



Key Messages:

The urban population is expanding in Nigeria, and urban places will thrive better if efforts towards sustainable cities are socially inclusive.

Numerous policies and plans focusing on urban development have been developed and implemented in Nigeria since 1999.

Most of the policies and plans do not include the sustainable cities agenda that assures health and food security in their development and implementation

Many policies and plans do not recognize the need to plan for sustainable urban development that assures optimal health, food and nutrition security

How Socially Inclusive are Urban Development Policies on health and nutrition in Nigeria?

Insights from policy analysis

INTRODUCTION

In 2018, half of Nigeria's 200 million people lived in urban settings, making it the country with the largest number of urban dwellers in sub-Saharan Africa (Ajaero & Madu, 2013). Urban places thrive when social inclusion is accommodated in the effort towards sustainable development, especially in key resource areas like health, food and nutrition (United Nations, 2018). We examined relevant policy documents in Nigeria to see:

1. What national policies, strategies and plans exist around sustainable urban environments within the contexts of Nigeria
2. In what way these policies, strategies and plans address issues of social inclusion (i.e. promote or constrain equitable access to healthcare and food/nutrition)?
3. Who are the stakeholders involved in these policies, strategies and plans?
4. How effective are the current policies, plans, and strategies around urban sustainability?

APPROACH

We sourced and reviewed major Nigerian policy documents, strategies, plans, and programmes developed between 1999 to 2020, that directly or indirectly featured urban areas, so as to identify if they addressed social inclusion in the areas of access and utilization of services (healthcare) and resources (food and nutrition). Important policies and legislative documents that were developed before 1999 were also considered.

RESULTS

Nature of the Policies/Strategies

Most of the policies reviewed were found to have a national geographic scope, and often did not particularly consider urban features or peculiarities. We found policies that advocated for access to health services, and others that covered food/nutrition issues. A number of policies were cross-cutting in both areas. While some policies targeted economic improvement of vulnerable groups (women, children, displaced persons, aged, and people living with disabilities) which in turn affects their abilities to access health and good food, others recognized the generic need to improve access to health and food resources. Generally, policies aimed to improve access to diverse health-related services, or improve nutrition by bolstering food supply and food safety.

Available policies and plans addressed access to health-related services and food/nutrition issues, but often did not make specific provision for urban places.

Some policies and plans did not involve key grassroots stakeholders such as farmers during planning.

The effectiveness of policies and plans were not clear because they had weak monitoring and evaluating frameworks.

Broad stakeholder assessment and involvement are needed in developing and implementing urban development policies and programmes

Highlight of Findings in Access to Healthcare

- National Urban Development Policy, 2012: to ensure provision of adequate, efficient and functional infrastructure and social services (including health services) in all human settlements.
- Nigeria Economic Sustainability Plan, 2020: to help Nigeria to bounce back from the health and economic impact of COVID-19
- National Integrated Infrastructure Master Plan, 2015: to prioritize investments in constructing public facilities, including health facilities.

Highlight of Findings in Access to Food/Nutrition

- Nigeria Industrial Revolution Plan, 2014: to maximize benefits from agricultural resources and boost local food production to meet local demands.
- Agricultural Transformation Agenda, 2011: to pursue the achievement of food and nutritional security by re-structuring fertilizer procurement and distribution.
- Agricultural Transformation Agenda Support Programme (2013-18): to promote food and nutrition security by investing in the agricultural value chain and market linkages

Stakeholders involved

- Federal, state and local levels of government,
- Federal & State Ministries, Departments and Agencies,
- Civil society groups,
- Organized private sector,
- Local planning committees,
- Community-based organisations,
- International organisations and other development partners.

Effectiveness of Policies

- Though evidence of some progress were noted, policies, strategies, and plans were rarely evaluated thoroughly.
- Common limitations across reviewed policies
- Inefficient monitoring, evaluation and supervision
- Most policies/strategies do not have sustainable cities agenda in focus.
- Implementation delays were common, and many contracts and MOUs with government parastatals were unfulfilled.
- Limited/inadequate integration of relevant stakeholders and grassroots in policy development and implementation
- Inadequate research evidence from both State and Federal levels.
- Most policies and programmes were externally funded, causing overreliance on donor groups for a sustainable agenda.



CONCLUSIONS

- Policies exist at the national and regional level to address social inclusion in health care and food/nutrition, but they are often not explicit about ensuring health and food security in urban areas.
- Without a deliberate approach, it will be difficult to widely reach all urban groups.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Future urban development policies, plans, and programmes should make explicit provisions for optimal access to health services, food and nutrition urban areas and should be evidence-informed
- Institutionalize policy impact assessment and feedback plans to curtail duplication of existing and/or failed policies and programs
- Review and update key urban development policies in line with the New Urban Agenda (2016) to ensure sustainable cities and social inclusion (SDG 11)
- Improve funding for urban development through more strategic and aggressive domestic resource mobilization

References

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