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Towards More Sustainable NGO Slum Upgrading Interventions: Lessons from Secondary Cities of Nakuru and Kitale, Kenya

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ABSTRACT
Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play a significant role in complementing the state ito improve the living conditions in urban slums in developing countries through slum upgrading. However, since NGOs operate on fixed budgets and timelines, and in small geographical areas, the sustainability of their interventions remains a subject of research interest and speculation. This has raised questions about the challenges facing sustainability of slum upgrading interventions driven by NGOs in secondary cities in Kenya. It is in line with this argument that this paper examines challenges facing the sustaining of slum upgrading interventions by NGOs in the secondary cities of Nakuru and Kitale, Kenya. The paper was based on an empirical survey conducted in 2019 on the Integrated Urban Housing Project in Nakuru and Building in Partnership: Participatory Urban Planning project in Kitale implemented 15 years ago. Primary and secondary data were collected using a descriptive cross-sectional research design involving a sample of 392 respondents and analyzed quantitatively and thematically. The findings indicate that although NGOs play a significant role in slum upgrading, they encounter several challenges that impede the success, effectiveness and sustainability of their projects. These challenges include limited financial resources, elite capture, limited private-public partnerships, political interference, and negative influence of cultural and traditional elements. Addressing these challenges requires more innovative interventions and approaches that, among other things, incorporate strong local public-private partnerships that support more collaborative and inclusive engagements with project beneficiaries in the post-implementation periods.
Keywords: Slum, Slum Upgrading, Non-Governmental Organization, Sustainability, Project beneficiaries
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The world is increasingly urbanizing with 56.2% (about 4.4 billion) of its population living in urban areas in 2020 and a projected 60.4% (nearly 5.2 billion) expected to do so by 2030 (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs – UN-DESA, 2020). This rapid urbanization has been accompanied by an equally fast increase in the proportion of the urban population living in slum and informal settlements, especially in developing countries (Cities Alliance, 2021; Roberts, 2017). At the global level, the proportion of the population in slums grew from 928 million in 2014 (23%) to 1.03 billion in 2018 (24%) and further estimated to exceed 1.2 billion in 2030 (UN, 2020). The largest proportional increase will be in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), where 56.5% of the urban population lived in slum and informal settlements in 2018 (UN, 2020, 2018; UN-Habitat, 2020).

Rapid increase in slum population poses major challenges to social and economic development of urban areas globally (UN-Habitat, 2010). Therefore, governments worldwide have responded to this by experimenting with diverse sets of strategies designed to improve the living conditions (Mansuri & Rao, 2013). The earlier strategies adopted in the 1960s and 1970s such as benign neglect, forced eviction, demolition, and slum resettlement proved unsustainable and failed to address the root causes of slums (Buckley & Kalarickal, 2005). Thus, in 1980s, the strategy changed to one emphasizing gradual improvement in living conditions to formalize and integrate settlements into the overall urban framework through slum upgrading (Cities Alliance, 2021). This approach is highly favoured and has been instrumental in fostering community-led and integrated interventions requiring active participation of slum dwellers (UN-DESA, 2020; UN-Habitat, 2019).

In a broad sense, slum upgrading has been implemented through an integrated approach in which the state, private organizations, slum dwellers, and community-based institutions collaborate to implement various interventions (UN-Habitat, 2019). In this framework, the state is a major driver of the process given its political strength, as well as its legal, and fiscal mandate in creating an enabling environment through development and implementation of appropriate policies and strategies (Huchzermeyer & Karam, 2006). This is done through central government and/or local government authorities. However, increasing demand for equitable access to basic services and infrastructure has compromised the effectiveness of the state in slum upgrading (Cities Alliance, 2019; UN-DESA, 2018). Not surprisingly, this has prompted the need to incorporate more support from non-state actors such as NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs) (IISD, 2013).

NGOs and CBOs have a comparative advantage of being less bureaucratic, more efficient, and cost-

effective in reaching poor slum residents in comparison to the state (IISD, 2013). NGOs have a history of resource mobilization including the provision of financial and technical assistance to complement the efforts of the state. They are also better equipped in facilitating community participation, empowerment, and ownership of the interventions (Abiddin et al., 2022) by focusing on smaller geographical areas (Sansom et al., 2004). This is in contrast to the state, whose development jurisdiction (even in the emerging era of devolution) tends to focus on larger geographic spaces, with the possibility of sidestepping engagement and involvement of the slum residents (Otiso, 2003).

NGOs also have the advantage of flexibility, speed of operation, ability to respond quickly and leeway to adapt their organizational structure, methods, and processes to allow for greater and direct involvement of slum residents (Abiddin et al., 2022). They are better placed to mobilize slum residents into small groups through CBOs to voice their concerns, and identify, articulate, and project their needs and interests to the state through lobbying for appropriate and favourable policies (Otiso, 2003). All these help to increase project reach and sustainability by creating a dialogue as well as bridging the gap between slum dwellers and the state (Robins, 2008). As a result, NGOs have become the preferred channel of official agencies and donor organizations seeking to fill the gap left by the state (Idahosa, 2008).

Despite the comparative advantage, evidence shows that NGOs often face some limitations, particularly in ensuring sustainability of their interventions. Some of these limitations have been attributed to their lack of jurisdictional authority to make binding their non-voluntary decisions, which makes them vulnerable to manipulations by the state (Water Utility Partnership - WUP, 2003). Moreover, many of the NGO-initiated interventions lack a broad programming context, which tends to limit replicability, self-sustainability, technical capacity, and impact (Otiso, 2000). The net result is that their interventions end up being piece-meal, small-scale, stand-alone, experimental and innovative practices largely uncoordinated and not necessarily sustainable. They do not support the wide-ranging, far-reaching and forward-thinking strategies needed for sustainability (Annis, 1987). In addition, given the magnitude of the challenges of slum settlements, NGOs cannot effectively undertake slum upgrading single-handedly without the support of the state (Otiso, 2003).

Like in many developing countries, Kenya experiences a rapid increasing urban population. In 2019, 31.1% of its population lived in urban areas (KNBS, 2019), with 56.0% of them found in slum and informal settlements in 2014 (World Urbanization Prospect - WUP, 2018; UN-Habitat, 2016). In response, the Kenya government has embraced slum upgrading as a development objective, which also in line with the realization of several United Nations-sponsored Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aim at addressing various challenges affecting slum settlements. Specifically, SDG 11 seeks to "*Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable,*" by focusing on Target 11.1 — "*By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums*". The indicator 11.1.1 addresses the "*Proportion of urban population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing.*" This was in addition to SDG 1 (End poverty in all its forms everywhere), SDG 6 (Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all) and SDG 10 (Reduce income inequalities within and among countries) (UN-Habitat, 2021; UN, 2020).

To this end, the government of Kenya has initiated several nationwide strategies to address and arrest the expanding slum population. Two of the focal strategies are the Kenya Slum Upgrading Programme (KENSUP) of 2005 and Kenya Informal Settlements Improvement Project (KISIP) of 2011, which aimed at improving the living conditions of alums by the year 2020 (Anderson & Mwelu, 2013). In addition, NGOs have also made a significant contribution to slum upgrading in the country, especially in the expanding secondary cities (Majale, 2009). These interventions notwithstanding, questions have been raised about the challenges facing sustainability of slum upgrading initiatives driven by NGOs in secondary cities in Kenya and other developing countries. This paper contributes to the theory and practice of slum upgrading by analyzing the sustainability challenges of NGO-driven slum upgrading interventions in secondary cities of Nakuru and Kitale, Kenya. The paper uses two case studies of slum upgrading namely the Integrated Urban Housing Project (IUHP) in Nakuru, and the Building in Partnership: Participatory Urban Planning (BiP: PUP) project in Kitale.

2.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

We used three theories to illustrate the role of NGOs in slum upgrading namely the Public Good Theory, Theory of Change, and Sustainability Livelihood Framework (SLF). According to the Public Goods Theory, in order to maximize social welfare, a benevolent and responsible government has an obligation to produce and provide equitable and inclusive basic goods and services for joint consumption by citizens (Gruber, 2012). This is especially the case for basic goods and services, which cannot be economically and efficiently provided by non-state actors (Musgrave, 1959). The non-state actors only intervene in the absence or failure of the government to fill the service delivery void and satisfy the residual or unsatisfied need. This theory is relevant to this study because it amplifies the role of NGOs in slum upgrading in developing countries like Kenya (Idahosa, 2008). In many such countries, governments often view slums as informal settlements, a perception that often contribute to

marginalization and neglect of these settlements as an integral part of the overall urban framework in service delivery (UN-DESA, 2018; Turok et al., 2017).

The Theory of Change posits that in any community, there are certain restraining forces that act on individuals and organizations to either maintain the status quo or cause a change to happen (Manchester et al., 2014). Changing the status quo requires executing planned change activities by increasing or decreasing the striving forces for change (Lewin, 1947). Accordingly, a change agent such as an NGO can introduce a new idea or process, but the resultant change depends on whether the targeted beneficiaries embrace and put it into practice (Lewin, 1951). When it comes to a development project, the theory outlines how the activities of a given intervention by a change agent (such as NGO) can contribute to the achievement of desired sustainable change (Jackson, 2013). For our purpose, the theory illustrates the role of NGOs in facilitating slum upgrading to achieve sustainable improvement in slum living conditions and livelihoods as the expected desired change.

Finally, the SLF is a holistic framework that helps to explain how poor households develop and maintain a variety of beneficial livelihood outcomes based on their existing vulnerability contexts and asset portfolios (Adaawen & Horgensen, 2012). In a slum settlement, this is partly shaped by the transforming structures and processes which include the policies, institutions (eg. NGOs) and processes (PIPs) that influence the resultant impacts. The PIPs include governance structures, laws, policies, standards, and organizations (public, private and non-profit), which determine access to resources and assets, their transferability, and the returns to any livelihood strategies (DFID, 2002). The SLF puts slum dwellers at the centre of any slum upgrading intervention with the facilitation of NGOs, as part of the PIPs, lobbying and advocating for appropriate and favourable policies. The SLF nevertheless recognize that there is no single sector that can sustainably improve the living conditions of a slum.

In this study, we incorporated the foregoing three theoretical perspectives, which are also multi-sectoral. For instance, the Public Goods Theory is useful in pinpointing the weaknesses of the state in single-handedly undertake slum upgrading. This creates room for NGO-driven interventions to supplement and complement the existing state initiatives. Similarly, the Theory of Change appreciates NGOs as critical change agents in facilitating slum upgrading to achieve sustainable improvement in slum living conditions and livelihoods. The SLF recognizes the role of slum dwellers in improving their living conditions and livelihoods within the existing vulnerability context and asset portfolio. In this paper, we chose to synthesize the critical elements of these three complementary theories in order to better explain the role of NGOs in slum upgrading.

3.0 MATERIALS AND METHODS

3.1 Study Area

This paper is based on an empirical study conducted in the secondary cities of Nakuru and Kitale, Kenya. Nakuru is the fourth largest and fastest-growing secondary city with a population of 570,674 people in 2019 having an annual growth rate of 5.6%. Poverty levels stood at 56.0% with 70.0% of the population living in slum and informal settlements (KNBS, 2019). In addition, 87.0% of the residents were tenants due to a lack of security of tenure, high cost of house construction, and low income (Olwero, 2008; Owuor, 2006) (see Figure 1). Kitale, on the other hand, is a rapidly growing secondary and agricultural city with a population of 162,174 people in 2019 with an annual growth rate of 12% and a population density of 520 persons per km^2 (KNBS, 2019). In addition, 65% of the population lacked access to basic services and lived in the sprawling slum and informal settlements (Majale, 2009) (see Figures 2).

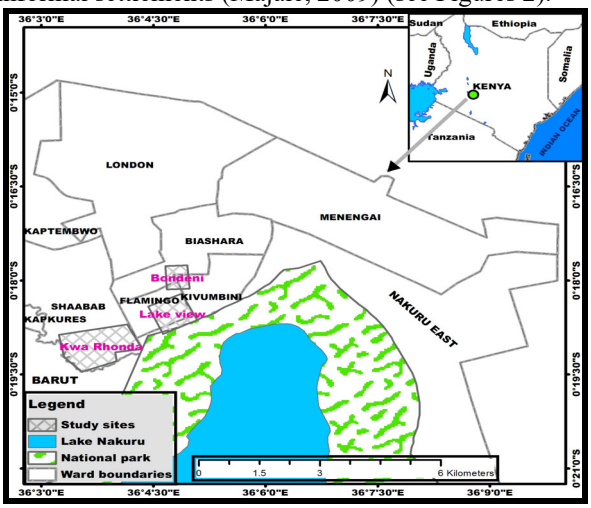

Figure 2: Study Sites in Nakuru

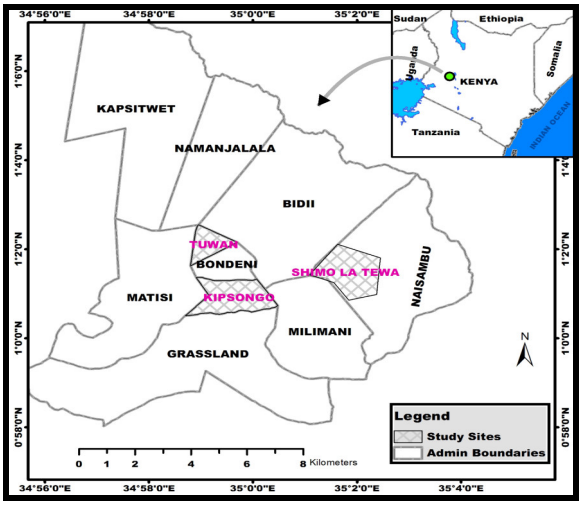

Figure 3: Study Sites in Kitale

The two secondary cities hosted slum upgrading projects in selected neighbourhoods supported by an NGO known as the Integrated Technology Development Group – East Africa (ITDG–EA). Nakuru hosted the IUHP implemented in the slum settlements of Kwa Rhonda, Lake View, and Bondeni between April 1999 and September 2003. The aim was to increase access to adequate, safe, and secure shelter by lowering the cost of construction of housing through the use of appropriate technology and sustainable income-generating activities (IGAs) and regular savings (ITDG-EA, 2003). On the other hand, Kitale had the BiP: PUP project implemented in the slum settlements of Kipsongo, Shimo-La-Tewa, and Tuwan between April 2001 and March 2004. The aim was to integrate local knowledge in urban planning by engaging the local community in designing appropriate sustainable interventions (Majale, 2009). The end-of-project evaluations indicates that the IUHP and BiP: PUP projects benefited approximately 7261 directly in terms of improved access to basic services, income generation opportunities, low-cost housing, capacity building, and empowerment (Majale, 2009). However, evaluation studies of the two projects did not address issues of post-implementation stages and sustainability of the implemented interventions of the two projects (Luvenga et al., 2015; Barnes et al., 2014)

3.2 Methods

This paper adopted a descriptive cross-sectional research design based on two case studies namely the IUHP and BiP: PUP projects with 1,647 and 5,614 project beneficiaries, respectively. In addition, we had the Project Manager from ITDG-EA, 193 officials of the 32 active local CBOs at the time of the study, and the County Urban Development Officer of each secondary city. In total, we targeted a sample of 392 respondents namely 365 project beneficiaries, 2 County Urban Development Officers, 1 Project manager from ITDG-EA and 24 officials of local CBOs. We collected primary data using a semi-structured questionnaire administered to project beneficiaries, key in-depth interviews (KII) with the Project Manager from the ITDG-EA and the County Urban Development Officers, focus group discussion (FGD) with officials of local CBOs, and field observation.

However, during data collection, we obtained a response rate of 98.63% (360) of the targeted project beneficiaries including 98.80% (82) for the IUHP and 98.58% (278) for BiP: PUP project. All the other targeted categories of respondents responded to their respective data collection instruments. We also collected secondary data on the broader subject of NGOs and sustainability of slum upgrading from literature review and project documents from the ITDG-EA. We designed a pilot study using the Peoples' Plans into Practice (PPP) project in Kisumu City using a sample of 40 beneficiaries. The PPP was also a participatory slum upgrading project supported by ITDG-EA in the slum settlements of Manyatta and Nyalenda of Kisumu. The pilot study established the content validity and tested the reliability of the research instruments. It yielded a Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha (α) of 0.889 for the semi-structured questionnaire indicating sufficient reliability (Streiner, 2003).

We used thematic analysis to gather respondents' views, opinions, knowledge, and experiences on the sustainability challenges of the two projects. We transcribed the completed questionnaires, interviews and FGDs and coded the data into emerging themes and sub-themes whose recurrence and importance was measured through frequency distributions. We also identified key direct quotes to use in reporting the findings of the study.

4.0 RESULTS

The findings of the study shows that the two projects were successful and moderately sustainable 15 years after completion with varied benefits at individual and community levels. The respondents vividly recalled multiple physical, social, economic, and environmental interventions implemented by the two projects 15 years ago. They reported improved access to water and sanitation, income and credit, and physical access and security. In addition, there was development of business and technical skills, reduction in water-borne diseases, and low cost housing and land. As a result, the respondents reported continuous improvement in the living conditions and livelihoods through empowering and building capacities of the targeted beneficiaries, enhancing social capital, and empowering local community to harness the momentum for future development. However, the respondents added that the sustainability of the two projects' sustainability was hampered by limitations associated with the funding NGO. Table 1 summarizes the challenges identified by the 360 sample project beneficiaries.

Table 1: Challenges of Sustainability of the IUHP and the BiP: PUP Projects

Challenge	Project IUHP	BiP: PUP	Total
Financial limitation	36 (43.9%)	121(43.5%)	157 (43.6%)
Elite capture	11 (13.4%)	56(20.1%)	67 (18.6%)
Limited public-private partnership	14 (17.1%)	34 (12.2%)	48 (13.3%)
Political interference	10 (12.2%)	35 (12.6%)	45 (12.5%)
Negative cultural influence	11 (13.4%)	32 (11.5%)	43 (11.9%)
N	82	278	360

Information in Table 1 enumerates the common challenges namely financial limitation, elite capture, limited public-private partnership, political interference, and negative cultural influence. First, financial limitation was cited as a major challenge (43.6%) facing sustainability of slum upgrading interventions after the exit of the funding NGO. The respondents attributed this to high levels of poverty and overdependence on the NGO for financial and technical support. This challenge mostly affected the physical infrastructure such as water projects and low-cost housing put in place by the ITDG-EA but without sufficient financial resources for their maintenance and repairs. Yet other interventions such as the footbridge in Shimo-La-Tewa site in Kitale was in a bad state even though it needed minimum repairs and financial resources. This suggests that the poor status of some of the said infrastructure is due to beneficiaries' negligence rather than lack of resources. Field observations confirmed the dilapidated footbridge, which only required minor repairs.

The Project Manager from the implementing NGO (ITDG-EA) elaborated on the financial limitations that the organization faced in actualizing the post-implementation stages and sustainability of the two projects by observing that:

> "we had fixed budgets and timelines for the two projects running from initiation to completion. The NGO expected the residents to gradually take full control, ownership, and responsibility for the activities in the post-project period. However, many of the activities have been left unattended after our exit" (Personal Communication with the Project Manager in Nakuru, November 17, 2019).

The Project Manager attributed this situation to the high level of poverty and low income among the project beneficiaries, which limited their financial and technical ability to undertake maintenance and sustainability of the majority of the interventions. The NGO's lack of sufficient financial resources limited the spatial reach of the interventions as well as ability replicate and to scale them up within the selected slum neighbourhoods and beyond.

Elite capture was the second major challenge (18.6%) facing these projects. Elite capture refers to a situation in which a few individuals with privileged social, economic, educational or political advantages manipulate the decision-making process of a development project for personal interest and benefits at the expense of the large group (Musgrave & Wong, 2016). In the study, 18.6% of the sample beneficiaries reported that a clique of a few self-seeking local elites took advantage of the freedom that ITDG-EA granted them through local CBOs to dominate and manipulate decision-making processes to their personal advantage at the expense of the larger local community. The elites included certain local community leaders, opinion leaders, leaders of CBOs, and elected representatives. The Project Manager supported these views by observing that:

> "our entry point into the project sites in the two secondary cities involved identification and working with local community leaders and opinion leaders through existing local CBOs as a strategy to actively involves the local community in decision making and needs assessment. However, we came to discover later at the implementation stages that these groups manipulated processes and prioritized their own interests and position themselves as first-line beneficiaries in many of the activities. Majority unfairly benefited from capacity building and empowerment programmes at the expense of other more deserving members of the community" (Personal Communication with the Project Manager in Nakuru, November; 17, 2019).

However, the same local elites dominated the leadership of the CBOs and deliberately controlled and manipulated information channels between the NGO and local community. As a result, the leaders became first-line beneficiaries of the key interventions of the two projects at the expense of other deserving community members. The benefits included unfair access to low-cost housing, water projects, established IGAs and savings groups, as well as training and skills development opportunities. Our field observations confirmed the reality that majority of the beneficiaries of projects' low-cost housing were officials of the CBOs and residents with comparatively more resources to meet the financial obligations of the projects.

The respondents cited weak public-private partnership (PPP) as the third challenge (13.3%) facing sustainability of the interventions of the two projects. The respondents reported that there was lack of coordination and harmony in the implementation of various interventions in secondary cities. The views of the Project Manager and 13.3% of the sample beneficiaries (Table 1) show this anomaly, suggesting that ITDG-EA, local authorities, and other stakeholders independently implemented disjointed, isolated, unsustainable, and competing interventions in the project sites with limited or no collaboration and consultation. Respondents in an FGD in Nakuru provided details showing overlap and lack of coordination in slum reduction efforts. The discussants noted that the central government implemented the KISIP in 2011 in Nakuru, eight years after the completion of the IUHP and exit of the ITDG-EA. The KISIP had various interventions such as the renovation of drainage and sewerage systems, street lighting, and solid waste management implemented in selected slum settlements, including the three IUHP project sites.

However, our respondents observed that there was no effort on the part of the KISIP and the Municipal Council of Nakuru (MCN) to consult, continue or complement similar or related interventions undertaken by the IUHP. The respondents reported further that they made several approaches to MCN to explore ways in which

some of the activities of the KISIP could serve to supplement and complement efforts by the IUHP to no avail. As one respondent in our FGD noted:

> "we thought that since the MCN was aware of the various interventions implemented by the IUHP, especially in low-cost housing, we should have been among the first beneficiaries of sewerage connection to individual houses under KISIP. However, nobody bothered with us, and instead, we were informed that the two projects were different, with separate criteria of choosing beneficiaries" (FGD Session at Bondeni Primary School, October; 8, 2019).

Participants in our FGD and survey respondents suggested that there was need for an integrated approach to slum upgrading among the various actors. If this could have happened, it would have enabled the KISIP and MCN to collaborate with the IUHP to renovate drainage and sewerage systems or connect beneficiaries of low-cost housing under the IUHP to the new drainage system.

Instead, as the Project Manager noted, "the local authorities in the two secondary cities embarked on blatant interference and violation of our implemented projects immediately after we exited from the project sites." This was contrary to the expected role of local authorities to protect, maintain and oversee the sustainability of such interventions. To further illustrate this challenge, respondents from a local CBO in Nakuru known as Daima Usafi Self Help Group in the Lake View project site reported that the MCN seized a lorry that was donated to them by the IUHP on the pretext of non-payment of taxes to the local authority after the exit of the NGO.

On their part, the Project Manager and respondents from our FGD in Kitale reported that the Kitale Municipal Council (KMC) unilaterally changed the intended usage of some of the interventions of the BiP: PUP project after the exit of the NGO. For example, the KMC seized and changed the purpose of two social halls (known as Mitume Community Social Hall) belonging to the BiP: PUP project into a government administration office and a dispensary. This was in violation of a joint Memorandum of Understanding signed between the NGO and KMC to collaborate in slum upgrading (Okelo et al., 2008). The respondents observed that although a government administration office and a dispensary were also critical services in their settlement, there should have been consultation between the NGO and KMC before the local authority made its decision. Because of the prevailing unilateral and disjointed approach to service delivery, duplication of the interventions and competition among the various stakeholders rather than complementarity had become a common place.

The fourth challenge was political interference. Information from the FGDs, interviews with the Project Manager, and 12.5% of the sample project beneficiaries (Table 1) indicated that some local politicians became uncomfortable and apprehensive of the success of the NGO in empowering and building the capacity of the local community. The respondents observed that politicians erroneously perceived the success of the implemented interventions as a threat to their political future and an indictment of their inability to provide basic services in the project sites. The respondents further reported that the politicians' negative perceptions of these projects was attributed to an erroneous feeling that the NGO was using slum upgrading to manipulate the local communities and to undermine local political leaders. Moreover, the politicians were also afraid that enhanced community empowerment by NGOs could change the local power balance and jeopardize their power base. For example, the respondents from an FGD with local CBOs affiliated to the IUHP allege that a local politician closed down some of the refuse transfer chambers on the pretext that they were located on public land. This was done even though the same land was donated by the MCN to support the IUHP intervention. Further, respondents from a local CBO in Nakuru known as Daima Usafi Self Help Group noted that the MCN seized a lorry that was donated to them by the ITDG-EA on the pretext of non-payment of taxes to the local authority after the exit of the NGO.

In Kitale, field observations and information from sample project beneficiaries, CBOs, and the Project Manager show that local politicians influenced the KMC's decision to forcibly take over and change the usage of two project social halls into a government administration office and a local dispensary. Additionally, respondents from Tuwan Water and Sanitation Service Group reported that in the partnership between the ITDG-EA and the KMC, the former allocated a 5-acre piece of land for the construction of a water and sanitation project. However, the Trans Nzoia County Government, which succeeded the KMC, reneged on the agreement and showed signs of wanting to repossess part of the land on the pretext that the allocation was erroneous. At the time of this study, the County Government had written to the BiP: PUP project about the intention of reallocating at least two acres of project land for other uses.

Finally, negative influence of culture was another challenge to sustainability of the two projects. The Project Manager and 11.9% of the sample beneficiaries (Table 1) reported that negative cultural influence and rigidity among the beneficiaries limited the adoption of some of the intended interventions. For example, the NGO facilitated some of the beneficiaries to attend a training on solid waste management in Uganda. The training focused on recycling of domestic waste using a composting toilet known as Urine Diversion Dehydration Toilet (UDDT) to produce soil fertilizer. After the training, the NGO facilitated the adoption of the technology in the project sites back in Kenya. However, although the technology had succeeded in Uganda, the targeted beneficiaries openly rejected it citing non-conformity with local cultural beliefs and social norms. This happened despite poor sanitary conditions in the project sites. There was stigma in handling and recycling human

waste into soil fertilizer.

5.0 DISCUSSION

In this paper, we have presented the challenges facing the sustainability of NGO-driven slum upgrading in secondary cities in Kenya using two case studies of the IUHP in Nakuru and the BiP: PUP project in Kitale. These challenges include financial limitations, elite capture, weak PPP, political interference, and negative influence of culture and traditions.

The results suggest that NGO-driven slum upgrading efforts suffer from lack of sufficient financial resources and support to ensure sustainability of the implemented interventions. NGOs operate on fixed budgets and timelines, which largely cover all stages up to the implementation of the projects. The written or un-written expectation is that the project beneficiaries will assume responsibility for the post-implementation stages and in that way contribute towards the sustainability of the projects. However, beneficiaries often fail to take full control, ownership, and responsibility for the post-implementation stages because of their high level of poverty and over-dependence on NGOs for financial and technical support. These findings confirm conclusions from previous studies such as Wasilwa (2015), Barnes et al. (2014), and Ndou (2012) who observed that scarcity of resources limits the replicability, self-sustainability, and scalability of the NGO-driven interventions to match the needs of the ever-expanding slums. As a result, while many NGOs pursue low-cost, small-scale, and innovative programs, they tend to be under-financed, poor quality, insignificant, temporary, and unsustainable (Annis, 1987). For example, financial limitations contributed to the deterioration and abandonment of water wells and pumps in Yombo Dovya and Tungi settlements in Dar es Salaam (Kyessi, 2005).

The findings also demonstrate that the high social, economic, and political power imbalances in slums enable local elites to use NGO-driven community development processes for personal goals at the expense of the wider community. Moreover, local elites use their privileged position to dominate local community organizations and to position themselves as intermediaries between NGOs and local communities in order to manage and manipulate information flows in ways that benefit them. This compromises the sustainability of the NGO-sponsored slum upgrading interventions because local elites use their comparative resources, knowledge, influence, and network advantages to benefit themselves disproportionately (UN-Habitat, 2020; Madajewicz, et al., 2014). This situation arises because of the absence of strong and independent local organizations, which can help to ensure the sustainability of NGO projects (Madajewicz, et al., 2014; Rigon, 2014). The two projects under review unsuccessfully attempted to minimize the danger of elite capture by collaborating and working with local CBOs. In the end, they failed because local elites found ways of dominating the same local CBOs (Majale, 2008).

Our findings have also revealed a lack of a clear and robust PPP in the post-implementation stages of slum upgrading. The sustainability of slum upgrading depends on an all-encompassing partnership among key stakeholders to supplement and complement each other, especially in the post-project period. This requires vibrant non-state actors alongside a capable and authoritative local urban authority to provide a conducive and enabling environment for sustainability of the interventions. However, the observed level of negligence of some of the interventions of the two projects after the exit of the NGO indicates a failure by local urban authorities, as state agencies, to protect, maintain and oversee sustainability of the planned efforts. This failure, it may be argued contributed to the many independent, disjointed, isolated, unsustainable, and competing interventions by various actors with limited or no collaboration and consultations. These results emphasize the importance of strong PPPs in slum upgrading with local urban authorities playing a critical role in creating an enabling environment for sustainability of the interventions implemented by other actors such as NGOs. These findings corroborate previous observations that underscore the perception that strong PPPs minimize needless competition and duplication, and instead promote diffusion of best practices in delivery of services (Muraguri, 2011). This requires an interdependent and adaptable relationship between private and public sectors to augment their respective strengths and overcome their weaknesses (World Bank, ADB, and IDB, 2014). The public sector, through local authorities, should implement policies and interventions that complement, coordinate and collaborate with non-state actors, rather than compete with them. However, other studies have identified a lack of adequate support from local authorities as the weakest link in supporting strong PPPs (UN-Habitat, 2016; Post & Mwangi, 2009). According to the Global Platform for Sustainable Cities (2020), local authorities suffer from ineffective governance, lack of political will, limited budgets, and poor communication with the public and other actors.

The findings further demonstrate that urban settlements operate within the jurisdiction of a devolved governance system in form of local authorities, which are essentially political in structure and nature. Thus, the presence or absence of local political will, support, and commitment are important determinants of sustainability of slum upgrading. This is especially true of projects by non-state actors such as NGOs whose effectiveness and efficiency depend on the ability of the state to design and implement policies that create an enabling environment for their effective operation. The state policy-making function is ordinarily a political process with vested local

political interests and outcomes. These sentiments are in agreement with observations from previous studies showing that effective slum upgrading and sustainability of the same requires strong political will and commitment by local urban authorities (Acioly, 2007). Lack of political will not only hinder the creation of a necessary supportive policy environment (Imparato & Ruster, 2003) and slows down decision-making (Ndukui, 2013) more in Africa where governments and politicians have tended to harbor negative perceptions and attitudes towards NGOs (Gyamfi, 2010). In some cases, governments and politicians suspect NGOs of being partisan and harbouring ulterior political agendas camouflaged as development interventions thereby, at times, leading to the deregistration or restriction of NGOs and their activities (Gyamfi, 2010; Otiso, 2003).

Our findings also illustrate that slum settlements operate in unique social, historical, economic, and political contexts. This in turn requires uniquely suited interventions with tailored solutions to specific problems within local contexts. Interventionists are thus required to understand and align their planned slum upgrading to the social, cultural, and economic contexts in specific slum areas. There cannot be "fit-for-all-situations solutions" to slum upgrading in diverse geographical and socio-economic settings. Any new technology, programme, policy, or approach introduced should thus be compatible with and in conformity with social and cultural norms and aspirations of the local community. Understanding and articulating these dimensions in slum project interventions will persuade and encourage targeted beneficiaries to ensure effectiveness and sustainability of local slum upgrading. This reality supports previous research findings that slums are unique, complex and heterogeneous settlements, which require site-specific interventions based on equally unique complex and heterogeneous local situations (Cities Alliance, 2016). Moreover, the sustainability of any slum development intervention requires the recognition of and respect for diverse local cultural heritage and values (Hristova et al., 2015; Hosagrahar, 2013).

6.0 CONCLUSION

This paper has examined the challenges facing sustainability of NGO-driven slum upgrading interventions in the secondary cities of Nakuru and Kitale, Kenya. Its findings shows that although NGOs play a significant role in slum upgrading in Kenya, they encounter several challenges that impede the success, effectiveness and sustainability of their projects. These challenges include limited financial resources, elite capture, limited private-public partnerships, political interference, and negative influence of cultural and traditional elements. Addressing these challenges requires more innovative slum interventions and approaches that, among other things, incorporate strong local public-private partnerships that can support more collaborative and inclusive engagements with project beneficiaries in the post-implementation periods. These changes will enable NGOs to continue playing their complementary and supplementary role in improving the living conditions and quality of life of slum residents in Kenya and other developing countries.

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