

# Outcomes of Community Participation in Housing Development An Update Review

Thomas T. Aule\*<sup>1</sup>, Mahmud Bin Moh'd Jusan<sup>2</sup>, Moses Iorakaa Ayoosu<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2 & 3</sup>Department of Architecture, Faculty of Built Environment and Surveying, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Skudai, Johor Bahru 81310, Malaysia

<sup>1</sup>Department, of Architectural Technology, Faculty of Environmental Studies, Federal Polytechnic, Kaura Namoda, Zamfara State, Nigeria

## ABSTRACT

Community participation has been identified as one of the most productive approach to empowering the 'poorest and most vulnerable people' in the move towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals 11, with mandate to 'provide opportunity for all people to housing that is safe, adequate, and affordable with basic services as well as to upgrade slums'. In this exploratory study, some 54 materials were reviewed comprising of books, journals, conference papers as well as published reports, on the subject matter of Community Participation. Based on their respective contents, the materials were first classified into different Areas of Study. Levels of participations were also established following conclusions and recommendations by the respective authors. Categorical outcomes were finally obtained from the reviewed materials as either positive or negative. It was however deduced that while bulk of publications on the subject matter of Community participation were in the area of Housing, at a collaborative Level of Partnership, just as over 70% of researchers reported positive outcomes of participatory projects. In conclusion, community participation in housing development is seen to be most effective at the highest level of empowerment, as the minor Discriminant Function, agree with the position of most scholars. It is therefore recommended that authorities of government as well as multi-national organisations should seek Partnership with local communities, not just for economic concerns, but with sincere motive of empowering the people for effective social production of their built environments.

**Keywords** : Community Participation, Housing Provision, Sustainable Development, Planning Outcomes, Community Empowerment.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Community participation is gaining grounds as a developmental concept as well as a productive strategy for sustainable housing provision, especially in developing countries (Bredenoord, 2016; Johar, 2017; UN General Assembly, 2016). Its popularity is based on United Nations' (UN) strengthened international solidarity that is focused in particular on

the 'needs of the poorest and most vulnerable people' (United Nations MDGs, 2015; United Nations SDGs, 2015).

Before now, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were established with carefully formulated targets to improve quality of human life in particular, as well as environmental habitat in general. Though the MDGs had unimpressive outcomes in developing

countries, unlike the excellent results in developed nations (Kyei-Nimakoh, Carolan-Olah, & McCann, 2016; UN human Rights, 2010; UN Human Rights, 2008; UN Malaysia, 2015; United Nations MDGs, 2015).

Consequently, the UN formulated a new agenda called Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with productive title 'Transforming Our World', which is set to be achieved between 2015 and 2030. To facilitate smooth operation of the SDGs program, the UN therefore initiate mechanisms focusing on multi-stakeholder collaboration between its member states, private sector, scientific community, civil society, among others; with particular emphasis on 'needs of the poorest and most vulnerable people' (Galadima & Shaibu, 2016; Georgeson & Maslin, 2018; Jiboye, 2011; Johar, 2017; Un-Habitat, 2017; UN General Assembly, 2016; United Nations SDGs, 2015).

Recent studies indicate that to effectively achieve SDGs eleven, which include 'provisions of adequate, safe and affordable housing with basic services, as well as to upgrade slums', communities have to be empowered so as to ensure effective participation of the 'poorest and most vulnerable stakeholders'. (Jiboye, 2011; Kent, 1981; Thwala, 2009; United Nations SDGs, 2015). Community participation is therefore identified as an effective empowerment means to achieve the related UN SDGs eleven, which targets 'making cities and settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable' (Nocca, 2017; Nour, 2014; UCLG, 2018; Un-Habitat, 2017; UN Habitat Nigeria, 2016).

This study is therefore an exploratory review of some recently published materials (2010 -2019) on the subject matter of Community Participation, accessed on open data base of Google Scholar, as well as institutionally subscribed online data base of University Technology Malaysia. The focus on recent publications is to highlight the period SDGs agenda was launched, with over-all aim of study to establish

outcomes of Community Participation in developmental projects, especially in area of Housing Provision.

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## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Community participation may be seen as the engagement of individuals of a given society in developmental projects, to take part in resolving their peculiar challenges (Harvey, Baghri, & Reed, 2002; Ijasan, Vian, & Oluwumi, 2013). In global practice, community participation may be viewed as the right of a group of persons to partake in issues touching their imminent development (Armstrong, 2013; Buerger & Holzer, 2015; Summerville, Adkins & Kendall, 2008). In community development, participation is a practice whereby indigenous community adherents become integral part of the project planning, among other decision-making exercises, as well as the later phases of implementation, evaluation and adaptation (Global Change Institute, 2016; Nour, 2014; Tosun, 2000).

Through community participation, concerned stakeholders are informed about developmental projects in their domains, be availed opportunity to take active part in it, and also be empowered in the process through training as well as experience (Astuti & Prasetyo, 2014; Jiboye, 2011; Nikkhah, 2009; UN DESA, 2013). In conceptual parlance, participation avails community members some level of empowerment with adequate means (training, tools, and methods) as well as satisfactory ends (acceptable outcome or impact) of a developmental projects (Alexiu, Lazăr, & Baciú, 2011; Fallavier, 2007; MacCallum, 2008).

The United Nations emphasized the centrality of participation and collaboration in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially in housing provision, by stressing to ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision making at the local, national and global levels (UN General Assembly, 2016; United Nations SDGs, 2015). The UN further stated that ‘neighbourhood development programmes yield best results when participatory activities are included as specific components for more qualitative, economical and acceptable results’.

### III. METHODS AND MATERIAL

The methodology adopted for this study was basically an Exploratory Review of 54 published materials on the topical area of Community Participation in project development. Works reviewed were categorised based on their Area of Research, Level of Participation and finally Participatory Outcomes. The review was also limited to materials published within the last ten years, between the 2010 to 2019 inclusively, within the SDGs target period (Fig. 1).

(Abdhaladi, 2018; Abildgaard et al., 2018; Adesida & Okunlola, 2015; Aigbavboa & Thwala, 2011; Andani, 2017; Archer, 2012; Astuti & Prasetyo, 2014; Begum, 2015; Bodo & Ukpong, 2018; Brown-Luthango, Reyes, & Gubevu, 2017; Brown & Wocha, 2017; Budiman, 2018; Chang, Helfrich, Coster, & Rogers, 2015; Chirenje, Giliba, & Musamba, 2013; Delgado, 2014; Digun-Aweto, Fawole, & Saayman, 2018; Donadei, 2019; Eltahir, 2005; Fakere & Ayoola, 2018; Global Change Institute, 2016; Hasgül, 2016; Hatley, 2013; Hewlett, 2010; Ijason, Vian, & Oluwumi, 2013; Johar, 2017; Karim & Rashid, 2012; Kwun-ling, 2011; Laah, Adefila, & Yusuf, 2014; Madzihandila, 2014; Mahdaviinejad & Abedi, 2011; Mahdi, Jusan, Mohammadi, & Roshan, 2014; Marais & Ntema, 2013; Marzuki, 2015; Mazzurco & Jesiek, 2017; Meredith & MacDonald, 2017; Miles & Samndong, 2015; Mubita, Libati, & Mulonda, 2017; Muchadenyika, 2015; Mustapha, Azman, & Ibrahim, 2016; Ngo, 2016; Nishimura, 2019; Nour, 2014; Patel, 2013; Prabhakaran, Nair, & Ramachandran, 2014; Reed et al., 2018; Sadiq, Trigunarsyah, & Coffey, 2017; Shand, 2017; Shui, Xu, Wei, & Wang, 2012; Tobing, 2013; Ushantha & Wijesundara, 2016; Valladares, 2013, 2017; Yanes, Zielinski, Diaz Cano, & Kim, 2019)

**Figure 1:** some current Literatures on Community Participation

#### A. Area of Research

The 54 materials on Community Participation were further categorised according to their respective areas of research into Housing, Tourism, Urbanism, as well as Other Planning Areas. Housing Area has to do with papers published on participation in housing design, housing provision, housing preference, housing policy, among others.

On the other hand, Tourism Area captures publications in the fields of environmental tourism, parks and gardens, cultural tourism, social tourism, religious tourism, eco-tourism, among others. Furthermore, Urbanism included participation in city upgrade, urban sanitation, urban waste management, urban pollution, among other similar areas. Lastly, Other Planning Areas included papers on participation in regional planning, poverty alleviation, population planning, environmental conservation, transportation planning, conservation, among others.

#### B. Level of Community Participation

The levels of community participation, grounded on ‘Ladders of Citizen Participation’ (Arnstein, 1969), as well as ‘Ladders of Community Participation for Underdeveloped Countries’ (Choguill, 1996), were also extracted from the various publications. For concrete comprehension, the levels were concisely grouped into three practical approaches namely Informing (Top-down), Partnership (Balanced) and Empowerment (Bottom-up).

Informing is the ‘Top-Down’ approach to participation which consists of a one-way flow of information mostly from government authority to community which the project is located (Ahmadian & Samah, 2012; Begum, 2015; Choguill, 1996). According to Solava (2018), it is the first level of “tokenism” participation, where the regulating authority carry out absolute decisions concerning project planning and development, and the benefiting community members are merely informed of project location in their domain.

Partnership is a medium level of participation which involves active input by community representatives in decision making (Begum, 2015). At this step, community members and regulating authority as well as other technical stakeholders, collaborate on planning and implementation of a project (Choguill, 1996).

Empowerment as the uppermost step on the ladders of participation for underdeveloped countries (Choguill, 1996), generally entails expansion of capabilities and assets of community members to influence, control, negotiate, participate, and accept responsibility of institutional developments in their living environments (Solava, 2018). It is a bottom-up participatory approach, in which community members initiate their own improvements and developments, possibly with the assistance of outside organisations, demonstrating control for social production of their build environment (Begum, 2015; Choguill, 1996).

### C. Outcome of Community Participation

The outcomes of community participation were established from the publications under review, categorically as either positive or negative. This emanates from conclusions made by various researchers in the projects carried within the framework of community participation. Anticipatory projects and proposals with the model of community participation were also nominally assessed from conclusions made by authors from various publications, as either positive or negative.

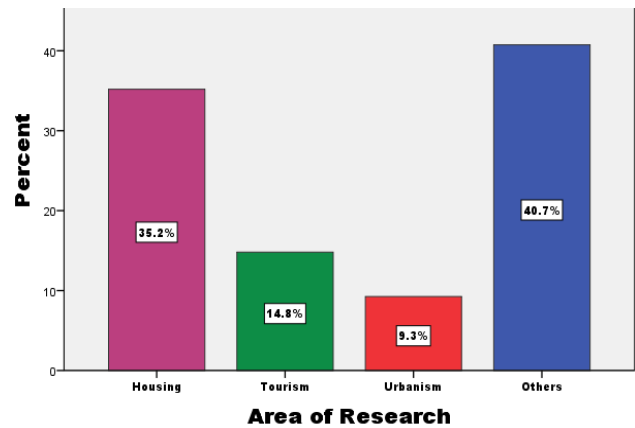
## IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results for the Exploratory Review of 54 materials on the subject area of Community Participation in project development categorised into, Area of Research, Level of Participation as well as Outcome of Participation, published between the years 2010 to 2019 inclusively were as presented below

### A. Area of Research

The 54 materials on Community Participation were further categorised according to their respective areas of research into Housing, Tourism Urbanism, and Other Planning activities. Figure 2 shows that publication in the area of Housing 19, Tourism 8,

Urbanism 5 as well as 22 in Other Planning activities (see fig. 2).



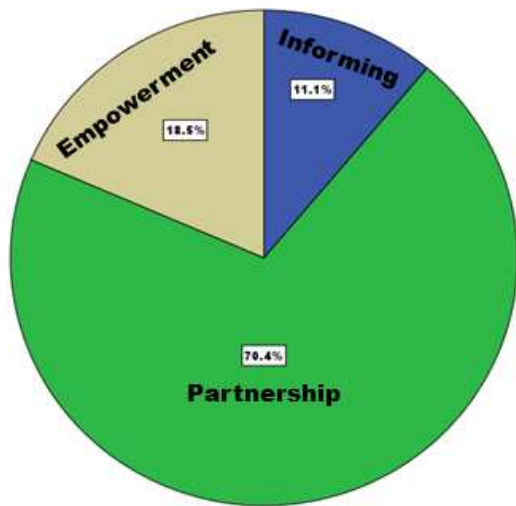
**Figure 2:** Analysis for Area of Research

The analysis in figure 2 shows that publications in the subject area of community participation is focused more on the basic human needs of Housing (35%) as well as other Planning activities (41%) such as welfare, health and poverty alleviation etc. The low level of participation in Tourism (15%) and Urbanism (9%) can also be established, probably due to difficulty in bringing diverse people together to participate with a common goal.

Details of the result show that significant numbers of community participation projects were carried out for mass housing provision, as well as post-disaster housing re-construction.

### B. Level of Community Participation

The levels of community participation based on the more concrete levels of informing, partnership and empowerment. From the review, the authors reported their respective participation levels of informing (6), partnership (38), as well as empowerment (10), as shown in figure 3 below



**Figure 3 :** Analysis for Level of Community Participation

Analysis for the level of community participation in developmental indicates that that majority of the projects were conducted at the level of Partnership (70%), a somewhat balanced stage of interaction between government authority, local people among other technical stakeholders.

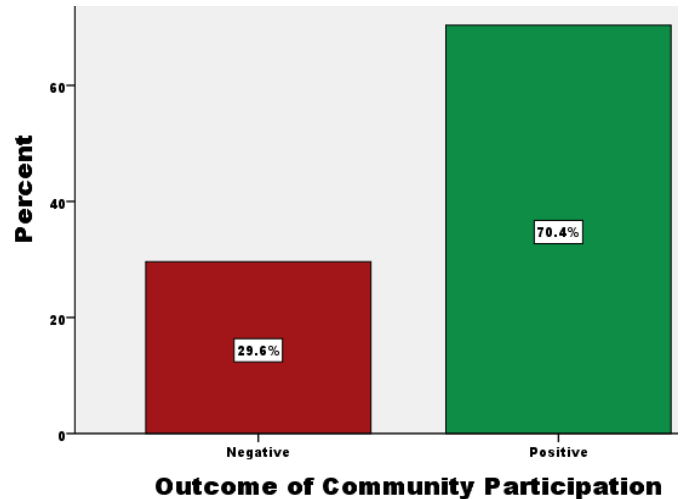
Distantly following is the level of Empowerment (19%), where community acquired the means to control the social production according to their needs. It can also be seen that more than Ten per-cent of the projects published were carried out at the conservative level of Informing (11%), a top-down participatory approach where input of community members is not sought and/or considered.

Here, it can be deduced that bulk of projects executed through community participation framework, are at a balanced collaborative level of partnership. Although, majority of stakeholders are advocating for the highest participatory level of Empowerment, that will avail local people the technical means to engage in social production of their built environment, so as to attain their satisfactory ends of cultural preservation.

### C. Outcome of Community Participation

Community participation impact, as the nominal independent variable, was finally established from results of the publications under review, as either

positive or negative. From the review, 16 of the published participatory projects reported negative outcome, while the results of 38 respondents were positive, as shown in figure 4 below



**Figure 4:** Analysis for Outcome of Community Participation

From the over-all outcome of community participation projects, as reported by the reviewed publications, 70% came out with positive results while 30% of the projects were reported not successful.

While the entire communities that participated at the level of Empowerment, as well as a majority at Partnership level, reported positive outcomes, those at the Informing level together with a few disgruntled ones at the Partnership level, presented negative outcomes.

It can therefore be established that participation at the level of Empowerment has the highest chances of successful outcome with satisfactory acceptable ends, while non-participation at level of Informing mostly produces negative outcomes with community not been satisfied with project results. A government that shows concern for its people should execute projects at-least at the collaborative level of Partnership rather than that the absolute top-down approach of merely Informing, thereby neglecting the people.

**D. Significant Participatory Outcomes**

The independent factors affecting outcomes of community participation processes, namely Area of Research and Level of Participation, were further tested using Standardized Canonical Discriminant Function Coefficients, as presented in figure 5 below

	Function 1
Level of Community Participation	.870
Area of Research	-.446

**Figure 5** : Level of Participation as the most significant factor

**V. CONCLUSION**

It can be seen that significant numbers of community participation projects were carried out for mass housing provision and post-disaster housing reconstruction, as well as in other Planning spheres of community welfare, health, sanitation and poverty alleviation, among others. The review also shows that, while bulk of projects executed through framework of community participation were at a collaborative level of Partnership, participation at the level of Empowerment has the highest potentials for successful outcome with satisfactorily acceptable ends. Most stakeholders advocate for the highest participatory level of Empowerment, which will avail local people the technical means to engage in social production of their built environment, so as to attain the satisfactory ends of cultural preservation. A government that shows concern for its people should carry out projects at-least at the collaborative level of Partnership, rather than at the absolute top-down approach of merely Informing, thereby neglecting the people’s participation.

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