



NIGERIA: KARU URBAN PROFILE



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UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME

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FOREWORD



According to research published in UN-Habitat's¹ flagship report, *The State of the World's Cities 2010-2011*, all developing regions, including the African, Caribbean and Pacific states, will have more people living in urban than rural areas by the year 2030. With half the world's

population already living in urban areas, the challenges we face in the battle against urban poverty, our quest for cities without slums, for cities where women feel safer, for inclusive cities with power, water and sanitation, and affordable transport, for better planned cities, and for cleaner, greener cities is daunting.

But as this series shows, there are many interesting solutions and best practices to which we can turn. After all, the figures tell us that during the decade 2000 to 2010, a total of 227 million people in the developing countries moved out of slum conditions. In other words, governments, cities and partner institutions have collectively exceeded the slum target of the Millennium Development Goals twice over and ten years ahead of the agreed 2020 deadline.

Asia and the Pacific stood at the forefront of successful efforts to reach the slum target, with all governments in the region improving the lives of an estimated 172 million slum dwellers between 2000 and 2010.

In sub-Saharan Africa though, the total proportion of the urban population living in slums has decreased by only 5 per cent (or 17 million people). Ghana, Senegal, Uganda, and Rwanda were the most successful countries in the sub-region, reducing the proportions of slum dwellers by over one-fifth in the last decade.

Some 13 per cent of the progress made towards the global slum target occurred in Latin America and the Caribbean, where an estimated 30 million people have moved out of slum conditions since the year 2000.

Yet, UN-Habitat estimates confirm that the progress made on the slum target has not been sufficient to counter the demographic expansion in informal settlements in the developing world. In this sense, efforts to reduce the numbers of slum dwellers are neither satisfactory nor adequate.

As part of our drive to address this crisis, UN-Habitat is working with the European Commission and the Brussels-based Secretariat of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group to support sustainable urban development. Given the urgent and diverse needs, we found it necessary to develop a tool for rapid assessment and strategic planning to guide immediate, mid and long-term interventions. And here we have it in the form of this series of publications.

The Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme is based on the policy dialogue between UN-Habitat, the ACP Secretariat and the European Commission which dates back to the year 2002. When the three parties met at UN-Habitat headquarters in June 2009, more than 200 delegates from over 50 countries approved a resounding call on the international community to pay greater attention to these urbanization matters, and to extend the slum upgrading programme to all countries in the ACP Group.

It is worth recalling here how grateful we are that the European Commission's 9th European Development Fund for ACP countries provided EUR 4 million (USD 5.7 million at June 2011 rates) to enable UN-Habitat to conduct the programme which now serves 59 cities in 23 African countries, and more than 20 cities in six Pacific, and four Caribbean countries.

Indeed, since its inception in 2008, the slum upgrading programme has achieved the confidence of partners at city and country level in Africa, the Caribbean and in the Pacific. It is making a major contribution aimed at helping in urban poverty reduction efforts, as each report in this series shows."

I wish to express my gratitude to the European Commission and the ACP Secretariat for their commitment to this slum upgrading programme. I have every confidence that the results outlined in this profile, and others, will serve to guide the development of responses for capacity building and investments in the urban sector.

Further, I would like to thank each Country Team for their continued support to this process which is essential for the successful implementation of the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Joan Clos'. The signature is fluid and stylized, with a long horizontal stroke at the bottom.

Dr. Joan Clos
Executive Director, UN-Habitat

¹ UN-Habitat - United Nations Human Settlements Programme

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme (PSUP) is an accelerated and action-oriented urban assessment of needs and capacity-building gaps at the city level. The programme is supported by funds from the European Commission's European Development Fund and it is currently being implemented in over 30 African, Pacific and Caribbean countries. PSUP uses a structured approach where priority interventions are agreed upon through consultative processes. The PSUP methodology consists of three phases: (1) a rapid participatory urban profiling at national and local levels, focusing on Governance, Local Economic Development, Land, Gender, Environment, Slums and Shelter, Basic Urban Services, and Waste Management, and proposed interventions; (2) detailed priority proposals; and (3) project implementation. PSUP in Nigeria encompasses profiles for Karu, Onitsha and Ifako-Ijaiye, each published as a separate report. This is the Karu City report and it constitutes a general background and a synthesis of the seven themes; shelter and slums, basic urban services, local economic development, governance, environment, gender and HIV/AIDS, and heritage and tourism.

BACKGROUND

The city of Karu lies east of Nigeria's capital city, Abuja. Karu is the administrative headquarters of the Karu Local Government area – one of 13 local government areas that make up Nasarawa State. Nasarawa, which was created in October 1995 after being part of Plateau State, was the second-smallest (or third-smallest if the Federal Capital Territory of Abuja is included) state in Nigeria in terms of population in 2006¹. The population of the Karu Local Government area – which includes Karu and its outskirts – was 216,230 in 2006², and covers a land area of 2,938 square kilometres³. Karu Local Government is split into three “development areas” (Karu, Karshi and Panda) for administrative purposes.

The precise boundaries and population of Karu city are difficult to determine, given that it consists of at least eight⁴ main settlement areas that sprawl across the Abuja-Keffi expressway, and even spill over from Nasarawa into Abuja. Despite the lack of up-to-date statistics, the urban areas in and around Karu are known to be some of the fastest growing ones in Nigeria. Therefore the current population of the Karu Local Government area is likely to be far higher than the last census count; an outdated booklet published by the Nasarawa State Government suggested that the population of the local government area is over 1.1 million⁵.

It should be noted that henceforth “Karu” in this document refers to the Karu Local Government area as opposed to Karu city proper, unless stated otherwise.

Karu Local Government was created in October 1991⁶. For the 15 years preceding this, Karu came under the jurisdiction of Keffi Local Government. The area's indigenous population consisted of a handful of tribes, and historically the local people were mainly engaged in agriculture.

After the relocation of the seat of the Government of Nigeria from Lagos to Abuja in 1991, the population of the new capital city grew very rapidly. In 1991, the population of the Federal Capital Territory was only 371,674⁷. In 2006, it was 1.4 million⁸, representing an average annual growth rate of 9.3 percent for that 15-year period. In 1991, Karu's population was approximately 10,000⁹, and it grew at an astounding rate of 22.7 percent annually to reach 216,230 by 2006. The principal reason for this growth was because Abuja failed to fully absorb the people who migrated there looking for jobs and opportunities.

The rapid growth of Abuja has therefore put a huge strain on surrounding cities such as Karu, which are forced to absorb large numbers of people looking for shelter and land that is less expensive than what can be found in the capital. Karu in particular has struggled to bear the burden of this growth, as it lacks good quality shelter, well-functioning water, waste and sanitation systems, and other basic urban services. These deficiencies ultimately have a negative effect on the overall well-being of Karu's citizens.

If no action is taken to resolve the deficiencies, serious costs may be inflicted on local, state and federal governments, as well as the citizens themselves. However, with careful and participatory planning, Karu has the potential to become a city that is able to provide its citizens with adequate and affordable housing, in addition to the economic and social opportunities in neighbouring Abuja, within Karu itself, and throughout Nasarawa State.

1 2006 Census

2 2006 Census

3 *Structure Plan*, hard copy, p. 15

4 *Structure Plan*, hard copy, p. 15

5 *Local Governments / Development Areas in Nasarawa State* – pg. xv

6 *Local Governments / Development Areas in Nasarawa State* – p. 183

7 National Population Commission – needs to be verified

8 National Population Commission 2006 census

9 World Bank Report – p. 1 and http://www.citiesalliance.org/casites/citiesalliance.org/files/Annual_Reports/cds_1.pdf – p. 14

SHELTER AND SLUMS

There is a range of shelter types in Karu, from solidly built concrete and aluminium structures to makeshift zinc or mud-based buildings with inadequate roofing. The former type is commonly found in planned neighbourhoods and often uses approved building plans. The latter type is almost exclusively in unplanned neighbourhoods, where new building plans are not subject to official approval. Improving the quality of shelter and promoting good planning methods are major challenges for Karu.

There are at least 14 neighbourhoods in Karu that could be considered slum areas. These slums are characterized by poorly built housing, inadequate water, waste, sanitation, and electricity facilities, cramped living conditions, exposure to pollution, and insecure property rights. Slum-dwellers in Karu deserve better living conditions, and for their sake it is imperative that the Millennium Development Goal of achieving a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020 is met.

BASIC URBAN SERVICES

Water supply infrastructure and waste management systems are both highly inadequate, if not non-existent, in the vast majority of Karu's neighbourhoods. Electricity supply from the Power Holding Company of Nigeria is also erratic, which frustrates both domestic and commercial users. Healthcare and education services are in decent supply in Karu, with both primary and secondary schools within easy reach for most students. However many health centres, hospitals and schools are significantly underfunded affecting the quality of their services.

Public transport in and around Karu is disorganized, and characterized by deteriorating roads and frequent traffic congestion.

Until the provision of basic urban services is drastically improved, Karu will remain a largely unhealthy and frustrating city to live in.

LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Given Karu's strategic location, it acts as a gateway for trade between Abuja and the eastern regions of Nigeria. Consequently, around one-third of Karu's labour force is employed in the trade and commerce industries. The agriculture, construction and manufacturing industries employ the bulk of the remaining labour force. The majority of labour is carried out in the informal sector – an issue that governing authorities would no doubt like to address.

Karu's growing population, combined with its relatively youthful and middle-class demographic make-up, indicate that economic opportunities in the area are promising. Importantly though, sufficient planning is required to ensure sustainable, balanced, and inclusive growth that provides employment opportunities and reduces poverty levels.

GOVERNANCE

Urban governance refers to the ways in which all stakeholders and institutions interact to plan and manage the common affairs of a city. A number of public and private agents are involved in this process in Karu. In terms of official government, agencies at the federal, state, and local levels are involved in strategy formulation and oversight of policies. Service delivery is largely undertaken by a mixture of local or state agencies, some private sector agents, and people at the community level.

In reality, the institutional framework for urban governance in Karu is complex and cumbersome. Federal and state ministries, the Federal Capital Territory administration, Nasarawa State and Karu Local Government agencies, and several layers of traditional government wield the most influence in urban planning. The number of actors involved in the urban planning process tend to complicate management systems and ultimately stifle progress.

Good urban governance is accountable, effective, equitable, and participatory, and promotes safety within the city as well as civic engagement. Currently, there are numerous capacity gaps that need to be addressed for Karu to achieve good urban governance.

ENVIRONMENT

Karu suffers from varied and serious environmental problems. Indiscriminate waste disposal sites, noise and air pollution from local transport sources, and blocked water drainage systems are just some of the critical issues affecting the area.

Furthermore, the outskirts of Karu are subjected to environmental problems arising from bad agricultural techniques such as the inappropriate use of agro-chemicals and unrestricted harvesting of trees. As the city expands, it is imperative for the health and wellbeing of local citizens that these negative environmental impacts are reduced.

GENDER AND HIV/AIDS

Despite Nigeria's constitutional commitment to equality between women and men, it is clear that a heavy imbalance still remains in virtually all aspects of life in Nigeria. In Karu, women are vastly under-represented in every layer of government and are largely excluded from both the business arena and land and property owning opportunities. Furthermore, women in Karu tend to be less educated than their male counterparts and as a result are more prone to falling into poverty. Thankfully, though, women's rights and opportunities are being strengthened – albeit slowly – by various non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations, which highlight the many positive attributes that women bring to wider society.

Once again, Karu's proximity to Abuja is a factor in its fight against the spread of HIV/AIDS. Being a growing commuter city, the resultant increased anonymity among citizens is an area for concern regarding HIV/AIDS. Some indications show that women may be more exposed to HIV/AIDS, and there are insufficient local health centres to deal with those living with the virus. However, the national HIV/AIDS prevalence rate (3.1 percent in 2007¹⁰) is below the average for sub-Saharan Africa (4.7 percent in 2008¹¹), and numerous agencies are involved in successful awareness-raising campaigns.

HERITAGE AND TOURISM

High-quality urban planning should take into account Karu's heritage and history, including the cultural and religious sites and practices that local citizens cherish. Such actions fit with the notion of allowing Karu to develop into an area that tourists can enjoy too. With proper infrastructural development, including transport and hotel improvements, citizens from outside Karu, including Abuja, would be able to visit the area and take pleasure in visiting the surrounding hills and scenic viewpoints. This would not only increase revenue and employment generation, but also develop

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