives, and a resident survey, which provides context and helps substantiate reported outcomes. Observed improvements in infrastructure, social cohesion, and local economic activity suggest that LASURA's interventions have tangible positive impacts, although long-term verification remains a limitation.

Overall, the study provides an in-depth assessment of institutional mechanisms in Lagos, highlighting how structured governance, community engagement, and sustainability-oriented practices can enhance the effectiveness of slum upgrading programs. It contributes to knowledge by illustrating both the potential and the limitations of single-agency-led urban renewal initiatives, offering lessons for policy and practice in similar urban contexts.

Importantly, LASURA's experience illustrates how locally grounded slum upgrading efforts can contribute to international learning. While this study is rooted in Lagos State's unique socio-spatial context, the institutional lessons, particularly regarding participatory governance, sustainability integration, and adaptive implementation, are relevant for other rapidly urbanising cities in the Global South seeking to balance local realities with global sustainability commitments. Ultimately, linking local evidence with global agendas strengthens the potential for scalable, equitable housing solutions and inclusive urban development.

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