

# An Assessment of Planning and Project Management Processes under the Zongo and Inner-Cities Regeneration Programme in Ghana

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## Abstract

Urban regeneration faces both conceptual and process challenges. Conceptually, it tends to have a variety of definitions and meanings. However, while urban regeneration, which is basically the comprehensive improvement of degenerated and declined built environments, urban renewal is only a physical form of it and, itself, has several sub-modes, including slum upgrading. In practice, however, there tends to be a mix of all these by different actors, which are portrayed in the ZICRDP. Similarly, various attempts have been made to develop procedural process models for explaining, assessing and undertaking urban regeneration and renewal transformation processes. Three of these were reviewed but none was considered adequate, independently, for assessing and explaining urban regeneration and renewal interventions. An alternative approach, which combined procedural planning processes - preparation for the intervention, problem identification, statement of objectives, data management, strategy generation, policy formulation, plan design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation - and experiential learning theory was, therefore, developed for the purpose. The former was useful in assessing the various stages of the urban regeneration process, including elements of project management, the latter addressed more of the emotional, relational and knowledge development experiences of participants and stakeholders as well as future programme performance.

**Keywords:** urban regeneration and renewal, slum upgrading, procedural planning process, project management processes, experiential learning theory, Zongo and inner-city communities, inclusive participation

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## 1. Introduction

In the contemporary era, urban regeneration has achieved a phenomenal imperative of its own, globally. Virtually, in every town or city, everywhere, urban regeneration or any mode of it has been taking place (Couch et al., 2003; Weck, 2009; Porter and Shaw, 2009; Diamond et al, 2010; Leary and McCarthy, 2013). However, urban regeneration policies, processes and practices vary markedly between the global North and South and within both (Heffron and Haynes, 2011; African Planning Association and UN-HABITAT, 2013; Adama, 2020). But one issue has been not about the substance of urban regeneration but how it is undertaken, its planning processes (Roberts, 2000; KIT Publishers and Government of Ghana, 2008; Amirtahmasebi et al., 2016). And the 'how' of engagement has generated a variety of knowledge forms or theoretical formulations (Roberts, 2000; KIT Publishers and Government of Ghana, 2008; Porter and Shaw, 2009; Leary and McCarthy, 2013; Amirtahmasebi et al., 2016). For instance, the multi-agency and partnership-based character of urban regeneration has developed into a collaborationist theory, with multi-dimensional adherents (McCarthy, 2007; Horita and Koizumi, 2009; Romero, 2017; Boyle and Michell, 2020, Wang et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2021; Siewwahanagul et al., 2022) with critical leadership provided by planning theorists like Healey (1997; 2003). However, it is not the intent to enter into collaborationist theory in this study due to its complexity. Generally, it also has a limited application in a context that lacks a firmly established institutional culture and urban development governance system. Moreover, the particular focus of this study is on a typical urban transformation intervention in a developing country, slum upgrading, in Ghana, and the relative infancy of the initiative involved.

A few works, yet, have emerged on urban regeneration in Ghana. These include Duah (2014), Akuffo (2014), Asante et al, (2015), Duah and Bugri (2016), Amoah et al. (2018), Asante and Hebrecht (2019a, 2019b, 2019c). Generally, these focused on the structure of regeneration than its procedural processes. The Cities Alliance (2008), based on 6 global South countries and Adama (2020) on Nigeria, gave glimpses of both aspects. However, Asante (2020) applied a structured procedural model proposed by Amirtahmasebi et al. (2016) to the evaluation of market infrastructure facility in Kumasi and Cape Coast, in Ghana. But Asante (2020) focused solely on the model, without comparative appraisal of other models. So, this was done with a kind of blind faith. Another issue relates

to the definition of urban regeneration, which tends to have various meanings to different people, including academic researchers, practitioners, civil service organisations and local communities (Jones and Evans, 2013; de Beer, 2018). Because of these issues, procedural processes may tend to vary between types of urban regeneration, and depending on how these are conceptualised. For this reason, it is useful to define urban regeneration in this study but it is not a major focus because this could constitute another paper on its own. However, this set of issues also justifies the need to provide procedural models of urban regeneration that are simpler and facilitate application, virtually, if not pervasively, within the global South or wider world. Such procedural approaches would also include aspects of planning and project management processes.

This study aims to assess the planning and related project management processes of a major and contemporary urban regeneration initiative in Ghana: the Zongo and Inner-Cities Regeneration and Development Programme (ZICRDP). It must be emphasised that the main focus was on the planning and implementation processes of this intervention. A second objective was to assess the effectiveness of the programme, based on its delivery processes. Third, to identify the challenges and other constraints of the planning and project management processes and to make proposals for the improvement of these, especially as the programme is still in its short- to medium-term and faced with several difficult problems. Main methods of the study included literature review related to urban regeneration and its modal forms and definitions and experiential learning theories, and how these informed the assessment. Another method consisted of face-to-face field interviews conducted during August-September 2022 with key professionals and representatives of two main project management institutions: the Zongo and Inner-Cities Development Secretariat and Zongo Development Fund Development Secretariat. First, a definition of urban regeneration is provided. Second, three selected procedural models are reviewed and in relation to the outcome of this, a fourth approach is proposed and applied to assessing the planning and project management processes of the ZICRDP. Third, a brief background of the programme is indicated. Fourth, actual assessment of the planning and project management processes involved in the ZICRDP is made. Fifth, conclusions are drawn and some recommendations made for ameliorating programme performance.

## 2. Defining Urban Regeneration

Urban regeneration is a process of rebirth of declined built environments through the comprehensive improvement and transformation of its sectors and spaces by implementation of appropriate policies, programmes, plans and strategies, aimed at reversing the trends of decay and degeneration (Roberts, 2000; Couch and Fraser, 2003; UNEP, 2003; Hassan, 2012; Jones and Evans, 2013; Tallon, 2013; de Beer, 2018: 1). It is integrated, inclusive, collaborative, usually partnership-led and more fulfils the achievement of sustainable development (Roberts, 2000; Friesecke, 2007; Tallon, 2013; Hwang, 2014; Lang, 2017; de Beer, 2018). All these characteristics of urban regeneration also underline its multi-stakeholder and participatory nature. However, some writers are more explicit about the coverage of the cultural dimension of regeneration (Roberts, 2000; Couch and Fraser, 2003:2; Section 198 of Ghana's Land Use and Spatial Planning Act, 2016 (Act 925), Republic of Ghana, 2016). Others are (Jones and Evans, 2013: 2; Tallon, 2013; Hwang, 2014) underlining its integrated nature (Roberts and Sykes, 2000; Roberts, Sykes and Granger, 2017). Urban regeneration is defined in this study as: a process of comprehensive, integrated, inclusive, sustainable remaking of existing degenerated and declined towns and cities for their economic, social, cultural, environmental, ecological and physical transformation through implementation of appropriate policies, plans and investment strategies and reversing the decay.

However, a distinction is usually made between 'regeneration' and 'renewal', the latter being a physical form of intervention, sometimes with some environmental elements (e.g., Friesecke, 2007: 6). Urban renewal may also mark a stage in the process of urban change and, itself, has a variety of sub-modes, depending on the particular spatial malaise (Roberts, 2000: 14; Friesecke, 2007: 6; Heffron and Haynes, 2011: 7-8; Tallon, 2013; Hall, 2014). These include 'urban' added to any of 'redevelopment', 'reconstruction', 'rehabilitation', 'renovation', 'restoration', 'revitalisation', 'reinvigoration', 'rejuvenation', 'modernisation', 'facelifting' (Khaoya, 2011; Tallon, 2013; Duah, 2014) and 'slum upgrading'. Urban renewal is seen, in context, as a process and strategy of physical, including some environmental change, in derelict built environments through the replacement and reviving of worn-out fabric and infrastructure, renewing physical uses and spaces, improving their quality and function, conserving and preserving these.

In practice, however, there tends to be a mixture of concepts and definitions of urban regeneration, renewal and its sub-modes by various writers (Duah, 2014; Duah and Abugri, 2016; Oyinleye et al., 2017; Egolum and Emoh, 2017; Amoah et al., 2018) because 'Urban regeneration' tends to be 'loosely used by very many different people', given different meanings and may be imbued with 'contesting visions' (de Beer, 2018: 1). First, urban regeneration researchers exist across different disciplines (Jones and Evans, 2008: 6; Duah, 2014; de Beer, 2018). Second, political actors tend to use it and its conceptual modes as it suits their political economy (The Cities Alliance, 2008; Adama, 2020). Some public policy actors in developing countries see it as being "wider" and more akin to the 'economically advanced countries' (Interview with team of national planning and urban development officials, Accra, January 2021). Others believe that Zongos are elementary communities with extensive

environmental challenges, so ‘slum upgrading’ more applies to them (Interview with the former Director of Policy, Planning, and Evaluation, erstwhile MICZD, September 2022; Senior Researcher, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer of the ZoDFS, August 2022; Republic of Ghana, 2012: 132, 2015). In Ghana, government (Republic of Ghana, 2011: 16) also considers redevelopment as a ‘full scale’ intervention and ‘should have been’ preferable but due to high replacement and often social cost, community upgrading strategy is operationally more acceptable. It also used ‘urban regeneration’, as a whole, to mean largely physical development, including upgrading of key infrastructure such as storm drains, sewerage systems, etc. However, other writers maintain a comprehensive and citywide view of urban regeneration (Obeng-Odoom, 2013; Akuffo, 2014) even based on transportation projects (Asante et al., 2015) and market infrastructure (Asante, 2020; Asante and Hebrecht, 2020). Such mixes reflect in the ZICRDP.

### 3. The Zongo and Inner-Cities Regeneration and Development Programme

Government of Ghana introduced the ZICRDP, with its creation of the erstwhile Ministry of Inner Cities and Zongo Development (e/MICZD) and establishment of the Zongo Development Fund, latter under the Zongo Development Fund Act, 2017 (Act 964) (Republic of Ghana, 2017; MICZD, 2017). “Zongo” is a corrupted form of the original, “Zango”, which in Hausa means “a settlement of Hausa speaking traders” (MICZD, 2018a), with pioneer settlers mainly from Northern Nigeria (MICZD, 2018b). In the contemporary era, Zongo communities include people from all parts of Ghana and levels of society and other immigrants from neighbouring West African countries, including Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso, etc. (MICZD, 2018b). However, residents are mostly Moslems, Hausa is the dominant language, and ‘the community is characterised by poor living conditions’ (Act 964). Zongos are the most deprived, disadvantaged, poorest, with the most vulnerable people, excluded and neglected parts of the towns and cities and mostly located close to or within the equally declined inner-city areas. Thus the President stated in 2018 ‘ “The deprivation and under development that has characterised the lives of people in the Zongo is not something that healthy society can tolerate” ‘ (GhanaWeb, 2017; ATLFM, 2018; Graphic Online, 2018). So, the ‘Fund is ... aimed at regenerating and addressing the challenges faced by the communities which have been, most of the time, neglected’, (Graphic Online, 2018) through effective planning and has a wide variety of funding sources, (section 5 (a) to (d); section 8 (2) (g). Act 964).

Zongos and the related inner-cities have become attractive to political decision-making and actors, generally, urban policy interventions, in particular, since 2017, much because of the increasing population densities, high levels of deprivation and disadvantage, with high community sensitivity to electoral politics and the national political economy, their being vociferous and a political force that the political elite can longer ignore (GhanaTrade.com.gh, 2018; Graphic Online, 2018). Indeed, like the neighbouring inner-cities, Zongos abound with voter-supporters of the two leading political parties, New Patriotic Party (NPP) and National Democratic Congress (NDC), making these settlements highly attractive to politicians. Following re-election of the ruling party in 2020, Government down-sized the e/MICZD, re-designated it as the Zongo and Inner-Cities Development Secretariat (ZICDS), and like the Zongo Development Fund Secretariat (ZoDFS), placed it directly under the Office of the President.

Act 964 aims to ‘provide financial resources to develop and transform the social and economic conditions of Zongo communities; and to provide for the management of the Fund and for related matters’ (Preamble). Section 2, sub-section (2) (a) focuses on *physical regeneration*: strategic infrastructure, including (i) roads; (ii) streets; (iii) neighbourhood lanes; (iv) bailey bridges; (v) street lighting, energy; (vi) community upgrading, basic amenities and services; (iv) drains and drainage systems. Section 2, sub-section (2) (a) on *environmental regeneration*: (i) sanitation: household, public and institutional toilets; (ii) waste management: waste mounds removal, etc.; (iii) water resources/systems; (iv) community security and safety improvement; (v) community greening, tree-planting, etc.; (vi) fire protection; (vii) inter-ethnic/inter-tribal and community conflict resolution and peace management. Section 2, sub-section (2) (a), (b) and (e) on *social regeneration*: (i) educational facilities, including basic, junior and senior high schools; (ii) sponsorship and scholarships, for local and international higher education; (iii) technical and vocational education and training; (iv) residential accommodation for school teachers; (v) health infrastructure and services; (vi) social protection for the poor and vulnerable children, men and women; (vii) social empowerment, especially of women. Section 2, sub-section (a), (b) and (c) on *economic regeneration*: (i) supporting local business; (ii) youth employment, entrepreneurship training and skills development; (iii) Information and Computer Technology (ICT) training and development; (iv) job-creation; (v) fund raising; (vi) management and investment of financial contributions. Section 2, sub-section (d) on *cultural regeneration*: (i) promoting culture and arts programmes; (ii) promoting cuisine, music and festivals, literacy works and language classes, art works, built heritage assets; (iii) recreational and sports infrastructure, including natural/green parks, new/upgraded astro-turf parks/stadiums; (iv) tourism development. Focus of the present study is on the planning processes involved in delivering the ZICRDP.

#### 4. Models of Urban Regeneration Processes

Three selected models of urban regeneration planning processes were reviewed and a proposed approach set out, all seen as knowledge forms in urban transformation intervention. The first set included the 'guiding principles of successful project management' (KIT Publishers and Government of Ghana, 2008), urban land regeneration tools and process (Amirtahmasebi et al., 2016) and Roberts's (2000) 'input and output' process model. The proposed model was an adapted form of the procedural planning process with aspects of experiential learning theory.

##### 4.1 Elmina 'guiding principles of successful project management'

An innovative regeneration initiative, Elmina 2015 Strategy, was undertaken in Elmina town in the Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abrem Municipal District in the Central Region (Figure 1) in the 2003-2015 periods. Following full project implementation, the leading partners derived, practically, a model for guiding urban regeneration and development interventions, simply called 'guiding principles of successful project management' (KIT Publishers and Government of Ghana, 2008). It involved 10 'principles' but these can be collapsed into 5-7 principles relating to: project planning; time-scaling; external learning; resource drivers; committed and inclusive participation. Although the approach is not exactly set out in a process-based form, it gives glimpses of this as well as provides cautionary and helpful guide in urban regeneration and development interventions, with emphasis on project management. Another advantage of the approach is that it entails significant elements of experiential learning, which will be explained later. However, while this model is not adopted, these elements relating to project management and experiential learning are relevant to the present study.

##### 4.2 'Input and output processes' in urban regeneration

Roberts (2000: 20) set out an 'input and output processes' model for explaining urban regeneration interventions and planning these. Friesecke (2007: 2) expanded on it, adding other details. In Roberts's model, inputs of the urban regeneration process flow from specific economic, social and environmental analyses of problems of the built environment. A second level of analysis and source of inputs includes external and internal drivers of change in the urban environment. External drivers include global macro-economic factors. Internal drivers relate to existing strategies of the particular urban environment, resource availability, resident preferences and position of any existing partnerships. According to Roberts (2000), combining results of both analyses generate certain regeneration outputs, including neighbourhood strategies: community action, inner-city renewal, local social facilities, community-led planning; training and education: skills improvements, community training, research and development; physical improvement: town/city centre improvement, housing sector, quality built heritage change; economic development: positive change in employment, incomes and revenues, economic space and infrastructure; and environmental action: waste management, energy efficiency, greening/landscaping, etc.

However, Roberts's (2000) model is somewhat deterministic of both input and output flows. Input analysis is also limited because relevant concerns could be wider. The model is not explicit on the roles of all stakeholders, although the role of partnerships is much emphasised. And knowledge is not explicitly specified as an output/outcome of the regeneration process. Flexibility of application of the model is also limited, much because of its determinism. However, Roberts (2002), to an extent Heffron and Haynes (2011) are emphatic that urban regeneration is an interventionist and practical activity and suggest that it needs contexts of equally a practical knowledge form and epistemology such as experiential and action learning.

##### 4.3 Urban land regeneration tools and process

In the case studies of regeneration in 8 countries, Amirtahmasebi et al. (2016) developed a model to assist planners and decision-makers with the tools and delivery processes. They aimed to demonstrate the potential contribution of private capital in the transformation of struggling places and spaces in urban neighbourhoods into prosperous and more habitable communities, realising the limitations of public sector support. Selected cases were Ahmedabad, India; Buenos Aires, Argentina; Johannesburg, South Africa; Santiago, Chile; Seoul, South Korea; Shanghai, China; Singapore; and Washington DC, United States (Amirtahmasebi et al., 2016). The model involves 4 circular stages of 'scoping', 'planning', 'financing' and 'implementation'. Scoping deals with the micro- and macro-levels of problem analysis and trends of urban change. Planning establishes a framework of plans, planning process, regulations and implementation plan. Financing involves assessment and mobilisation of financial resources, under various regimes and controls. Implementation relates to putting the visions, decisions, strategies and plans designed for urban regeneration into action.

However, Amirtahmasebi et al. (2016)'s approach would not suit many developing countries like Ghana, much because these lack a really active and private sector, apart from having weak and largely ineffective planning and land management systems. Asante (2020) used the model as a singular tool to assess and explain market infrastructure regeneration in Ghana, based on case studies in Kumasi and Cape Coast in a doctoral dissertation, without any comparisons with any other alternative assessment approaches. His choice and use of the model was, therefore, deterministic throughout the thesis. Second, Asante (2020) did not really appraise the private sector

ecosystem. However, the deliberate emphasis on enabling the private sector, including legislation, regulation or relaxing these may also conflict with provisions for community participation (Türkün, 2011; Unsal, 2015). Third, processes of the model are rather elitist and less inclusive than encourage real participation. Fourth, the model is highly technical in its coded assembly and use of “tools” for analytical, organisational and resource mobilisation purposes than available in many developing jurisdictions. Fifth, the 4-phased urban land regeneration process meant to be cyclical does not really make a cyclical and continuous turn, ending between the 270<sup>th</sup> and 360<sup>th</sup> degree of circle (Amirtahmasebi et al., 2016: xxx). However, the model bears a broad resemblance to the procedural planning process.

#### **4.4 An Adapted Form of Procedural Planning and Experiential Learning Processes**

While the models reviewed are not wholly used in the present study, elements of these occur in context, to the extent that these are symptomatic aspects of the procedural planning theory and experiential learning. In preferring these modes of theorisation, the aim is to conceptualise a faster, simpler, more participatory, more inclusive approach that is also sensitive to heterogeneity and an environment of multiple values such as the Zongo and inner-city communities in many African countries. Traditional procedural planning process involves the following (Ofori, 2021): initial preparation to undertake planning; identification of problems to be solved; statement of objectives to be achieved; collection and analysis of data and information on the problems; identification and generation of feasible courses of action/strategies; formulation of formal policies; generation and design of alternative plans, programmes and projects; implementation of the chosen and viable mode of these; monitoring and review; and ex post evaluation.

A central argument in this study is that urban regeneration is deeply experiential for all stakeholders, and who tend to react differently or express their experiences in various ways and all of which are valued. Thus it promotes inclusiveness and effective participatory practices. So, this argument encourages the inclusion of experiential learning theory in the conceptualisation of urban regeneration and transformation processes (Roberts, 2000; Heffron and Haynes, 2011; Amirtahmasebi et al., 2016). In this context, Kolb’s (1984) theory of experiential learning is considered useful. Kolb (1984: 38, 41) defined experiential learning as ‘the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience.’ Therefore, knowledge is created through the combination of grasping and transforming experience. Upon this, Kolb (1984) propounded a 4-stage experiential learning process: ‘concrete experience’, ‘reflective observation’, ‘abstract conceptualisation’ and ‘active experimentation’. Concrete experience is a passive stage, the learner recalls the event or situation they experienced or encountered, without reflecting on or making any judgments or conclusions about it. Reflective observation is made through watching, listening, discussing, analysing and understanding the experience, from as many angles as possible and identifying any inconsistencies, including making assessments, judgments and conclusions. Abstract conceptualisation involves in-depth thinking, identification of new concepts and theories, revision of existing ones, integration of these into overall learning and making generalisations. Thus abstract conceptualisation aims to constitute ideas, visions, new forms of knowledge, principles, even laws that underpin, inform and drive learning and action. In active experimentation, one plans and tests or tries out what they have learned, through planning an action and implementing it. Active experimentation includes plan/action monitoring, review, testing and evaluation. It also involves speculation about or foreseeing likely implementation challenges and how these might be mediated. It, therefore, provides a foundation for future and continuous/lifelong learning and action.

Baldwin and Rosier (2016) have underlined the fact that experiential learning is a process than an outcome and it is grounded in the personality of its users. Second, it involves the creation and re-creation of knowledge, including the resolution of any opposing perceptions and conflicts. Third, it emphasises the mediated/collaborative mode of experiential learning (Watson, 2002; Kayes et al., 2005). Like the procedural planning process, only aspects of the experiential learning model are adopted in this study. These include participant and stakeholder emotions, knowledge and learning gained in the ZICRDP processes, future intentions, plans and programmes and likely planning processes.

### **5.1 Planning and Project Management Processes in the Transformation of the Zongo and Inner-City Communities**

#### **5.1.1 Project planning and policy context**

The National Medium Term Development Policy Framework (NMTDPF), a 4-year national planning policy document issued by the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) constitutes the policy origins of the ZICRDP (Interview with former Director of Policy and Planning, ZICDS, September 2022; Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, ZoDFS, August 2022). NMTDPF, itself, derives from the Comprehensive Programme of Economic and Social Policies (CPESPs), submitted by each newly sworn-in government, usually covering two terms of 4 years each. Typical initiatives included the Zongo and Inner-Cities Environmental and Sanitation Programme that the ZoDFS rolled out previously (Interview with respondent, ZICDS, September 2022). Such initiatives ‘led to the upgrading of the Zongo communities, which had largely semblances of slum’ (Respondent).

This indicates that the ZICRDP has a legitimate national policy and planning context, which has the potential to ensure successful implementation. Significantly, slum nature of the Zongo communities achieved some improvement under the legitimate policy and planning contexts. The tendency for some built environment professionals and policy makers to prefer “slum upgrading” to “regeneration” was also apparent as the ZICDS and ZoDFS respondents indicated, with the former stating that ‘almost all the Zongos are slums’ (Interview, August-September 2022).

### **5.1.2 Project design process**

According to the former Policy and Planning Director of the ZICDS, the ZICRDP design process is ‘conceptually in line with the National Planning Budgeting Structure, which is based on guidelines issued by the Ministry of Finance’ (Interview, September 2022). It starts ‘with a nationwide stakeholders’ consultation, including ‘Local Authorities, Chiefs, community, youth, women groups, religious authorities, the World Bank, United Nations Development Programme (UNEP), and Development Missions: Turkish, Chinese, Moroccan, Malaysia, Qarta Government, Sudan Government, United States Agency for International Development (USAID)’. Indeed, project design processes involved consultation with a wide local, national, civil service, international, bi-lateral and multilateral actors and agencies. Stakeholder collaboration and engagement identified project adopting actors, and also depending on their own ‘philosophies relating to contributions’ (Respondent). For instance, the Chinese tended to support ‘training’ for project managers, the ‘World Bank gave project-based resources, Qatari assisting with water supply, Turkish giving grants to the poor, other supplies during festivities’ (Interview, September 2022).

Next, ‘a draft of vision’ is made, ‘based on discussion’ with relevant stakeholders, who ‘helped with re-shaping of ideas to fit the programme structure’ (Interview with former Policy and Planning Director, ZICDS, September 2022). ‘But strategically, everything is’ done ‘in relation with the Strategic Development Goals (SDGs) and by determining the future we want and sharing it with them’, i.e. stakeholders and the practitioners and project managers ‘reached out to them through meetings, conferences and proposals’ (Respondent).

### **5.1.3 Project organisation**

Project planners ‘prioritised the area for intervention, based on the level of vulnerability’, including ‘types of elements of stresses and pressures’, e.g., ‘climate-related events like flooding (flood risks)’ (Interview with former Policy and Planning Director, ZICDS, September 2022). Second, ‘a range of services and facilities that should be considered with the community, e.g. drains, access roads, sanitary facilities, landscaping, giving fresh look to the community’ (Respondent). Other initiatives such as ‘waste management, grassing of spaces, still ongoing’, together with ‘upgrading, intensive rating on image of property development and improvement’ (Respondent). However, respondent admitted that ‘traditionally, upgrading focused much on the physical aspects but this was differentiated’ (Respondent). This reflects the urban renewal/slum upgrading nature of the ZICRDP, and as defined, which would also limit the full sustainability of the intervention for a complete transformation of the targeted communities.

### **5.1.4 Modes of participation and roles**

Participation was always ‘shared on how to better deliver; e.g., the USAID shared insights on successful programmes with other participants’, ‘through peer-learning programmes’ reflecting elements of experiential learning in the participation processes (Interview with former Policy and Planning Director, ZICDS, September 2022). Most stakeholders participated in terms of playing specific roles but the local community’s roles were not explicit.

### **5.1.5 Targeted areas and sites**

Zongo communities where the planning processes and project execution were undertaken included Nima, Akweteman, Alogboshie, part of Madina, all in Accra metropolis. But projects were still undergoing in these areas, ‘mostly in the south because of the urbanisation and informal communities more visible’ due to ‘geographical prioritisation’; i.e., southern Ghana (Interview with former Policy and Planning Director, ZICDS, September 2022). Condition of the communities is so deprived that ‘any lifelong changing project, even one project, constitutes upgrading’ (Respondent), also reflecting the limited availability of funding, which affects project design. Anyway, such communities included Aboabo in Kumasi and Konongo, both in the Asante Region, Kintampo and Tekyiman in Bono East Region, where drains were constructed (Respondent). However, the communities tended to stress on other needs like water, sanitation, housing, etc. (Respondent), apparently, due to insufficient funding. But ‘not actually providing facilities from the scratch, rather improving the adequacy/capacity’ (Respondent).

### **5.1.6 Participant and stakeholder emotions about the planning process**

Emotional experiences of participants and targeted beneficiaries are significant sources of learning about urban regeneration project planning processes and implementation performance. Residents tended to be ‘quite upbeat, anticipatory of the good that was to come’ (Interview with former Policy and Planning Director, ZICDS, September 2022). Respondent admitted that the Zongo communities are ‘vast and the programme has to stay on’ as it would take ‘decades of systematic prioritisation’ and ‘geographical prioritisation’ to deliver, which also justified the need to massively increasing project financing. Importantly, the respondent also indicated that the ZICRDP tended to focus on the ‘urban areas in the southern part of Ghana’ than ‘the northern sector’, which is

'more of rural'. So, Zongo residents in northern Ghana tended to feel not getting a fair share of the programme. However, the respondent indicated that programme implementation tended to be more sensitive to areas which were less-slummed Zongo or relatively better developed pockets within the Zongo community, where there was 'more of housing construction' (Respondent) and interventions relating to such private shelter development and improvement initiatives. 'But' in the really slummed 'Zongos', focus was on 'improving what they already have rather than new buildings' (Respondent). Generally, respondents in the latter category must have felt that the programme was not proactive enough in their sections of the community.

### **5.1.7 Institutional actors**

Apart from the ZICDS and ZoDFS, a number of other institutions were involved in each project under the ZICRDP. These included the Department of Urban Roads, under Ministry of Roads and Highways; Hydrological and Sewerage Department, under the Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources, Local Authorities, Traditional Authorities, especially in relation to land issues. Eighty per cent of lands in Ghana is under the control of the Traditional Authorities, the public sector in charge of 20 per cent. So, there is need for land assembly negotiation with the former in most development interventions. Other structures included youth groups, especially related to contracts, inclusive services and field support. However, depending on the intensity, scale and coverage of particular projects, there could be many more institutional actors. But these were well co-ordinated, especially in organised partnership form; each tended to play their own roles as these came up.

### **5.1.8 Consultation and participation processes**

In the experience of the ZoDF, 'consultations are very effective and level of interest, high; all projects needs-based' (Interview with Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, ZoDFS, August 2022). The ZoDFS team engaged by asking 'what the community want, e.g. which trainees go on directly to do their own projects?' (Respondent). In developing a strategic plan, the 'team talked to the communities, institutions, Office of the President, community of Zongo Chiefs, community of Muslim Chiefs, Islamic Education Unit, civil service organisations, Ministry of Finance', all Act 964-based, consisting 'of various organisations' (Respondent).

Projects were approved by the Fund's Board but projects were funding-based. 'Communities make application for the Fund', as provided under section 23, Act 964. Next, 'Team visits to validate the need and project' and meets 'with key community groups', including the 'Zongo Chief, Local Government and the role to play', to interact about these (Interview with Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, ZoDFS, August 2022). Third, 'a report is then made to the ZoDF Office (Chief Executive Officer)' and the 'report is put before the Board' (Respondent). Project 'contractors' tended to come 'mostly from the community' and 'only those materials that are not in the community come from outside' (Respondent). Fourth, when the facility was developed, 'its management is under the District/Municipal/Metropolitan Assembly'. However, a self-help or community maintenance management of the developed facilities would be more efficient because they live at the point of use (discussion with Respondent).

Nevertheless, the current participatory practices, 'so far', are 'encouraging but need to strengthen ties with the community' (Interview with Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, ZoDFS, August 2022). Towards achieving this, 'ZoDFS has established Zonal Offices, in all 5 northern Regions, 1 in Bono, 1 in Bono East and 1 in Asante Regions; others are 1 for the western coastal zone in Takoradi, 1 in the Volta Region, another in the Oti Region. Altogether, 11 zonal/regional offices were established, all staffed and closer to the communities. Participant groups were represented on the ZoDF Board and 'participation is effective' (Interview with Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, ZoDFS, August 2022). For example, the 'community gives the lands and through the Chiefs; the Fund has not had to buy land, except in a few cases', such as in cemetery uses (Respondent).

There was no umbrella-style partnership but the ZoDF formed two separate partner relations with the Global Commons also called Global Commons Alliance, an American not-for-profit organisation and Qatar Charity, both with local branches in Ghana. These were non-governmental donor sources to the ZoDF. With the former, ZoDFS informed it about its list of project needs and it implemented the projects. For USAID, it provided financing through the Global Commons, which had provided about US\$31 million to date. With Qatar Charity, ZoDFS 'facilitates list of needs and' the 'Charity provides the items and the Fund identifies the communities and distributes these, e.g. basically, food items', including 'rice, oil, meat, processed locally with funding and procurement by the Charity' (Interview with Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, ZoDFS, August 2022).

## **5.2 Programme/Project Implementation**

### **5.2.1 Mode of project implementation**

Projects were implemented through private contractors and service providers, some of who were resident in the Zongo community, and as facilitated under the national procurement systems, following determination and award of the contract.

#### **5.2.1.1 Resource inputs**

Implementation input resources included funding, land, labour, knowledge and skills, professional actors, and time/time-lines. Counterpart funding as, generally, provided by Government of Ghana, multilateral and bi-lateral funding by partners like the World Bank, Qatari Charity. Implementation priorities were also determined by

existing density and accessibility, infrastructure, structure of the local economy, the physical space/built-up area and the level of urban functions, including services (Interview with Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, ZoDFS, August 2022). Respondent also indicated the need to explore urban morphology/spatial structure and more clearly define what constituted “urban” for easy delimitation of Zongo space on the ground. Indeed, this tended to be complicated by the situation that some inner-city areas were as slummed as the Zongos. As indicated previously, land was provided through counterpart support, usually by the local and Traditional Authorities. Labour, usually identified as “sweat labour” or “sweat equity” was provided by the contracting company, apart from Local Authority workers. Other knowledge and skills tended to be provided by Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Community Based Organisations (CBOs), apart from other professional actors. Time-lines, in effect, depended on the timely release of resources for project implementation.

#### **5.2.1.2 Resource control**

Altogether, resources were released, largely based on the physical needs of the community. ‘In the last 3-4 years, adequate resources were provided for implementation, but starting 2020, not enough resources’ (Interview with Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, ZoDFS, August 2022), apparently due to the effects of COVID-19. However, the Internal Audit Committee of ZICDS and ZoDFS ensured that the resources were well-used and as published in the public audit reports, having ‘to do with resource allocation and utilisation, generally’ (Respondent).

#### **5.2.1.3 Co-ordination of activities and processes**

Implementation co-ordination was undertaken on project-by-project basis, co-ordinators being involved directly with contractors. And the co-ordinators also reported on project progress to the ZICDS and ZoDFS. But coordination was less effective between projects and among all actors involved.

#### **5.2.1.4 Communication in implementation processes**

According to the former Policy and Planning Director of the ZICDS, ‘communication not efficient as expected’ (Interview, September 2022). It is ‘not in effect, linked with the Local Authorities, expected to have control of operators, contractors, etc., which did not happen’ (Respondent). Apparently, poor co-ordination also tended to contribute to ineffective communication in the implementation processes, indicating the rather poor co-ordination between and among all stakeholders and partners involved in the ZICRDP. This may be due to the fragmented nature of the programme institutional context and, perhaps, the lack of an overall planning framework under the intervention.

### **5.3 Project Monitoring and Review**

Project monitoring took place at various levels, based on the project delivery schedules and time-lines. However, a beneficiary Community Observation Report was compiled on project basis. Examples included development of the Bolgatanga Recreational Park, which was very effective, and change from natural grass to astro-turf at the Zongo Recreational Park in Old Tafo, Kumasi, which was less effective. Monitoring and Evaluation Unit of the ZICDS provided quarterly reports to the Ministry of Finance and the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC). Semi-annual and annual reports were submitted to Parliament and the Office of the Head of the Civil Service. ZoDFS also provided quarterly monitoring and review reports, through the Office of the President (Office of Government Machinery) to the Ministry of Finance. Mid-year reports were also provided through the same process. Project monitoring was based on Action Plans, prepared and approved by the end of the preceding year and submitted to the Ministry of Finance and Parliament. A critical part of the Action Plans was the budget guide, provided by the Ministry of Finance in advance and used to make project proposals. Ministry of Finance vetted the Action Plan and returned it to the ZoDF Board for any necessary revision, and to serve as a basis for project monitoring. In all cases, community reports and feedback provided monitoring information. Thus programmes and projects went through a statutorily well-structured system of monitoring and review.

### **5.4 Programme and Project Evaluation**

Evaluation was almost entirely in the ex post mode, ‘basically, looking at output’ (Interview with former Policy and Planning Director, ZICDS, September 2022). Respondent maintained that it was only in this mode that projects were ‘matured, enough to assess impacts’. ZICDS prepared ‘an evaluation plan that was used to observe actual output against the planned interventions’ (Respondent). An evaluation plan provided the ‘opportunity to observe not only the output but travel time to collect water, number of people served’, etc. (Respondent). ‘So, water programmes gave opportunity to observe actors, turn-around time for sourcing water’ (Respondent). Evaluation was based on a fairly comprehensive and systematic conceptualisation and actual delivery of material goods and related enactments. Under the ZoDFS, infrastructure projects were evaluated by engineering consultants, ‘who provided all performance on quarterly, mid-year and end-of-year assessment basis’ (Interview with Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, ZoDFS, August 2022). Non-infrastructure ones such as social and economic projects were assessed by project officers. All evaluation was based on prepared concept paper that provided a basis for the monitoring reports and the project team’s verification (Respondent).

During the field interaction, an issue arose about need for the rather fragmented nature of the programme



institutional structures into two secretariats. The former Policy and Planning Director, ZICDS, argued that the view was incorrect (Interview, September, 2022). As a matter of policy externality and evaluation processes, it was important to know that beyond the Zongo Fund, other interventions affected the Zongo communities: ‘so, these others should be taken up by’ the ZICDS (Respondent). Cases included the following. First, a male resident was murdered in a Zongo community in Ejura, Asante Region and it generated a huge inter-ethnic and community conflict that required political-cultural liaison with the security services. And the ZICDS, having responsibility for such relational matters, had to intervene directly, although such cases were not really its main responsibility under the programme. Second, Zongo communities may join ‘other’ non-Zongo ‘minorities to commission projects’ (Respondent), requiring involvement of the ZICDS. Third, special responsibilities were needed in actual liaison with the various ethnic groups and institutional structures within the Zongo, including Hausa Community in Ghana, Zongo Chiefs, etc. Fourth, acting as direct liaison/link between Zongo and government. Such cases were better managed by the ZICDS and should also enter into project evaluation (Respondent).

### **5.5 Individual and Group Knowledge and Lessons Gained**

Programme delivery was always based on what the Zongo communities possessed, including local knowledge, which reflected through needs assessment initiatives. Project management agencies believed that ‘let them identify their needs; community may have their own vision and they need to be effective’ (Interview with former Policy and Planning Director, ZICDS, September 2022). Respondent was emphatic about the inclusiveness and empirical contexts of programme delivery:

‘Community may have their own vision and they need to be engaged. Government initiatives must be driven by proper and empirical research. Need to define problems in development terms, not in identity terms. In all interventions, every initiative affects and benefits everybody. Focus on fulfilling community needs in an inclusive way.’

So, project managers learned from the local and experiential learning of the programme beneficiaries, who were also in the best situation to provide user feedback.

According to ZoDFS’s Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, ‘contractors tend to bring in their labour, so that knowledge transfer is limited’ (Interview, August 2022). However, participants, including the Zongo residents gained knowledge about the ‘methodology for prioritisation, components of programme design, broader expected benefits of upgrading’ (Respondent). And from experience of the ZICDS, ‘programme-based budgeting used ensures the transfer of knowledge from provision programmes’, additional to those noted.

### **5.6 Post-project Relational and Mood Experience of Participants**

From the experience of the ZoDFS, they observed improved relations among some of the participants but the programme also ‘divided some of them; a mixed bag’ (Interview with Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, ZoDFS, August 2022). For instance, ‘at Yeji, a tussle between the community and the District Assembly about facility management’ arose: issue was who was to be responsible for effective facility maintenance; community or Local Authority? (Respondent). ‘The community wanted to be in charge of facility management but District Assembly objected to it’ (Respondent), apparently because they did not believe that the former would do a good job. Post-project facility management was a huge challenge in urban development, generally, regeneration initiatives, in particular (Asante et al., 2015). Other times, ‘sectors of the community disagreeing; generally, they are all happening’ (Respondent). So, some residents were happy, others unhappy in the post-project situation due to their various experiences. It appeared that other disagreements tended to be about the community needs, if even those unhappy were in the minority.

### **5.7 Future Intentions and Plans and Programmes**

#### **5.7.1 Future Intentions and Plans of Participants and Stakeholders**

Appropriately, ZICDS thought that the ZICRDP ‘could be a good model to replicate (Interview with former Policy and Planning Director, ZICDS, September 2022). This would include ‘facility management and user fees, making it more participatory, i.e. enhancement; want to have adequate baseline before projects are implemented’ (Respondent). In the view of the ZoDFS, the future would rest on ‘two main groups: Traditional Authorities, including religious leaders and young people/youth. But there was need for ‘building the capacity of the Traditional Authorities in managing and maintaining the assets.’ There would also be need to ‘quicken the transition from school to work, make the residents participate in the development of the country’ (Respondent). And to widen participation so that ‘whatever solutions, other public and private sectors/organisations can take them up’ (Respondents), underlining the need for effective participation and inclusiveness in the Zongo and inner-city communities.

#### **5.7.2 Future policy aims and objectives**

One future policy objective would be for the ZoDFS ‘to have a substantial share of budget for development, so as to wean the Fund off Government’ and become financially independent (Interview with Monitoring and Evaluation

Officer, ZoDFS, August 2022). Another was ‘to achieve the SDGs’ (Respondents). Third, ‘to promote urban accesses’, obviously the Zongo areas are deficient in spatial accessibility (Respondent). And ‘to improve the closeness between the state and the Zongo resident, which would also improve the communication gap between the government and community’ (Respondent).

### **5.7.3 Specific future strategies**

In the light of its experience, the ZoDFS hoped to adopt a variety of strategies in the future. First, they ‘want to have regular donor conferences’ and to maintain contact with their major funding sources (Interview with Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, ZoDFS, August 2022). Second, ‘to have a comprehensive needs assessment’ than the isolated practices at the moment, including the need ‘to have comprehensive master plans for the development of the’ Zongos (Respondent). Third, ‘benchmarking organisations in Ghana, the Gulf, Africa’, generally and to learn from other institutions (Respondent). Fourth, ‘to join with other communities, globally, e.g. linking Nima with New York, etc., twinning these for beneficial relations, both ways (Respondent).

### **5.7.4 Likely community participants and groups to be targeted**

Again, the ZoDFS has learned from experience to target ‘the youth, women, Traditional Leaders, religious leaders and entrepreneurs’ (Interview with Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, ZoDFS, August 2022), the last being those that create jobs and wealth; and all other social-economic, cultural and political actors. Entrepreneurs would include construction artisans and small businesses (Respondents).

### **5.7.5 Future mode of programme implementation**

First, programme implementation would need to be strengthened (Interview with Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, ZoDFS, August 2022). Respondent explained that ‘as a government programme, there is a little political influence, e.g. how projects are distributed’ (Interview, August 2022), speaking powerfully to the frequent public sector intervention by political actors, based on their political economy and cultures. However, the word ‘little’ may be an under-statement because of the breadth of such political issues in the development process, generally. A similar observation was made by the author in urban regeneration in Cape Coast, where the Metropolitan Development Planning Officer at the time stated ‘as for the political interference, it is too much’ (Interview, January 2019). Indeed, several other writers have discussed the issue of political interference in urban regeneration programmes (Akanbang et al., 2018; Korah et al., 2018; Deuskar, 2019) and the related political economic values in urban planning development interventions, generally (Flyvbjerg, 1998; 2003; Drazen, 2002; Ajulor, 2006; Corporate Finance Institute, 2015; Adetoye, 2016; Frieden, 2020; Adhikari, 2021),

Apparently, the political interference was limiting participation and inclusiveness as the respondent expanded on the issue (Interview with Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, ZoDFS, August 2022):

‘Political leaders - Assembly Members, Members of Parliament or District and Municipal Chief Executives tend to influence the determination of projects, they write to the Fund. Time-lines tend to be short; so the Fund tends to acquiesce to the political demands.’

Because of this, programme managers ‘want empirical basis and to make the project needs-based and involve other stakeholders’ (Respondent). Indeed, the respondent was emphatic that:

‘The Fund needs to practise needs-based assessment so as to have the scientific basis and role of political judgement would reduce. Because of the short existence of the Fund at the moment, it has not had the time to do all the needs assessment. It takes about 2 years to do the needs assessment’ (Interview, August 2022).

Certainly, project implementation would need to be set within empirical, evidenced-based and programmatic practices (Deuskar, 2019).

### **5.7.6 Future mode of project monitoring and review**

Generally, limited participation also reflected in monitoring actors. So, the ZoDFS officials ‘want to increase the level of community monitoring and so personally review’ the trends of programmed change (Interview with Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, ZoDFS, August 2022). They also intended ‘to make the monitoring and evaluation as independent as possible’, i.e. out of any likely political interference or biases (Respondent).

### **5.7.7 Future mode of programme evaluation**

‘So far’, programme managers have been ‘depending on consultants; not able yet to do own evaluation; Fund starting with consultant’ (Interview with Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, ZoDFS, August 2022). However, they were hopeful that in future, they were ‘soon to depend on communities’ (Respondent). Occasionally, the Fund received limited feedback from some sections of the community but this was not representative and accurate enough. Nevertheless, ‘consultants’ may still be needed ‘for strategic evaluation of medium/long-term initiatives’ (Respondent).

## **6. Conclusions**

The study identified the ZICRDP as a form of urban renewal, mostly community or slum upgrading. Similarly, there was a variety of theories aimed at explaining the processes of urban regeneration and the study reviewed three of these to assess their relevance to the context. These included the “guiding principles of successful project management, input-output processes of regeneration and the urban land regeneration tools and process models,

none of which was considered independently adequate enough for explaining and assessing the ZICRDP. So, an alternative and strengthened approach that combined the procedural planning process with experiential learning theory was considered more effective for the purpose. Constituted procedural planning process was effective in assessing the entailed stages of intervention; experiential learning shed more light on the relational, emotional and knowledge development experiences of the participants and stakeholders as well as directions of future regeneration and slum upgrading programmes.

In preparation for the intervention, suitable accommodation facilities were provided for programme management, the ZICDS at the Osu Castle and ZoDF at its Secretariat in Abelemkpe, both in Accra metropolis. Both structures were also well resourced in terms of office-ware and equipment, but limited in logistical facilities; project officers, however, often depended on personal transport facilities. Preparation for the intervention covered the identification of an impressive array of stakeholders and participants, including bilateral and multilateral donor agencies, Zongo Chiefs, Muslim Chiefs, Traditional Authorities, the youth, Islamic Educational Unit, Civil Service and Non-Governmental Organisations, gender-based groups, especially women, apart from the community. Other public sector institutions included the Ministry of Finance and, of course, Office of the President. Donor and other funding agencies were adopting specific projects, Traditional Authorities provided land, key community leaders were bringing up needs-based project requests. And the ZoDF also had partnerships relationships with bilateral agencies and NGOs, apart from the broad partnership make-up of the ZICRDP. However, local representation was limited in terms less explicit identification of gender-based and children's groups, especially in relation to the latter, since one of the major programme challenges was supporting 'street children'. Institutional context was, however, improving with the increasing creation of zonal offices of the programme. At the time of fieldwork, these had been established in 11, out of 16, administrative regions in Ghana, bringing the programme closer in touch with the community and promoting their participation.

Nevertheless, the significant identification of stakeholders promoted problem identification, which was related to the needs-based requests that the Zongo residents made to programme management. When these came up, the project team visited the community to confirm and validate the needs and which involved meeting with key community leaders. Next, the project team submitted a report on the community needs request to the ZoDF Board, through their Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and consideration was determined mostly on the basis of funding availability. So, problem identification was project-targeted but involved informative consultations with the community. However, problem identification was reactive than proactive.

Statement of objectives were more specified through the statutory provisions of Act 964, generally social and economic development of the Zongos, including community renewal and slum upgrading as the programme goals. So, specific objectives related to the various programme sectors, including the social, economic, environmental, physical and cultural development interventions and the more specific project levels within these. In context, programme objects were also reflected in the needs-based requests brought up by residents to programme managers. Such dispersed focus and lack of compact plans and programmes equally isolated objects, which had the tendency to undermine sustainability.

Programme-related data were partly collected through the residents and expressed community project needs. Otherwise, the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit of ZoDFS also collected some data from existing secondary sources, e.g., demographic and population statistics, apart from primary data, which they garnered from the community. And the Unit made appropriate analysis of all relevant secondary and primary data. However, data were more project-specific because wider community spatial or master planning was not in practice. And since programme focus was more on the Zongos in the South than those in the North, data and information, generally, tended to relate to the former than the latter, creating a disparity in programme data coverage. Second, the programme tended to be more sensitive to the Zongo areas where there were better properties, especially for rating purposes. This kind of attitude also tended to be reflected in data collection and analysis.

Identification of strategies was reflected in the project-based data management and delivery practices, apart from broadly indicating objects of Act 964. However, strategy identification was more reactive and focused on the expressed needs of the community. Thus the lack of directly proactive approach and practice of community spatial and master planning also affected strategy generation. Otherwise, strategy identification was also seen in sector-based terms as in Act 964.

Policy formulation was appropriately guided by the National Medium Term Development Framework (NMTDF) or the Ghana Shared Growth Development Agenda (GSGDA), which is made every four-year period to guide the production of national, sector-based, regional, and local development plans. Another guiding context for programme policy formulation was the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Third, it was also guided by the provisions of Act 964. So, the ZICRDP had an enriched policy formulation framework. However, the project-targeted nature of delivery tended to disperse sector and strategic policy focus of the programme. Nevertheless, policy was also determined by the Office of the President, the ZoDF Board and the Programme Co-ordinator's Office. Such policy formulation tended to be administrative and essentially budgetary allocation orientated. In all these, therefore, the community were hardly involved in policy formulation, apart from bringing up their project

requests.

All respondents agreed on the urban renewal based nature of the programme, but mostly of a slum upgrading nature. Due to the vastness of the Zongo communities and the relative limited funding available, only a few Zongos had, so far, benefited in any way, from the intervention. For instance, only a few slum communities had been targeted in Accra metropolis. However, respondents indicated that determination of project locations depended on the intensity of slum development and deprivation. But projects were, generally, more of bits of infrastructure. Nevertheless, it was also indicated that the level of Zongo deprivation and decay was so deep and extensive that even a single and minimal piece of development, at a time, was a valued benefit, meeting some need. But physical planning and design also reflected the absence of areal/spatial and master planning in the Zongos. As indicated previously, there was the tendency to target Zongos in the more urbanised areas, especially in Southern than Northern Ghana, generally with more sensitivity to the better-propriety parts of the Zongos. Apparently, these were also the constituency bases of leading political actors.

In programme implementation, projects were executed by private contractors mostly based within the Zongos, including builders, service providers and artisan operators. Apart from the outstanding challenge of limited funding, other resources were always available. Land was always provided by the Traditional Authorities who are the principal landowners in Ghana. Knowledge and skills were usually provided by Non-Governmental and Community Based Organisations and other professional actors. Labour was locally recruited, with some MMDA staff support. Project delivery time-lines depended on timely release of funding; so there could be any period of delay, depending on the respective time-lines. Determination of project priorities was based on the existing density, accessibility, infrastructure, local economic structure, nature of built-up area, prevailing levels of urban functions. Resources, mostly funding, other material inputs used to be more available before 2000 but less since then, apparently due to the economic effects of the pandemic. However, audit reports indicated that resources were used efficiently. Project officers co-ordinated between contractors and reported progress to the ZICDS and ZoDFS. However, con-ordination tended to be less effective because of staff shortages. Second, there was less effective co-ordination between project management and the community, due much to equally limited post-commissioning facility maintenance. Similarly, communication between project management and the MMDAs was not effective enough because of the same staff shortages, due to funding limitations. So, poor co-ordination contributed to ineffective communication in the implementation processes between and among all stakeholders. These challenges were also due to the lack of an overall planning framework. Thus it is absolutely necessary to strengthen implementation co-ordination and communication.

Monitoring of implementation processes was undertaken on project-by-project basis by the project team/officers. Then they produced a Community Observation Report for each project, aimed at determining specific project performance. This tended to be challenging, however, for the limited staff available and due to the non-existence of an overall planning framework. However, Quarterly Monitoring Reports were also prepared and submitted to the Ministry of Finance and the NDPC. Third, Semi-Annual and Annual Monitoring Reports were submitted to Parliament and the Head of the Civil Service. Other Quarterly Monitoring Reports were also submitted through the Office of the President to the Ministry of Finance. Project monitoring was based on Action Plans of the ZoDFS, for which the Ministry of Finance provided as budgeting guides; Action plans were then used as basis for project proposals. The Community Observation Report included project performance feedback by residents. So, the ZICRDP involved an elaborate monitoring system, based on public sector and Civil Service practices.

Project evaluation was based on criteria that included output quantity/magnitude, user services, timeliness, all against planned targets. Generally, evaluation was performed by project officers. However, major infrastructural were evaluated by consultant engineers. In both cases, evaluation officers provided Quarterly, Mid-Year and End-of-Year Reports. However, programme management indicated the need to involve the community in project evaluation activities.

Participation was highly encouraged and effective. Residents were quite exuberant and anticipatory due to the level of deprivation in their community. This was demonstrated in the several rounds of consultation and monitoring but less, if at all, in evaluation activities. Overall, resident and community participatory roles were not clearly defined and as was reflected in the generally poor post-commissioning facility maintenance. Relationships were also constrained or conflicting between and among some of the participating groups, e.g., between whole/sections of the community and the Local Authority responsible for the area over who actually had the responsibility for post-commissioning facility management. Therefore, there is need for project management, the community and Local Authority to deliberate and address such relational conflicts and disagreements.

An advantage of the combined procedural planning-cum-experiential learning theory in urban regeneration and renewal transformation lies in its facilitated production of knowledge. Project needs assessment was based on the local knowledge of the community, of their own environment. Project management ensured that they worked with such local knowledge. This also contributed to promoting inclusiveness in needs assessment, not based on project management conceptualisation. It also made implementation empirically-based. Residents also gained

knowledge of the programme delivery process by experience, including prioritisation, components of programme design, wider benefits of community upgrading, etc. However, knowledge transfer was limited because of the lack of labour training and contractors bringing their own labour. But because delivery was project-targeted, this contributed to learning and knowledge transfer between projects.

A further advantage of experiential learning lies in its active experimentation stage, contributing to the prognostication of future programme directions and practices. This also means that the field interviews directly generated a set of recommendations for future programme improvement. These relate to future plan design, programme objectives, strategies, targeted participant groups, participation, implementation and evaluation processes. First, future plan and project design should be replicated across Zongos, including focus on facility management, user fee charges, widened and improved participation, with more involvement of Traditional Authorities, religious leaders and the youth, building on their capacity support for programme delivery, apart from other public and private sectors. It should also promote the fast-tracking of the transition of graduating students and trainees from school to work. Second, there is need for adequate funding in order to fulfil programme aims and objectives as well as making the programme and management financially independent, without any further government budgetary support. The programme would also aim to achieve the SDGs in the Zongo communities, including improvement in spatial accessibility. Another future objective should be to improve relations between Zongos and Government. Third, programme focus should be on 5 main strategies: conducting more comprehensive needs assessment; introducing the preparation of equally comprehensive master/spatial development plans for the Zongos; benchmarking other organisations at the national, Africa and wider global levels to learn from them about institutional and programme management; entering into inter-Zongo and joined-up non-Zongo development programmes as well as international city-twinning initiatives. Fourth, intensifying participation and roles of targeted groups, including the youth, women, Traditional Authorities, religious leaders, entrepreneurs and artisan businesses, social-economic elite and political actors. There would also be need to improve programme design from slum renewal and upgrading to more comprehensive urban regeneration, to enhance the integration of the formal built environments and informal/slum settlements, apart from promoting sustainable development. Fifth, future programme implementation should also address the challenge of political interference in project distribution and its limiting effects on participation, inclusiveness and constrained needs-based assessments. Sixth, because of the critical importance of participation, delivery focus should include widening community participation. Seventh, future programme programme evaluation should be more professionally delivered and independent of any political interference; it should also fund the recruitment of more project officers and depend less on external consultants as well as actively involve community residents for effective feedback on total programme performance and facility maintenance.

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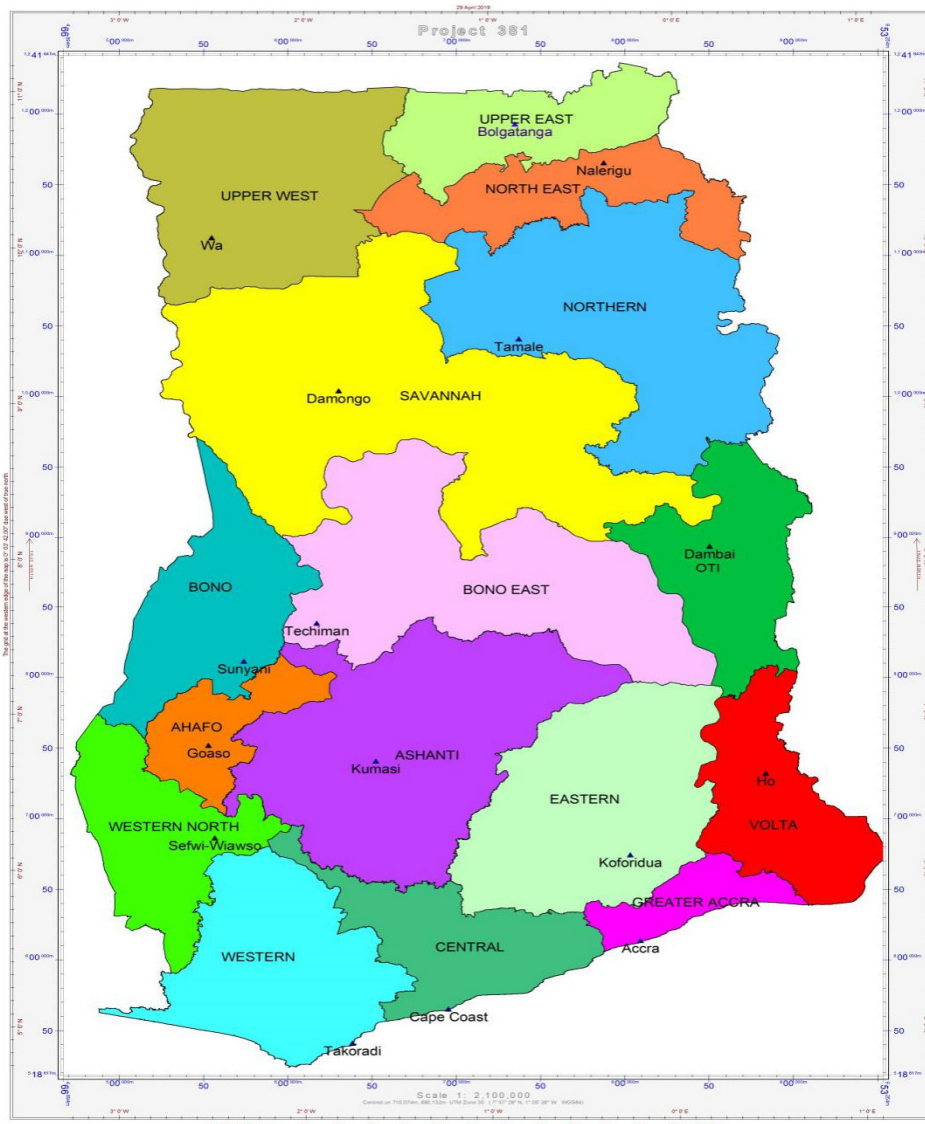


Figure 1 Map of Ghana showing the 16 political-administrative regions.  
*Source:* Central Regional Office, Land Use and Spatial Planning Authority, Cape Coast, 2019.