

Urban Slum Upgrading as a Form of Regeneration in Developing Countries: Zongo and Inner-City Communities in Ghana

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Abstract

Urban regeneration tends to mean different things to different people, everywhere. Particularly in the developing countries, holistic urban regeneration tends to be mixed up with its, generally, physical form, urban renewal, and its own sub-modes, including slum upgrading. These portray in Ghana's Zongo and Inner-Cities Regeneration Programme, initiated in 2017, especially for reasons of political economy, politics, financing, institutional, and character of urban degeneration. However, since, significant achievements have been made in terms of physical, environmental, economic, social and cultural transformation. Such progress as well as challenges encountered hold implications for future project implementation. The latter includes inadequate funding and personnel, political interference, lacking scale-up, limited programme coverage, ineffective community management structures, constrained project planning, other institutional and governance issues. Suggestions are made for the amelioration of these, focused on adequate funding, institutional reforms, a proactive and settlement/spatial planning approach, and introduction of Zongo Community Development Committees.

Keywords: Urban regeneration, urban renewal, slum upgrading impacts, Zongo and Inner-City Regeneration and Development Programme, urban policy, institutional contexts, urban sustainability

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1. Introduction

Towns and cities, globally, have been scenes of phenomenal degeneration reversal initiatives since the latter part of the 20th century, with variations between and among countries (Couch et al., 2003; Weck, 2009; Porter and Shaw, 2009; Diamond et al., 2010; Leary and McCarthy, 2013). As McCarthy (2007) and Pierson and Smith (2011) argued, urban decline, generally, emerged from changes in the dynamics of Western capitalism, since the mid-20th century, associated with the decline in manufacturing, huge growth in unemployment and social polarisation, including exclusion, especially in the global North, negatively impacting towns, cities and their communities and creating tendencies towards cycles of regeneration (Jones and Evans, 2008; 2013; Tallon, 2013). However, urban regeneration initiatives have become imperative strategies for investment attraction and job creation (Couch et al., 2003; Jones and Evans, 2013) in many places, globally. These have also contributed to the development of knowledge-based, service and innovation economies (McCarthy, 2007), after Schumpeterian ideas. But the massive funding these processes require is much lacking in the developing countries, apart from other factors, including conceptualisation and nomenclature; policy, planning and implementation processes; resource inputs, especially land supply systems; cultural contexts; institutional and management systems, among other considerations (Porter and Shaw, 2009; Leary and McCarthy, 2013). For instance, colonial history created an urban system of spatially dualised cities, between 'European quarters' and 'Traditional/Native areas', becoming an inertia of disparity and inequality in these countries (Adarkwa, 2012; African Planning Association and UN-HABITAT, 2013). Subsequently, the native parts and other settlements declined and deteriorated considerably, becoming extensive scenes of informality and slum development, with governments unable to fund effective and efficient urban development and regeneration.

Such challenges tend to generate various discourses about urban regeneration impacts, including its real benefits, seen by politicians and investors (Lovering, 2007; KIT Publishers and Government of Ghana, 2008; McDonald et al., 2009; Türkün, 2011; Obeng-Odoom, 2013; Unsal, 2015; Sun, 2015; Asante et al., 2015; Teernstra and Pinkster, 2015; Amirtahmasebi et al., 2016; Amoah et al., 2018; Asante 2020; Adama, 2020). Others relate to it being a mimicry of the built environment of the global North and relatively more economically advanced parts of the global South (Asante and Hebrecht, 2019a, 2019b; Asante, 2020; Adama, 2020), necessitating the need to decolonise planning and development processes and practices, systems of law, administration and governance in developing countries (African Planning Association and UN-HABITAT, 2013). Still, others highlight the lack of focus on urban poverty issues (Adarkwa, 2012; African Planning Association and UN-HABITAT, 2013; Adama, 2020), reproduction of foreign urban spatial models to develop 'world class city construction' and promote globalisation conditions attractive to external investors and businesses (Lovering, 2007; Türkün, 2011; African

Planning Association and UN-HABITAT, 2013; Unsal, 2015; Fält, 2016; Citifmonline.com, 2017; Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, 2018; Adama 2020), Additionally, the violent and brutal evictions, discriminatory and victimising actions against the urban poor, especially where relocation, land assembly and compensation issues are concerned, apart from effective participation opportunities (Adama, 2020).

This study aims to explore the meanings of urban regeneration, to underline how complicated these can be in state interventions and to apply an appropriate mode to assessing the impact of a relatively new urban transformation intervention in Ghana: the Zongo and Inner-Cities Regeneration and Development Programme (ZICRDP). Another objective is to learn lessons for improving programme implementation and guiding future regeneration interventions, especially as this programme took off only since 2017. Methods of the study included literature review and largely primary sources. Literature review covered published works related to the concepts and processes of urban regeneration, others on statutory urban policy and legislation. Primary data were collected through face-to-face interviews with key actors in the Zongo and Inner-Cities Development and Zongo Development Fund Secretariats (ZICDS, ZoDFS) during the August-September periods, 2022 and other national urban development and planning officials, early 2021. First, an observation is made on emergent urban regeneration interventions in Africa. Second, the urbanisation, urban growth and slum development contexts are highlighted. Third, the definitions of urban regeneration are set out. Fourth, the ZICRDP is assessed along the conceptual and legislative dimensions, including sustainability issues and other challenges. Then, conclusions are drawn and some programme amelioration measures suggested.

2. Emergent Urban Regeneration Interventions in the Global South

Since the late 1980s, especially early 1990s, increasingly many urban regeneration initiatives are being implemented in the global South countries. African cases include Ghanaian towns and cities, Kigali, Rwanda; Nairobi, Kenya; Lagos, Nigeria; Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania; Maputo, Mozambique; Kampala, Uganda; Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo; South African cities like Johannesburg, Pretoria and Durban (African Planning Association and UN-HABITAT, 2013), Other global South countries, generally, include Sao Paulo and several other cities in Brazil; Hong Kong and other cities in China; Seoul, South Korea; Tokyo, Osaka and other cities in Japan; Singapore; Mumbai and other cities in India; Turkey; Syria and Egypt (United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), 2003; Porter and Shaw, 2009; Khaoya, 2011; Leary and McCarthy, 2013). Interventions cover small, medium-sized, large and metropolitan towns and cities, including mixes of comprehensive initiatives and partial modes of transformation. The latter include many slum upgrading initiatives in Zimbabwe, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Mali, Senegal, Uganda, Tanzania, South Africa, Nigeria, the Philippines and India, among many others (The Cities Alliance, 2008; UN-HABITAT, 2011; African Planning Association and UN-HABITAT, 2013). In 2003/2004, UN-HABITAT and its partners piloted the Slum Upgrading Facility (SUF) initiative in Ghana, Indonesia, Tanzania and Sri Lanka (UN-HABITAT, 2011) and have since blown it up into the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme (PSUP) across a vast number of cities in the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries (UN-HABITAT, 2021). Thus urban regeneration and upgrading of slums and informal settlements have become major urban policy concerns to governments and civil society in the global South. However, it is generally an under-researched area, especially in places like Ghana and herein underlies the importance of the present study.

3. Urbanisation and Urban Growth and Slum Developments

Phenomenal rapid population growth and extensive slum development immensely challenge urban policy and regeneration, especially in the global South, necessitating an imperative need for effective transformation interventions (UN-HABITAT, 2012; 2013). Over half of global population is now urban-transitioned and increasingly so, with Africa as the fastest urbanising region (UN-HABITAT, 2012, 2013; Muggah and Hill, 2018; Saghir and Santoro, 2018; Adade, 2020). Similarly, slums have been increasing in terms of numbers and in situ population, depending on cases (Republic of Ghana, 2014: 93, 2015a; 2021; Deuskar, 2018). Thus a number of writers (Adarkwa, 2012; Cobbinah et al., 2015; Cobbinah and Erdiaw-Kwasie, 2016; Muggah and Hill, 2018; Saghir and Santoro, 2018, Adade, 2020) critically argue that while urbanisation tends to positively impact most parts of the globe, virtually the opposite happens in Africa, population growth outpacing economic growth, in looming poverty. Challenges include the rapid urbanisation and urban growth rates; lacking rural investments; infrastructure deficiencies; unsustainable urban investments; poor facility maintenance; massive unemployment and under-employment; low per capita income growth and inequalities; over-crowded neighbourhoods and communities; weak urban planning and land-use management systems; regulatory, institutional and governance constraints; ineffective involvement of the informal sector; poor service delivery, etc. (Yeboah and Obeng-Odoom, 2010; Saghir and Santoro, 2013; Muggah and Hill, 2018).

Slum and informal settlement development constitute a spontaneous form of urbanisation across the global South (UN-HABITAT, 2003 & 2010, 2013). In 2012, some 1 billion people, globally, lived in slums, increasing since 1990 (UN-HABITAT, 2014). In 2001, sub-Saharan Africa had the largest share of urban slums among developing countries at 71.9 per cent (UN-HABITAT, 2003 & 2010). However, in absolute terms, Asia topped

with 60 per cent of global slum dwellers, Africa with 20 per cent, Latin America and the Caribbean, 14 per cent. But it was observed that the proportion of urban population living in slums in developing countries reduced from 46.1 per cent to 32.7 per cent; 60 per cent to 51.3 per cent in Africa; 70 per cent to 61.7 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa, during the 1990-2010 periods, mainly due to slum improvement interventions (UN-HABITAT, 2003 & 2010; 2014). Nonetheless, slum areas are run-down, highly deprived, overcrowded with the urban poor/poorest, characterised by quite sub-standard housing, squalor and tenure insecurity; lacking accesses to water and sanitation; inadequate and non-durable building structures; insufficient living area and often on hazardous land (UN-HABITAT, 2003 & 2010; Adarkwa, 2012; African Planning Association and UN-HABITAT, 2013; Duah, 2014; Republic of Ghana, 2014: 94, 2015a, 2015b; Adamtey et al., 2018; Adama, 2020). However, slums have attracted peaked-up international attention, with the increasingly expanding informal economies, related working and housing conditions under informality planning (Roy, 2005). In Ghana, Government recognises slums being a disorder in formal planning and aims to ensure the effectiveness of improvement initiatives, to bring up urban informality to formal standards (Republic of Ghana, 2014: 97). Various one-off initiatives have been implemented, and following the successfully piloted UN-HABITAT-led SUF project and the PSUP, government designed a National Slum Upgrading and Prevention Strategy for implementation, awaiting funding availability (PSS Urbania, 2010; Republic of Ghana, 2015a).

4. Understanding Urban Regeneration

Urban regeneration means giving new life to a declined built environment, whether in part or whole or sector-based terms (Roberts, 2000; Couch and Fraser, 2003; UNEP, 2003; Hassan, 2012; Jones and Evans, 2013; Tallon, 2013; de Beer, 2018). It is a conscious and ‘deliberate process that seeks to reverse urban decay or degeneration’ (de Beer, 2018: 1). While many writers do not disagree about this definition, they do about the sectors and modes of transformation involved. Roberts (2000: 34) emphasised the economic, physical, social and environmental aspects of the built environment. Couch and Fraser (2003: 2) hammered on the economic, social, environmental and ecological sectors. Section 198 of Ghana’s Land Use and Spatial Planning Act, 2016 (Act 925) (Republic of Ghana, 2016) defines urban regeneration as involving local economic revival, community reinvigoration, natural and built-environmental improvement, building restoration, land and infrastructural redevelopment and ‘complementary social and economic’ initiatives, constituting largely economic, environmental, social and physical aspects of regeneration. But all these lack explicit indication of the *cultural* dimension. However, all sources reflect the participatory, partnership-led and long-term nature of urban regeneration, its legitimate management and governance, policy and planning contexts. Comparatively, Jones and Evans (2013: 2) and Tallon (2013) defined urban regeneration more comprehensively, including the cultural aspect, fulfilling its full sustainability structure. And the inter-dimensional linkage of the regeneration process is also important, (Jones and Evans, 2013; Tallon, 2013; Lang, 2017), underlining its integrated nature (Roberts and Sykes, 2000; Roberts, Sykes and Granger, 2017). This study defines urban regeneration 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. Urban renaissance is a more enhanced form of transformation and is seen as: a process of comprehensive, highly sustainable rebirth and quintessentially enlightened quality of declined towns and cities, including innovative urban design, scaled-up citywide and nationwide improvement, elimination of slums/informal settlements and unified integration of these with the formal built environment.

A distinction is usually made between ‘regeneration’ and ‘renewal’, the latter being a physical form of intervention, sometimes, with some environmental elements. Urban renewal may mark a stage in the process of urban change and, itself, has a variety of sub-modes, depending on the particular spatial malaise and focus of intervention (Roberts, 2000: 14; Heffron and Haynes, 2011: 7-8; Tallon, 2013; Hall, 2014). Spatial focus of urban regeneration may also historically shift between smaller and individual sites, citywide and regional scales (Roberts and Sykes, 2000: 6; Imrie and Raco, 2003; Jones and Evans, 2013). This study sees urban renewal 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. Its sub-modes 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’.

In practice, there tends to be a mixture of concepts and definitions of urban regeneration and its sub-modes. As de Beer (2018: 1) indicated, ‘Urban regeneration’ tends to be ‘loosely used by very many different people’, given different meanings and may be imbued with ‘contesting visions’. 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, apart from cultural, level of informality and financial factors (The Cities Alliance, 2008; Adama, 2020). Some public policy actors 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 basic communities with extensive environmental problems, so ‘slum upgrading’ more applies to them (Interview with the former Director of Policy, Planning, and Evaluation, erstwhile Ministry of Inner-Cities and Zongo Development (e/MICZD), September 2022; Senior Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer of the ZoDFS, August 2022). Several writers also tend to mix up ‘regeneration’/‘renaissance’, ‘renewal’ and its sub-modes (Duah, 2014; Duah and Abugri, 2016; Oyinleye et al., 2017; Egolom and Emoh, 2017; Amoah et al., 2018). Other writers maintain a comprehensive and citywide view of urban regeneration (Obeng-Odoom, 2013; Tallon, 2013; Akuffo, 2014), even focused on transportation (Asante et al., 2015) and market infrastructure (Asante, 2020; Asante and Hebrecht, 2020). However, 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’ to mean largely physical development, including upgrading of key infrastructure, only, such as storm drains, sewerage systems, etc. (Republic of Ghana, 2012: 132, 2015b). Such mixes reflect in the ZICRDP, meant to be a slum upgrading intervention and a form of urban regeneration.

5. Inner-Cities and Zongo Regeneration and Development Programme

The ZICRDP was introduced with the establishment of the erstwhile Ministry of Inner-Cities and Zongo Development (e/MICZD) and the Zongo Development Fund, latter under the Zongo Development Fund Act, 2017 (Act 964) (Republic of Ghana, 2017b; MICZD, 2017; 2018a, 2018b). “Zongo” is a corrupted form of the original, “Zango”, which in Hausa means “a settlement of Hausa speaking traders” (MICZD, 2018a), pioneer settlers mainly from Northern Nigeria (MICZD, 2018c). However, Zongos now include people from the lower and middle classes from both northern and southern Ghana and other immigrants from neighbouring Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Mali, Ivory Coast, Niger, Togo, Benin, etc. (MICZD, 2018c). Thus under Act 964, ‘ “Zongo communities” means a heterogeneous community comprising various ethnic groups with different religions where (a) the predominant religion is Islam; (b) the predominant language is Hausa; and (c) the community is characterised by poor living conditions.’ Indeed, 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).

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 and high levels of deprivation and degeneration in these, with high community sensitivity to electoral politics and the national political economy, their being vociferous and a political force that the political elite can no longer ignore (GhanaTrade.com.gh, 2018; Graphic Online, 2018). A similar trend had emerged in the inner-cities of the global North, especially since the 1980s (Ribera-Fumaz, 2009). According to Jafaru (2020), ‘there are over 3,000 Zongo communities’ in Ghana ‘with an estimated population of approximately 5 million people’. However, the e/MICZD (2019) put the number of Zongos at 1,080 with a total population of 4.6 million, based on samples from 66 districts, 133 towns and 479 Zongo communities. So, the number of Zongos and total population may lie between these ranges. However, Zongo communities, like the neighbouring inner-cities, abound with voter-supporters of the two leading political parties, New Patriotic Party (NPP) and National Democratic Congress (NDC), making these settlements hot cakes for politicians. Therefore, ‘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. 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 is focused on the dimensions of urban regeneration as defined and the ‘programmes are inter-related’ (Interview with Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, ZoDFS, August 2022). It 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):

1. Section 2, sub-section (2) (a) on *physical regeneration*: strategic infrastructure, including (i) roads; (ii) streets; (iii) neighbourhood lanes; (iv) bailey bridges, for community spatial integration; (v) street lighting, energy; (vi) community upgrading, basic amenities and services; (iv) drains and drainage systems.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.
 5. 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.

The Fund has a wide variety of sources, (section 5 (a) to (d), Act 964), including Parliament-approved monies, grants, loans, other voluntary funding, Internally Generated Funds (IGFs), other lawfully payable monies, and is exempted from paying tax (section 24). Additionally, the Fund's Board can 'organize fund-raising activities to raise monies for the fund' (section 8 (2) (g)). What has been the actual material impact of the ZICRDP, to date?

6. Transformation of the Zongo and Inner-City Communities

6.1 Physical Regeneration and Renewal

In view of the appallingly poor drainage in the Zongo communities, a major strategic response was the construction of primary and secondary drains in a number of targeted communities. However, primary drains tend to require more desilting and are relatively more expensive to maintain. By 2022, the ZoDFS had 'done some drains in about 4 communities' (Interview with Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, August 2022). E/MICZD (2019: 4-5) indicated that a 1.7 km long storm drain was dredged in the Pelele neighbourhood of Aboabo, apart from Asawasi in Kumasi metropolis, Asante Region. Additional works included the 'raising of the side walls and construction of a catchpit undertaken to limit silt accumulation' at Asem, also in Subin, Kumasi metropolis (Figure 1) (e/MICZD, 2019; Jafaru, 2020). A 1.2 m wide secondary drain was also constructed at Tekyiman Zongo, Bono East Region. Drain transformation included new construction, maintenance and management of existing ones. However, effort made, so far, in relation to the problem is low-scaled. Nevertheless, the ZoDFS aimed to construct 2 km more drains in several communities, subject to funding availability.

With community and spatial accessibility, a huge challenge in the Zongos, provision of physical access is a highly desirable intervention. Some existing roads and streets were rehabilitated by part grading, others tarred, in both cases with drains constructed along these. Examples included Agogo in the Asante-Akim South District and Bonsu in Kumasi, both in the Asante Region, and Tekyiman, Bono East Region. So far, GHC4,782,356.36 (US\$478,235) has been spent on road and street renewal and upgrading in the Zongo communities (Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, ZoDFS, August 2022). Once again, effort, so far, is low-scaled. However, other development was the supply and installation of street lighting facilities (Jafaru, 2020), improving visibility and security in the beneficiary areas (Jafaru, 2020). Targeted communities included Danfa Zongo in Madina and Washington, both in the La Nkwantanang Madina District; Darul Salam Zongo and Ngleshie Amanfrom, Greater Accra Region; Jema in Bono East Region; and Opeikuma in the Central Region (Jafaru, 2020).

6.2 Environmental Regeneration and Renewal

6.2.1 Waste management

A typical urban environmental deterioration and deprivation challenge, globally, especially in the developing countries, worst in the Zongo community, is waste management. In 2019, a clean-up exercise held in Nima produced about 40 tons of solid waste collected (Republic of Ghana, 2019). Apart from clearing up heaps of waste accumulated within various parts of the Zongo and inner-city areas, waste sorting centres were also established in a number of communities. This was aimed at sorting out different types of waste for specific treatment, including re-cycling, where useful, including a solid waste segregation programme - i.e. solid waste from liquid waste - in Nima, Maamobi, Newtown, Madina in Accra metropolis and Ashaiman Municipality (Republic of Ghana, 2019). However, waste management is still less efficient due to the lack of resources, including conveniently allocated skips, routinised and programmed waste collection systems etc.

6.2.2 Sanitation and water facilities

Sanitation interventions focused on the provision of public and household toilets. Households chose from among several toilet designs and their preference was constructed from them. ZoDFS has, to date, constructed over 250 private toilets in Accra metropolis in the following communities: Korle Gonno, Mamprobi, Agboghloshie, Bukom - in Ga Mashie -, Adabraka, Chorkor and Kokompe. About 50 household toilets were provided in Ga Mashie alone, an inner city area. It has also provided 17 public toilets, each costing GHC200,000 (US\$20,000), with a fully connected mechanised borehole. Such innovation instantly resolved the problem of water supply, improving Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) services. Indeed, ZoDFS 'is taking aggressive action in ensuring the provision

of public and household toilets in Zongo communities and inner-cities' (Jafaru, 2020). Apart from these, ZoDFS also provided 10-seater institutional/school facilities in targeted Zongo and inner-city communities. Localities included Bodwesango, Adansi Asokwa District; Nkawie, Atwima Nwabiagya South District, both in the Asante Region, and Salaga in the Salaga Municipality, Savannah Region. As Jafaru indicated, 'water is life', and the ZICDS and ZoDFS 'have given evidence of this adage by constructing boreholes in some Zongos' (Jafaru, 2020) and as a viable alternative to area-wide piped water supply. By 2015, 15 of these had been constructed (Jafaru, 2020). Cases included Bibiani Zongo, Anhwiaso-Bekwai District; Dwenasi Zongo, Sefwi-Wiawso District, both in Western North Region; Opeikuma Zongo, Awutu Senya East District, Central Region; and Dambai Zongo, Krachi East District in Oti Region.

6.2.3 Tree-planting and other greening

Some tree-planting and greening was undertaken. According to the former Policy and Planning Director of the ZICDS, 'few tree-planting' projects took place but 'the fate of this is similar to the fate of national programmes, where survival rates are very low' (Interview, September 2022). Ghana embarked on a national tree-planting campaign since several years ago, to save forests that have been depleted by climate change, illegal mining and other forms of tree removal and deforestation. In 2022, it aimed to plant 20 million trees across the country (Mensah, 2022). According to the United Nations, Ghana has one of the highest losses of rainforest in the world, its forest cover a fifth of what it was a century ago. The Forest Commission indicated that between 2019 and 2021, Ghana lost over 300 sq km of primary forests, compelling timber dealers to import trees from neighbouring countries (Mensah, 2022). On a chosen day dubbed 'Green Ghana Day', usually in June of each year, the Head of State physically launches the annual tree-planting campaign aimed at halting deforestation, through 'aggressive afforestation and re-afforestation' (Mensah, 2022). On the day, the Forestry Commission gives out tree saplings to schools, businesses, religious groups and other organisations to distribute to their various members for planting.

But the greatest challenge to the programme is the 'survival rate' of the planted trees. About 20 per cent to 30 per cent of the trees planted are lost to climatic forces, vandalism, indiscriminate and non-permitted felling, less effective Tree Preservation Orders and policies, local edaphic factors, meaning the survival rate is between 70 per cent and 80 per cent. Tree management and effective implementation of Tree Preservation Orders ought to be the responsibilities of the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies - Local Authorities - (Republic of Ghana, 2016b). And, 'actually', 'tree-planting' is aimed at 'reducing the CO₂ footprint, balancing the micro-concentration condition and help project the bio-diversity' (Interview with former Policy and Planning Director, ZICDS, September 2022). However, in Zongo greening, there are 'no specific projects', only re-alignment with national programmes' (Respondent). This means the intervention is not directly Zongo-targeted, only as part of national programme implementation.

6.2.4 Community security and safety

Deteriorated and poor environmental conditions of the Zongo and inner-city communities includes threats to the security and safety of life and property. As indicated, community security was being improved through street-lighting, for instance. A related intervention was by creating the conditions for and improving police presence in the community, through the construction of new police stations and expansion of some existing ones. Programme managers 'lobby or co-ordinate with security and court officers to facilitate access to these' (Interview with Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, ZoDFS, August 2022). However, which programme management agencies need/ought to "lobby" the various actors, since the relevant services are the due of the community? It may be to provide some incentive to the security and other service actors in an environment that is critically less- or under-served. Another safety issue related to fire hazards, to which programme actors responded through the creation of fire stations but the respondent could not indicate any material levels achieved.

However, an effective way to achieving community security and ensuring safety of life and property is through effective and efficient conflict and peace management. One approach to achieving this is through the organisation of the Peace Conference or Peace and Development Dialogue Conference, a Zongo activity held annually in different places. Since inception, it has been held 3 times in Accra, Kumasi and Tamale (Interview with Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, ZoDFS, August 2022). Usually, the event is more of talks, shared experiences and celebration but programme actors intended to include conflict resolution activities. With the wide variety of ethnic, cultural, income and religious groups and political colours in the Zongo and inner-city communities, there is the tendency for conflicts to flare up in these. According to the former Policy and Planning Director of the ZICDS, the management of these is a particular responsibility of the Secretariat. A proposed future initiative is the Alternative Dispute Resolution practice, as part of wider Conflict Management Training. Stakeholders in this intervention include the 'Kofi Annan Peace Keeping Centre, the Attorney-General, the Chiefs to train and certificate them so that when settling conflicts, they do so within the context of the law, so they have the capacity to settle disputes and train them on residents' (Interview with Monitoring & Evaluation Officer, ZoDFS, August 2022).

6.3 Social Regeneration and Renewal

6.3.1 Education sector

With the extensive disadvantage, deprivation, inequalities and dismal opportunities prevalent in the Zongos and some of the inner-city communities, education is regarded key to their development. So, the ZICDS 'and ZoDFS' are 'keen on ensuring the necessary infrastructure to facilitate teaching and learning' (Jafaru, 2020). Since government 'came into office in 2017, the Fund has invested in education and training' (Interview with Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, ZoDFS, August 2022). One initiative was the construction of school blocks for basic and junior high schools at more than 31 locations, countrywide (Jafaru, 2020; Respondent). This included the provision of furniture and book supplies, and other school blocks were renovated. For both, locations included: Tunga in Ablekuma, Accra (Interview with Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, ZoDFS, August 2022), Agogo Zongo in Asante-Akim South District, Asante Region; Tolon, Tolon District in Northern Region. A school gate-house was also constructed for the Accra Girls Senior High School, Maamobi in the Ayawaso North District, Greater Accra Region. Construction of compound/campus gates is a development programme for schools in the Zongo community, depending on priority. ZoDFS is in the process of constructing more school gates and will also renovate other structures.

Another initiative was the provision of - internal/local - scholarships to over 200 students, so far, offering diversified courses; over 15 other students received bursary support. In this regard, there was an on-going initiative to 'develop Zongo model schools, using it as the approach to Integrated Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (T-VET) Schools', i.e. integrating both and 'several streams set up for this' (Interview with Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, ZoDFS, August 2022). A community library was also constructed in Nsawam-Adoagyiri, Eastern Region. Rehabilitation of existing structures included re-roofing, floor screeding, replacement of windows and doors, painting and re-painting (Republic of Ghana, 2019). The training initiative aims to train students from STEM to enter university and from T-VET directly to the market. Other trainees could come in from outside the T-VET to re-train or from the 'informal sector to gain formal training and qualification' (Respondent).

Under an international agreement with Cuba, 4 students go to study there, each year, since 2018, on various courses, especially medicine. And ZoDFS is negotiating for more such scholarships with the Gulf countries. All these initiatives are 'innovative' and aim 'to push the students to solve Zongo development' problems, being 'focused on Zongo community' (Interview with Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, ZoDFS, August 2022). A targeted education improvement related to the Islamic Educational Unit, under the Ministry of Education. For this purpose, there was a recruitment of 3,000 Arabic instructors, with identification and orientation provided prior to deployment (Republic of Ghana, 2019). Overall, there has been an increased access to education, improvement in student-classroom ratio and decreasing congestion in the schools. Generally, the average of 68 pupils per class fell to about 30, due to increased provision of classrooms. Similarly, there was an improvement in teacher-pupil ratios.

6.3.2 Health sector

Usually, the Zongo and inner-city communities fall under sub-districts or districts of the health sector but these spatial-administrative areas may not have any health facilities. And the slum and deprived communities may be located far away from the nearest ones. While provision of wider area facilities was critical, it was also urgent to make some provision for the local and neighbourhood communities. ZoDFS, however, contributed to improving existing municipal health facilities. For instance, the Fund constructed an elevator for the Neo-Natal Intensive Care Unit of Maamobi General Hospital in Accra metropolis. They also rehabilitated a health facility at Kpando, Kpando District in the Volta Region. However, during the pandemic, programme managers engaged with the Zongo and inner-city communities and distributed many of the needed resources to them, apart from promoting media and WASH campaigns. Inclusive was the translation of the preventive protocols into the main local languages such as Hausa, Dagbani, Twi, Ga, etc. (Jafaru, 2020). Such health-care support also tended to include free medical screening for any section of the community. For instance, during the 2019-2020 periods, there was medical screening of 1,333 pupils in 10 schools across Zongo communities in the Greater Accra Region; ten other schools were covered in the inner-city communities.

6.3.3 Social protection initiatives

ZoDFS managers are 'still in the process of working out the whole' social protection 'programme' (Interview with Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, ZoDFS, August 2022). However, so far, they have distributed 'relief items to the Zongo community, especially during the Eids (Islamic festivals), both 'to the Moslem households and other ethnic groups' (Respondent). Handouts included 'food and meat items', mostly provided by development partners, the Qatari, and Non-Governmental Organisations from Turkey (Interview with Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, ZoDFS, August 2022). However, ZoDFS was emphatic about the strategic importance of 'Livelihood Needs Assessment in the Zongos before prioritising any relief' (Respondent).

Another initiative was the development of the Zongo Street Programme, which involved engagement with 'unaccompanied minors' and 'rural urban migrants in the major city areas' (Interview with Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, ZoDFS, August 2022). The Fund 'developed a concept note' and was undertaking a

‘stakeholder consultation’ about it, aimed at ‘identifying and rehabilitating at least 200 kids per year’ and ‘providing grants to households’ (Respondents). Some of the street kids ‘come from Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali, follow onion trucks and come to Accra; although not Ghanaian, they are a responsibility of Government; also to avoid radicalisation and weaponisation by others’ (Respondent). Some gender, mostly women activists were also trained in various aspects of gender-related issues. Initially, this involved 25 activists selected from 5 regions of Ghana. Activists were expected to mentor their colleagues, promoting awareness of the issues and socially empowering them. A further initiative related to the ‘youth and drug abuse problem in a number of Zongos’ e.g., addiction to ‘marijuana and cannabis’ (Respondent). According to the Respondent, ‘some’ are ‘now mentally disturbed’ and the Fund was ‘seeking to rehabilitate them’ (Interview, August 2022), using mentoring, medical and socialisation treatments.

6.3.4 Nurturing and promoting inclusiveness

One of the aims of the ZICRDP is promoting inclusiveness in the community, also meant to encourage peaceful and harmonious co-existence and shared opportunities. ZoDFS ‘aims to achieve this by using the Chief Imams, Reverend Ministers and Pastors, the youth’ and ‘women groups’ (Interview with Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, August 2022). Part of this effort, ZoDFS intended to hold a yearly Religious Dialogue Session, involving the various ethnic-cultural-religious groups, aimed at ‘mentoring on peaceful; co-existence to avoid inter-tribal/ethnic conflicts’ (Respondent). Another approach to developing inclusiveness is through ‘promoting sporting activities, e.g., soccer, most popular; differently styled league, each year; so far, only means, soccer; request from the community’ (Respondent). Importantly, ‘in all initiatives, making these disability and vulnerability friendly, e.g.’ in relation to ‘buildings’ and related facilities, being ‘culturally sensitive in all constructions’ (Respondent). All ‘activities’ were defined in terms of being ‘needs-based, requests from the various communities; ZoDFS team visits and interacts with community and determines the specific needs; always address the community’s views and needs’ (Respondent).

6.3.5 Improving shelter/housing

Housing/shelter regeneration is not a direct objective under Act 964. However, it may be seen as part of general infrastructure; at least, seen as part of education facilities. So, the research interviewed the respondent briefly about any shelter initiatives (Interview with Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, August 2022). His response was ‘not, so far on housing but Zongo WASH programme’ included ‘toilets, boreholes for water’, catering for households, among other beneficiaries, as indicated previously, across the country (Respondent). However, ZoDFS indicated that it was part of the future development plans ‘to partner with the private sector to undertake housing developments’, including ‘early design stage’ (Respondent). Nevertheless, as part of the education sector initiatives, some 2-bedroom accommodation facilities were constructed for school teachers in places, though not indicated, and was meant to be sustained. Community upgrading was also intended to improve shelter, generally.

6.4 Economic Regeneration/Renewal

6.4.1 Skills training and entrepreneurship

A major challenge to economic development in the Zongo and inner-city communities is the lack of labour and entrepreneurial skills. Under an initiative dubbed Zongo Youth Skills Training and Entrepreneurship Programme, the aim was to meet this challenge. Some 1,000 youth, across various Zongos, were trained in batik and tie-and-dye production, coconut oil extraction, soap and sanitiser manufacturing and needlework. A popular area of skills training was in the cuisine and catering business, some 500 persons trained in the 2019-2020 periods, including other operators. Programme managers believed that when women, in particular, were trained in cuisine and catering, they ‘are likely to benefit their households’, improving household budgets (Interview with former Policy and Planning Director, ZICDS, September 2020). It was confirmed that previous trainees were ‘experiencing sales increases, with profit feeding into household income’ and the ‘level of confidence, some 90 per cent’ (Respondent). Under the programme, entrepreneurship support was provided for those who went through training successfully and were given a minimum starter support of GHC5,000 (US\$500) or GHC10,000 (US\$1,000) per an individual or group, usually the latter ‘demanding more’ funding (Interview with Monitoring & Evaluation Officer, ZoDFS, August 2022).

Another initiative was known as the Youth Start Programme, supported by the Ministry of Finance and the new Ghana Enterprise Agency, apart from international donors like Qatar Charity. The aim was to support completely new youth starters in various business developments. Successful trainees ‘start on their own because of the practical nature of the training’ (Interview with Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, ZoDFS, August 2022). Both the skills training and the entrepreneurship and youth starter initiatives were ‘profiting Zongo businesses and putting them in contact with public and private financiers’ (Respondent). Programme managers ‘are still talking’ to all the sponsoring organisations to ‘provide’ more ‘funding’ (Respondent). And these initiatives are creating many jobs in the community. A special aspect of the skills training and entrepreneurship programme was training in Information and Computer Technology (ICT), including software design, hardware servicing, etc. Since the 2019-2020 periods, over 250 youth have been trained in software development, starting in the Asante and Greater

Accra Regions.

Under the Youth Start initiative, programme managers sent out an online questionnaire to Zongo youth in the secondary/high schools and university graduates for them to apply for traineeship. In a recent invitation, ‘close to 260 applications for the support’ were received (Interview with Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, ZoDFS, August 2022). As at the time of field study, Youth Start had a ‘budget yet to be allocated’ (Respondent). When this was done, a wider ‘survey’ and ‘baseline assessment’ was to be undertaken (Respondent). The initiative involved ‘hiring private consultants to follow and work with’ the trainees (Respondent). ‘At the moment, almost all funding from the government’, but the ZoDFS has planned ‘to do a donor conference in 2023’ and for which a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed with Global Commons Ghana, an international not-for-profit organisation (Respondent). In particular, this included United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funding for 200 communities to benefit from toilet, water and other sanitation facility provision in the Oti, Northern, North East, Savannah, Upper East and Upper West Regions of Ghana, aimed at promoting economic development (Figure 1). Other development partners, including the Turkish and Saudi Governments were ‘working to contribute’ to the initiative (Respondent).

6.4.2 Effective management of financial assets

Management of all the Zongo Development Fund assets is controlled under the national procurement and financial management legislation. The Ministry/Office of Monitoring and Evaluation, under the Office of the President, was ‘also active ensuring that all targets are achieved’ (Interview with Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, ZoDFS, August 2022). The Fund was in the process of ‘establishing Facility Management Committees’ with their roles to include ‘how to use revenue and recycle’ cash inflows (Respondent). For instance, developments such as ‘supporting assets, public toilets and boreholes’ are ‘charged fees aimed at maintaining’ these ‘but not charging commercial rates’ (Responsibility). ‘At the moment’, there is not such asset management structure ‘but working towards it, following the Donor Conference 2023’ (Respondent).

6.4.3 Fund-raising and financial independence

The Fund aimed to be independent, quite apart from the requirement for it to raise funds to augment its assets (section 8, Act 964). ZoDFS was emphatic ‘not at all independent, still dependent on Government of Ghana; plan is to become independent and not dependent; sole and original aim is to become independent’, indicating its avowed intent to achieve financial independence (Interview with Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, August 2022). One factor threatening the Fund’s independence was ‘yes, politically controlled’ by the political elite (Respondent). These included Assembly members - Local Councilors -, Members of Parliament and actors at the Office of the President who sometimes controlled and manipulated activities of both the ZICDS and ZoDFS and for which ‘they always come to us’ (Respondent). However, considering the relatively shorter existence of the ZoDFS and the ZICRDP, with high administrative costs and staffing challenges at 23 employees only, the Fund managed to undertake 236 projects, covering 109 districts in 200 Zongo communities, nationwide. Respondent Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, ZoDFS, argued that ‘other agencies have existed longer but not achieved such performance’ (Interview, August 2022). For instance, the District Assemblies have ‘more funding and staff’ but ‘have not achieved’ such success (Respondent), underlining the distinctive and unique achievements of the ZICRDP.

Fund-raising function, is crucial to the ZoDFS’s effectiveness. However, according to the respondent Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, ‘none, so far, because of the process of developing the ZoDFS’ (Interview, August 2022). They have not been able to raise any funds but ‘strategic plans done; still doing basic needs and strategic assessment’ (Respondent). Apparently, this is because projects are funding-targeted.

6.5 Cultural Regeneration and Renewal

Cultural initiatives are seen as opportunities for recreation, inclusiveness and peaceful co-existence with valorised benefits (Interview with former Policy and Planning Director, ZICDS, September 2022). Generally, this is ‘based on the arts because the structures for history, art, music were already under specific institutions, so it was thought the project could collaborate with these, only attended at these’ (Respondent). Apart from a few areas of indigenous engagement, the ZICRDP joined in existing national initiatives, not implementing its own cultural projects, generally.

6.5.1 Sporting activities

Football was unanimously the most popular Zongo sporting activity. Initiatives included the development of natural and artificial parks and related infrastructure across many communities. The latter consisted of astro-turf football parks constructed in 17 communities. Some of these were originally planned as natural/green grass but were later turned into astro-turf projects because of the high cost of natural grass maintenance, including limited availability of water for the grass. Targeted communities included Madina and Fadama in Accra, Greater Accra Region; Kibi and Akim Oda, Eastern Region; Asokwa, Tafo and Aboabo in Kumasi, Mampong, Asante Region; Bolgatanga, Upper East Region; Damongo, Northern Region; Yeji, Bono East Region and Esikado, Western Region. Specific facilities included inner perimeter fencing, reverse player seats, and where grass parks existed, boreholes were constructed to provide water for grass maintenance; astro-turf parks had spectator stands and

dressing rooms. Programme managers were ‘working to diversify the sporting activities’ (Interview with Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, ZoDFS, August 2022). However, ‘due to the novel nature of the ZoDF programmes, it takes time to assess needs, based on severity of the needs’ (Respondent). Generally, sporting activities were aimed at ‘reshaping the talents and opportunities for the youth to showcase talents, largely football’ (Interview with former Policy and Planning Director, ZICDS, September 2020).

6.5.2 Zongo festivals

Apart from the Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-al-Adha Islamic festivals, the programme also aimed to promote indigenous Zongo festivities, including the traditional Damba and Mauloud Festivals. Basically, the Damba originated from the Dagbon in Northern Ghana. It involves drumming and dancing for whole Zongo populations, led by Zongo Chiefs, with donations in cash and kind, socialising and showing solidarity, given prominent press coverage. Mauloud is similar to the Damba, in terms of cash donations and fund-raising, generally, to be spent on Zongo development programmes. These festivals tended to attract ‘political inputs, e.g., the Vice-President appearing and delivering keynote address’, the ZoDFS Chief Executive Officer, Chief Imam and other Chiefs present (Interview with Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, ZoDFS, August 2022). Drumming and dancing accompanied these events but these were not yet independently developed activities. However, these included ‘Zongo youth hip-pops’, usually composed for the occasion, mostly by talented youth musicians or song-makers (Interview with former Policy and Planning Director, ZICDS, September 2022). Programme managers were involved in the organisation and resource-supported these festivities, contributing to merry-making, joyous and happy Zongo life.

6.5.3 Zongo cuisine and catering activities

Another popular aspect of Zongo community life related to the local cuisine and catering services. Generally, these tended to be well-patronised in most communities in urban and rural Ghana for breakfasts and most lunch meals. Apart from representing cultural values, Zongo cuisine and eateries were valorised economic activities that created jobs for many local women as indicated previously. So, ‘Zongo culinary culture now wide’ (Interview with Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, ZoDFS, August 2022). Respondent indicated the fact that Zongo cuisine was quite popular in West African countries and thought that a masters researcher could undertake a study on the activities ‘to trace origins of these relationships within the sub-region’. He also indicated that there was a Zongo cuisine development programme aimed at ‘promoting Zongo food, providing easy access to it’ (Interview, August 2022). For this purpose, an Association of Food Providers was formed and the ZICDS provided some money to support the group.

6.5.4 Zongo traditional clothing and textiles and handicrafts production

As part of the general ongoing Zongo skills assessment initiative, some traditional production activities were identified. These included the popular smock-weaving, kente-weaving, seamstressing and other production of traditional clothing. For instance, under the youth skills training project, some people received training in needlework, etc. However, ‘no particular support, so far’ (Interview with Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, ZoDFS, August 2022). But respondent admitted that these cultural activities, if well-supported and promoted would produce sustained valorisation in the economic life of the community.

6.5.5 Ethnic-religious mix in the Zongo community

A further mark of Zongo cultural life is its wide and heterogeneous ethnic-religious mix. Indeed, ‘Zongo culture is extremely diverse one, comprising close to 25 different cultures based on tribes and cultures’ (Interview with former Policy and Planning Director, ZICDS, September 2020). A major one was the Hausa culture, which is ‘quite dominant in the south; the definition of Zongo embodied in the Hausa language; so, Hausa language more pervasive’ (Respondent). Other ethnic groups were Akan (Twi speakers), Ga, Ewe, making the Zongo ‘the richest in diversity’ (Respondent). In terms of religion, the Zongo was ‘mostly Moslem’; ‘but ethnically, hardly one dominant tribe’ (Respondent). Significance of such wide ethnic diversity was in providing for and catering to the heterogeneous Zongo community, with valorised benefits, exploiting these to create thriving local product-markets and economic ventures.

6.5.6 Listing of Zongo heritage assets

One challenge in managing the cultural development and regeneration project, was the listing of the ‘heritage assets of the Zongo, based on United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO’s) listing’ (Interview with Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, ZoDFS, August 2022). Basically, this related to ‘relics of the slave trade - slave markets -, e.g. grave of a slave raider at Yendi Babatu; slum market in Salaga’ (Respondent). Others included ‘Kumasi early Zongo settlers; military museum, first Zongo military men, especially along the coast; British Gold Coast Constabulary, settled along the coast and Kumasi’ (Respondent). However, programme managers ‘need to assess the issues and identity language, history, etc.’ (Respondent). Especially so, as ‘some of’ the ‘Zongos over 200 years old, e.g., Adabraka, Tudu’ in inner-Accra, founded by Zongo settlers (Respondent). They also needed to do ‘ethnographic studies of early Zongo communities before the colonial eras; how to relay these stories to the communities, packaging them for the community and Ghana’ (Respondent). As part of these initiatives, ZoDFS planned, during ‘2022-2023, to engage with some Departments in the University of Ghana on the listing, e.g., Institute of African Studies, Department of Archaeology and

Heritage Studies' (Respondent).

6.5.7 Programme Impact on Poverty

Apart from the glimpses of material change and transformation observed, specific effort was made to obtain a measure of programme impact on Zongo poverty, generally. According to the ZoDFS, 'no empirical impact, so far' (Interview with Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, August 2022). However, what they observed was 'basic access to schools, access to basic services improved, new businesses and income increased' (Respondent). Second, 'we have improved government funding to pro-poor initiatives and elimination of slums' (Respondent). They were emphatic that 'almost all the Zongos are slums', with 'Zongos largely an urban phenomenon but some rural communities have Zongo' (Interview, August 2022). So, the achievement made, so far, under the programme contributed to reducing urban poverty, generally. Impacts related more to some improvement in infrastructure and related services but not per capita income because 'disposal income' was 'not factored in the definition of a slum' (Respondent). At the time of field study, the ZICRDP received a 'minimum allocation of GHC80 million (US\$8 million) per year; considering the massive Zongo numbers, apart from inner-city areas, this amount is woefully inadequate' (Respondent). However, respondent admitted that formal fund raising would generate additional funding, apart from donor-provided resources to further impact poverty reduction.

6.6 Impact on Sustainable Development

A major advantage of urban regeneration is that it has the greater potential to achieve effective sustainable development because of its comprehensive, multiple sector and multi-agency nature, than urban renewal and its sub-modes. According to ZoDFS's Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, 'sustainability is about culture and structures' and 'structures under community management structures' (Interview, August 2022). For this purpose, ZoDFS made Facility Management Plans (FMPs), under which Facility Management Committees (FMCs) were created, each having 5 to 7 members, 'trained' and 'have regular meetings' about facility maintenance issues (Respondent). And each 'facility manager has a technical person, who is hired to operate the structures', guiding them through maintenance processes (Respondent). Programme managers were 'still in the process of establishing these committees' (Respondent). Thus sustainability was assessed in terms of facility maintenance management operations and effectiveness. However, a complementary view 'is to the extent that some problems were cleared', including green plants and solid waste management and the 'other strategic dimensions' (Respondent).

6.7 Some Political Processes and Effects

Some instances have been indicated about how the political elite tend to interfere in programme delivery processes. According to the former Policy and Planning Director, ZICDS, the programme was 'quite favourable for the government because the people of the Zongos felt that government introduced the programme because it cared about their plight' (Interview, September 2022). Obviously, government has scored much political capital for itself, and being the first and only one to introduce such a bold regeneration programme. However, the respondent rightly recognised that this favourable political profile 'was not registered by the 2020 General Elections meaning that the Zongo people needed more than the government did; perhaps, the posture of the government appointees contributed to the generally low performance'. Apart from losing at least 30 seats in Parliament, the President was down on his 2016 performance, not really reflecting in the several innovative policies and programmes that government had introduced. But it is one act introducing policy and agency, it is another for citizens and communities to benefit from the real enactments and that was the electoral experience with the Zongos and inner-city areas.

Moreover, as all respondents encountered in the field indicated, the problem of political interference added to any programme implementation constraints. For instance, some residents tended to make 'contacts with Assemblyman and Members of Parliament' and it was realised that 'projects always entered community with the political operators', including 'the District Chief Executives' (Interview with former Policy and Planning Director, ZICDS, September 2022). The 'political parties were not supposed to be present but always involved' (Respondent). And 'some Zongos postured out to be aligned with political parties' (Respondent). However, communities saw themselves as 'development beneficiaries portraying allegiance to the government' (Respondent). Such political interference and enactments are not uncommon in planning and development experiences, globally (Flyvbjerg, 1998, 2003), particularly in the global South, much more so in slum communities (Deuskar, 2019) because programmatic processes tend to be less efficient and inclusive.

6.8 Other Programme Challenges

6.8.1 Project planning constraints

One challenge of project planning was 'agreeing on the basket of interventions' (Interview with Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, ZoDFS, August 2022). Project planning depended on the registering of needs by the community rather than upfront or in collaboration with programme managers. Whatever the community needed and with the involvement of local and national politicians, the ZICDS and ZoDFS virtually permitted these, to the

extent that funding was available, which government was hardly able to provide adequately. Any donor funding provider may not contribute sufficient additional resources, unless it was fully project-targeted. Meanwhile, ZoDFS was unable to initiate its fund-raising activities as expected. Because of the congested and less accessible nature of most of the Zongo and inner-city communities, another challenge was gaining ‘right of way for some interventions’ and related, the ‘cost of urban development impacts’, especially in terms of disrupting community life (Respondent). Reflected in these was another challenge of ‘how to get lives normal while projects go on’ (Respondent), much due to the lack of accessibility and rationalised spaces in most of the communities. Further, related to this set of challenges were ‘encroachments’ on public space/land that may be identified for development. Encroachments tended to happen before project managers became aware.

Furthermore, were the ‘differences in interests and how to fulfil these’ and as reflected in the ethnic and cultural heterogeneity of the Zongo communities (Interview with former Policy and Planning Director, ZICDS, September 2022). Another issue was that of image: ‘Zongo communities suffer from some stigmatisation’, which tended to be ‘very high in Ghana’ and part of the challenge was ‘how to temper this’ (Respondent). Much of these challenges was, however, linked to ‘capacity in terms of the Fund Team; Fund needs an expansion of its capacity’, i.e., ‘in terms of programme staff levels and funding’, etc. (Respondent).

6.8.2 Post-commissioning facility maintenance

Despite the effort at creating structures for effective facility maintenance and management, ‘it is a big issue, not all being well maintained’ (Interview with Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, ZoDFS, August 2022). Main reason was ‘because there are no facility management plans and agreements’ (Respondent). After all, ‘the political leadership have not seen such a plan as a priority’ (Respondent). However, ‘effort was being made to design project management plan but it was slow’ (Respondent). For some projects, ‘commissioning rather nascent but no real problems yet/so far’ (Interview with former Policy and Planning Director, ZICDS, September 2020).

6.8.3 Mediation and management of challenges

Less effective facility maintenance, management and planning constituted a challenge to mediation response. Additionally, respondents emphasised the need to focus on sustainability, generally, ‘sustainable funding’, in particular, depending on ‘how managed’ (Interview with former Policy and Planning Director, ZICDS, September 2022), among other suggestions. One approach was to ‘diversify funding sources, e.g., investing in commercial entities’ (Respondent). Second, ‘ensuring that the Fund does not duplicate the projects of partners like Ghana Education Services, Assemblies, Development Authorities, Civil Service Organisations’ (Respondent). Third, improving ‘urban transportation, running buses’ and ‘transforming “tro-tro” into more safe services’ (Respondent); “tro-tro” refers to local private mini buses. Further, ‘supporting farmers of Zongo origin’ through ‘cash cropping’ (Respondent). Fifth, creating ‘model schools, developing workshops that generate benefits’ (Respondent). Sixth, ‘trying to strengthen relations with partners’ (Respondents). Seventh, ‘effective communication with Government of Ghana’ (Respondent). Eighth, ‘managing the political risks, being as inclusive and multi-partisan as possible’ (Respondent).

7. Conclusions

This study was an assessment of the achievements and effectiveness, so far, of the ZICRDP, in the context of complicated conceptual and nomenclature issues, challenged availability of material inputs and financial resources, political economic values and politics, other institutional and management constraints. ZICRDP was conceived and legitimated as an urban regeneration initiative but some public officials, politicians and other government sectors see it as a slum upgrading intervention. So, basically, while urban regeneration more fulfils the achievement of sustainability, its partial forms of urban renewal and constituted sub-modes tended to be more preferable. Such mix of conceptual and nomenclature issues and other factors portrayed in the ZICRDP. However, for the Zongo and inner-city residents, what mattered to them was programme performance that promoted their well-being, social-economic and community development, as part of the effort to manage the typical urbanisation and urban decline challenges in a developing country, Ghana.

In less than 7 years of initiation, the ZICRDP has achieved significant success, both in terms of programme delivery and sustainability, which did not exist previously. In physical regeneration/upgrading, drains were constructed, others desilted and surface drainage improved but in a few targeted communities in 4 regions in southern Ghana. Under environmental regeneration/upgrading, waste heaps were removed and waste sorting centres for recycling management created in Accra metropolis. Household and public toilets with mechanised borehole facilities were provided and WASH facilities improved in selected Zongos in 5 regions. Community security and safety were improved with the provision of street lights, construction of new and renovation of existing police stations in places. However, Peace Conferences/Peace and Development Dialogue Conferences, Alternative Peace Resolution within Conflict Management Training initiatives need to be effectively organised and greatly improved.

Social regeneration/upgrading saw many school buildings and a community library constructed, existing ones renovated and rehabilitated, furniture and books supplied, various educational sponsorship, local and international

scholarships provided, Islamic and Arabic education appreciably promoted, overall educational access, class sizes, teacher-pupil/student ratios highly improved. Health sector improvement was very limited, some programme support for improvement to isolated and existing local facilities. And social protection initiatives involved relief material distribution to some residents, engagement with street children and drug-abusing youth and training of some women in advocacy practices. Promotion of social inclusiveness included organisation of annual Religious Dialogue Sessions, involving the various and heterogeneous groups, with similar processes planned. Additionally, shelter issues did not really feature, apart from isolated provision of a few accommodation facilities for some school teachers but there was a plan to tackle it through private sector agency.

Economic regeneration/upgrading executed two main youth training and entrepreneurship development initiatives. The Zongo Youth Skills Training and Entrepreneurship Programme saw some 1,000 youth trained in various artisan and commercial production activities started, creating jobs, generating incomes, with loan/credit support for individual and group initiators. Youth Start Programme provided business start-up support, using highly advertising media and had a special focus on ICT training. At the time of field study, an undisclosed amount of funding had been secured, yet to be allocated to participants. In support of these business development initiatives, an MOU had been signed with 2 major international aid donors to provide sanitation and water facilities in 6 regions of the country and other donors attracted, including the Turkish and Saudi Governments but overall funding available was very limited. FMCs were created to help with facility maintenance, user fee collection and revenue generation, to manage financial assets. No fund-raising was undertaken. But while ZoDFS aimed to become financially independent, its efforts were being undermined through political interference and manipulation by local and national politicians, which tended to alter project budgets and planning unduly.

Cultural regeneration/upgrading tended to lean on existing national initiatives. However, some natural and astro-turf football parks were developed in 7 regions of Ghana and efforts were being made to diversify sports outside football. To the character of Zongos, however, the 2 main Eids and other traditional Moslem festivals were well celebrated. And these were also occasions for promoting community peace and shared life, visiting opportunities for national politicians to address the community, national Moslem clergy, financial donations and contributions for project financing and for display of youth musical talents. Production of some traditional textile products and cuisine was actively promoted, with valorising benefits. And the diversity and heterogeneity of the Zongo communities much contributed to the differentiated local product-markets. However, challenges were encountered with the listing of Zongo cultural assets and heritage, by UNESCO's standards, to promote local tourism but there was a plan to work with relevant Departments at the University of Ghana to assist with these.

Poverty, generally, was impacted in terms of the improvement in educational facilities, basic services, new business formation, job-creation, income and revenue generation and the level of available government financing for pro-poor initiatives, towards slum elimination and poverty-reduction. Similarly, improvement in sustainable development was seen in terms of the efforts made to manage facility maintenance, solid waste and the elements of strategic developments achieved.

Various challenges, however, tended to limit the achievements and effectiveness of the programme, which have serious implications for its future. First, funding was still rather abysmally inadequate, considering the thousands of Zongo and inner-city communities and millions of residents in these. In about 7 years, the ZICRDP implemented some 236 projects in 200 Zongos, across 109 districts in the country. Although significant, the rate was too slow and level infinitesimal in relation to the enormity of the challenge and it all depends on adequate financing. It must be imperative for government to commit more resources to the programme. Moreover, limited funding also hampered the efforts of programme managers in undertaking comprehensive needs assessment in the communities, apart from limiting staff recruitment and constraining, even, fund-raising activities. Moreover, the need to scale up the whole programme, deepen and explicitly target aspects like tree-planting and other greening, shelter issues, and cultural initiatives is quite patent in the study, but still dependent on funding availability. These would also improve programme sustainability. Second, interference and manipulation by local and national politicians, lobbying programme officers and insisting on certain projects to be executed in their localities and constituencies tended to limit available budgets, since projects were funding-targeted, and constrain planning processes. There is real need to create and strengthen local representative and management structures that could forestall these. Such structures would also improve needs assessment performance and relations between programme officers and the community.

In this regard, the creation of the FMC could be improved by including a direct developmental role or converting it into a broadly-based Community Development Committee (CDC) as, for instance, done in Ga Mashie, which has its own Development Agency (GAMADA), in south-central coastal Accra (Interview with Executive Director, GAMADA, April 2021). A Zongo CDC (ZCDC) would help with project planning and all related problems, improve project identification, data collection, solicitation of the various group and stakeholder interests and preferences, apart from facility management and user fee and revenue collection, with all requests for project funding routed through it. An effective ZCDC would also be able to temper the political interference and manipulation, through negotiation between political actors and programme managers. And, it may be helpful to

decentralise the ZCDC on neighbourhood basis, within each Zongo, all part of one representative and body. Second, it would be useful to introduce a form of Zongo settlement/spatial planning practice, based on the production of indicative plans and within budgetary limits of programme management. This would reduce project duplication tendencies with other organisations, effectively liaising and co-ordinating with them, contribute to improving intra-Zongo spatial accessibility and ameliorate other mediation and management challenges. Again, Ga Mashie provides an example of participatory community spatial planning under their PSUP 3 intervention (Physical Planning Department, Accra Metropolitan Assembly, 2015). Definitely, the planning processes need to be proactive than the current reactive and needs-based approach. For these reasons, it would also be a complementary reform to consider effectively merging the 2 Secretariats into a single national agency, still under the Office of the President, especially with the opportunity to create zonal/regional branches of the Fund. All these done, would improve relations and communication with partners and government, promote inclusiveness and multi-partisanship, under an independent and integrated budgetary framework. These would further improve sustainability through greater investment in commercial developments, including workshops/work spaces, improvement in local transportation services, Zongo agricultural activities and political relations. Implementation of the suggestions made would also contribute to promoting a positive image of Zongo communities and bringing down the undue stigmatisation.

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Figure 1 Political-administrative map of Ghana showing major towns and cities.
 Source: Ontheworldma.com, 2021; Google.com