

PARTNERSHIP APPROACH: A STRATEGY TO SOLVING URBAN ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS IN LAFIA TOWN, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *The environment is increasingly characterized in terms of a crisis situation. The unique and complex characteristics of the environment entail social, political, and economic implications in its management. This paper describes the responsibilities of urban management institutions toward an efficient management of the environment in accordance with the constitution and national policies on the environment, but in practice, their operations are limited due to weak finances and little expertise in environmental management. Therefore, the community seems to have taken over the management of their environment in terms of water supply and sanitation service in a disorderly manner. The paper highlights the current state of these services and their institutional framework in Lafia town, and calls for a partnership approach in managing these urban problems. The paper also evaluates existing partnership strategy in line with good governance norms and the challenges in Lafia town. This paper finally recommends ways of addressing the challenges.*

KEYWORDS: management, partnership, sanitation, urban governance

INTRODUCTION

As urban centres continue to grow, the need to meet increasing water demand for the population has become a major problem of concern to Urban Managers. One of the objectives of National Policy on Water supply and Sanitation (NPWSS), 2000 and the MDG's goals is to provide adequate and quality water to the urban and rural population by the year 2015. The crucial issues on this paper is that government of Nigeria alone cannot provide most of urban services to the people and the agencies created with a responsibility to manage these services are been faced with the problems of inadequate finance and corruption.

To achieve the national and state water supply and sanitation policy objectives major institutional reforms must be carried out in our water and sanitation sectors, since most of the agencies are faced with the challenges of institutional development to provide water and sanitation facilities for the needs of urban population. Therefore, government have resorted into privatization and commercialization of his companies which are widely considered as social goods than as economic goods in most developing and socialist countries. The World Bank and UN-Habitat on the other side are promoting private sector participation through partnership since these public services cannot longer be provided by the government.

Therefore, this paper presentation is aimed at reviewing the existing water supply and sanitation conditions, institutional policies, existing partnership management and also some case studies with a view of making recommendations to straightening and improving partnership approach in Lafia town, Nasarawa State.

THE CONCEPT OF PARTNERSHIP

At the dawn of the twenty-first century, two development concepts have emerged in the development discourse: partnerships and participatory development. Partnership approach and participatory development has been gaining popularity both in the developed and developing countries for the provision of urban infrastructure and services. These concepts represent a new type of challenge for government. Addressing them is not just about adopting new policy and institutional arrangements, but is rather a matter of changing values in the State apparatus and society as a whole, and to recognize new stakeholders as partners in the development process. The core of these two concepts is therefore a shift in balance away from the public sector towards the private sector and a shift towards sharing tasks and responsibilities (Kooiman, 1993). According to Nelson and Zadek (2000), the notion of partnership implies people and organizations from some combination of public, business and civil constituencies who engage in voluntary, mutually beneficial innovative relationships to address common social aims through combining their resources and competencies. As such, partnership could mean government working together with a wide range of social partners at the national and local level to plan, implement and evaluate policy and actions for socio-economic development. The Sustainable Cities Programme (SCP) developed by the UNCHS/UNDP is a recent attempt at involving people in the management of their cities through the partnership approach.

Mitchell (1997, 156) defined partnership as: ...a mutually agreed arrangement between two or more public, private or non-governmental organizations to achieve a jointly determined goal or objective, or to implement a jointly determined activity, for the benefit of the environment and society.

He classified partnerships into four types:

A) Contributory Partnership, in which a public or private organization provides actual funding for a project or some activity, but has little or no direct operational involvement. This is seen as a weak type of partnership because not all partners are actively in decision-making.

B) Operational partnership. Partners share work rather than decision-making power. Emphasis is on reaching agreement on mutually desirable or compatible goals, and then working jointly to achieve them. Power is retained primarily or exclusively by the partner providing the financial resources.

C) Consultative partnerships. The resource management agency actively seeks advice from individuals, groups and other organizations outside government, but control is retained by the agency. Partners can however, exert significant influence on decisions which the agency cannot ignore due to political cost.

D) Collaborative partnership. The intent is to achieve mutually compatible objectives, and resources can be shared (information, labour or money). Each partner explicitly gives up some

autonomy. In the best form of collaborative partnership, decisions are reached through consensus.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Nasarawa State was created in 1996 with Lafia town as the State capital. The State is located in North central near the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nigeria in West Africa. Lafia town is situated on Longitudes 08° 30' East and Latitude 08 ° 31' north. The area is located in the middle climatic belt that is generally very warm and humid with dry and rainy seasons. It has a mean temperature range of 26 ° C to 30 ° C, a mean rainfall of 1120mm to 1500mm relative humidity of 60-80% and falls within the guinea savannah kind of vegetation; (Meteorological dept, 2009). Greater Lafia master plan

The final results of 1991 population census obtained from National Population Commission put the population of Lafia town as 78,247 with an estimated annual growth rate of 2.5%. When projected to 1996 the population stands at about 103,590 and this was further projected to 2009 as 203,790 people. The 2006 national population census for Lafia town is still being awaited for.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study first, source for information from official's reports, published and unpublished source, internet source and the author's personal knowledge to examine the concept of the study. The study appraised water and sanitation situations in Lafia town with the projected population of 263,998. The survey investigation was based on a three-stage clustered sampling framework in which a sample of 230 households (representing about 1.0% sample size of the 20,308 total households) was drawn across the three districts (Sabon pegi district, Bukan sidi district and Gayam district as the first stage). The second stage cluster was that the three districts were divided into sets of four clusters of neighbourhoods, giving rise to a total of 12 sampling areas from which street blocks as the third stage cluster were identified and a systematic random sampling was used to administer questionnaires.

URBAN ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS

For quite some time now, most Nigerian cities are grossly underserved with pipe borne water. By 1995, only about 30% of urban households were served with underground pipes (Onokerhoraye, 1995), causing those who could afford them to spend considerable household revenue on capital intensive deep wells, electric pumps and overhead tanks. Sanitation in most of the cities is poorly maintained. Sanitary facilities like sewers, sewage treatment facilities, septic tanks and toilets for homes are known to be grossly inadequate in Nigerian cities and have worsened over the years because of the rapid rate of urbanization in the country.

WATER SUPPLY AND URBAN SANITATION CONDITION IN LAFIA TOWN: AN OVERVIEW

The data results of the urban water and sanitation in Lafia town are presented below:

Table 1 Type of water supply and sanitation facility used by the households:

Water supply use	Percentage served	Sanitation facility	Percentage served
House connections	13.4	Public sewers	0.0
Yard taps	15.2	WC with septic tank	0.7
Public standpipes	4.1	Simple Pit latrines	54.6
Boreholes with hand pumps	5.1	Pour flush	18.9
Water tanker	6.5	VIP Latrines	6.2
Water vendor	8.2	Public toilet	0.4
Boreholes	19.5	No facility	14.7
Community well	6.5	Other	4.5
Yard well	26.7		
River/stream	1.3		
Total	100		100

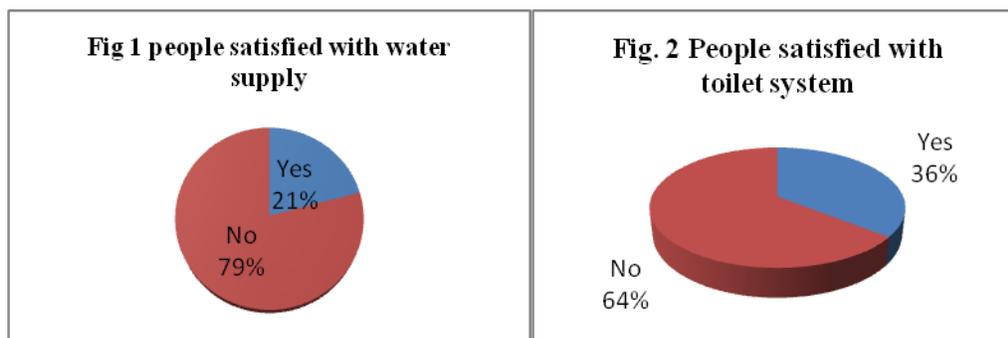
Source: Field survey, 2011

Table 2 Opinion on present state of water supply and sanitation

Variables		
	Frequency	(%)
State of water supply and sanitation		
Very poor	90	37.5
Poor	89	37.1
Fair	51	21.2
Good	10	4.2
Total	240	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2011

Satisfaction with current water supply and toilet system:



Source: Field survey, 2011

DISCUSSIONS

The results in table 1 show that the water supply situation in Lafia town is very poor. Less than 30% have access to safe water and others may be depending on other sources of water supply that may be polluted. The water services available in Lafia town include household dug wells (which constitute the major source up to 60% in the rainy season), community concrete wells provided by local governments, boreholes with hand-pumps provided by the State Government, public stand posts and water selling kiosks using water from NSWB, privately owned borehole water systems, hawkers and house connection from NSWB pipelines. The sanitation situation is also generally poor with 15% of the people interviewed saying that they have no sanitation facility at all. Pit latrines (54.6%), Pour Flush, VIP latrines (6.2%), San-plats and Bush (no facility). The serious environmental sanitation problem in Lafia town consists of the unhygienic city landscape in both the residential and commercial areas. They are found along some of the streets, particularly the back streets, where they often impact negatively on city transportation. There are several toilets built by private individuals in public places like markets and motor parks where people pay to use the service. This has implications for public health and urban development in Lafia town.

Table 2 From the opinion survey respondents gave their opinion on the present state of water supply as very poor 37.5%, while some said water supply is poor 37.1. About 21.2% said is fair and 4.2% said is good. The present level of water supply is described as very poor. Figure 1 and 2 shows only 21 % of the households expressed satisfaction with their current water supply systems. This is not surprising, given the above analysis about quality, distance and regularity of water supply, coupled with the cost of water. Reasons given for dissatisfaction with their current water supply system include: poor quality of water, inconvenience and irregular water supply. Only 35.5 % expressed satisfaction with their present toilet systems. Only 30 % thought their toilet was good in terms of privacy, 22 % considered their toilets good in terms of cleanliness and 14 % thought their toilets were convenient to use. Further analysis shows that households with no toilet facility were least satisfied with their present human waste/excreta disposal

systems (5.2 % satisfied). This is perhaps understandable given the problems of inconvenience, lack of privacy and distance to alternative facilities.

URBAN GOVERNANCE INSTITUTIONS RESPONSIBLE FOR WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION SERVICES IN LAFIA TOWN

There are three key institutions in Nasarawa State that have responsibilities for water and sanitation service delivery. These are:

A) The Nasarawa State Ministry of Water Resources and Rural Development (NSMWR&RD) is responsible for Policy formulation on water resources, but it is yet to properly assume the leading role in policy formulation in water resources management in general and WSS in particular.

The main objectives of the Ministry are as follows:

- Policy formulation on water resources
- Policy formulation on Rural Development
- Management of water resources in the state;
- Co-ordination of matters relating to the provision and development of potable water in the State;
- Provision of basic infrastructures in the areas of the State (roads, electricity);
- Research and development into the use of appropriate technology in the provision of infrastructures in the rural areas of the State;
- Liaison with the following bodies: Federal Government, Local government, International donor organisations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs)
- Increase the access of the communities in the State to potable water supply
- Increase the access of the communities in the State to safe sanitation

Problems: Presently, the state lacks a Water and Sanitation policy to address the above sectoral problems. Therefore the quest to improve service delivery in the water and sanitation sector had been hampered by the lack of a State Water and Sanitation policy, which would have served as a road map for developing the vast water resources in the state in a socially responsive, economically sound, and environmental friendly manner

B) Nasarawa State Urban Development Board (NUDB): Established by Edict No. 4 of 1997, the NUDB has powers and functions to administered, execute and enforced laws according to the provision of Town and Country Planning Law of 1946. One the responsibilities of the Board are to ensure clean urban environment through urban sanitation. The health department of Board does that by weekly collection and disposal of waste and monthly sanitation by the community.

Problems: The NUDB has problems of inadequate finance, manpower, vehicles equipments and relevant data for operations.

C) Nasarawa State Environmental Protection Agency (NASEPA): Established by edict no. 1 of 1997, the NASEPA was created in 1997 (now is Nasarawa State Environmental Standards and Regulation Enforcement Agency in line with NESREA at federal level) to put a stop to threat to the potential growth and sustainable development owing to diverse environmental problems being experienced across the state. The Nasarawa State Ministry of Health inspects private water supply systems and provides them with disinfectants during cholera break-out. NASEPA (Nasarawa State Environmental Planning Agency), registers all private sanitary facilities, like private commercial toilets and bathrooms) and ensures that they conform to a set standard. (See Case Study in Public Facilities). They also assist by providing standard designs for VIP latrine and public commercial bathrooms and toilets. They also carry out routine inspection of the facilities.

The functions of the Agency as specified in NASEPA Edict 1997 include:

- Initiate formulation and implementation of government policies and programmes on all environmental matters in the state
- Give technical advice to government on all environmental matters in the state
- Enforce policies i.e.-statutory rules and regulation on waste collection and disposal, general environmental protection, control and regulation of the ecological system and all activities related therein
- Render advisory services and support to all local government in the state in areas of flood control, solid waste management, ecological and sanitation matters
- Coordination activities of other government agencies as may relate to or impact on environment
- Carry out environment education/awareness programmes for cases on environmental matters
- Design/supervise erosion/flood control works in the State
- Carryout research/study on environmental problems in the state
- Monitor and enforce compliance of environmental regulations and standards by government and private sectors in the state etc.
- Facilitate implementation of federal policy on environment in Nasarawa State
- Act as liaison body with federal government and other states within the federation on matters of environment

Problems: The Nasarawa State Environmental Protection Agency (NASEPA) which is responsible for the implementation of environmental policies of the state and to implement environmental programmes that are directed towards improving our environment. However like its counterpart in the water sector, the agency performances are seriously hindered by several factors include the following:

- Lack of autonomy and political interference
- Inadequate funding
- Inadequate refuse collection vehicles
- Inadequate dump sites and its development
- Lack of equipment to manage the existing dumpsites
- Lack of sanitary equipment and plants
- OSEPA does not have any functional laboratory
- Inadequate technical manpower
- Lack of operational vehicles

D) Nasarawa State Water Board: The Nasarawa State Water Board -SWB) was established with edict No. 8 of 1998. The edict empowers her to secure for the present and future generation as well as commercial and industrial consumers an efficient potable water supply. The functions of the Board include treatment, distribution and sale of water and public enlightenment on water conservation.

The core objectives of NSWB are:

- To ensure a sustainable water supply system development in the State;
- To ensure for the present and future generations, an efficient use of potable water for commercial and industrial consumers;
- To produce for distribution and consumption of the public, sufficient potable water for World Health Organisation (WHO) Standard for their health and well being.

The NSWB is not involved in the provision of sanitation facilities in urban and semi-urban areas in the state

Problems: Nasarawa State Water Board (NSWB) is a government parastatal that is statutorily responsible for water supply to both urban and semi-urban settlements in Nasarawa state. Presently, NSWB manages 8 water schemes throughout the State. Out of the 6 water schemes, 11 (78.6%) of the schemes have a current operating capacity below 30%, while only 2 (21.4%) of the schemes have operating capacity of between 40% and 60%. All the 8 water schemes have varying degree of constraints which include:

- a. aged plant and equipment,
- b. faulty and inadequate distribution system
- c. unreliable power supply to the schemes
- d. Low tariff, and
- e. Weak institutional framework
- f. Inadequate Water Works Installed Capacity arising from increase in demand
- g. Physical Leakages of water mains, service pipes, and appurtenances.
- h. Epileptic power supply to power the urban water schemes

i. Inadequate funding

The combined effect of these constraints is that, less than 40 % of the urban settlements in Nasarawa State are presently served by NSWB. The distribution networks which are mostly AC pipes are old and prone to frequent burst and illegal connections. Total number of active connections is over 7,000 which are about 50% of the total connections (Bashayi, 2011). In addition Plants and equipment in the water schemes are aged and have therefore lost their operating capacity, and as a result water rationing is common. These problems lead significant drop in water productions and are responsible for the acute shortage and contribute immensely to poor service coverage. As a result, Nasarawa resorted to rationing of water to its customers.

E) Local government: Local Government Authorities (LGAs) are responsible for the provision of Rural Water Supply and Sanitation services within their areas of jurisdiction, though with limited existing capacity to meet the challenges posed by this responsibility. The Lafia local government council has been responsible for the provision of boreholes in some community in Lafia town. The department of works of the local government is in charge of the water supply. The local governments too have health departments that assist in ensuring that refuse are not disposed of indiscriminately. They also participate in the collection and disposal of dead animals and the likes. They also construct culverts and drains in the low-income areas.

Problems: Their problems includes inadequate funds, equipments operation and managerial problem, and lack of experts carry this responsibility effectively.

EXISTING PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY FOR WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION IN LAFIA TOWN

The community participation exists in the study area because neither the Nasarawa State Ministry of Water Resources (NSMWR), Nasarawa State Water Board (NSWB), Nasarawa State Environmental Agency (NASEPA), Nasarawa State Urban Development Board (NUDB), nor the local government councils could meet the water supply demand and sanitation services of the communities. Therefore, community organizations were formed which have assumed a major role in filling up this important gap. These various communities' organizations that have being formed include Water Supply and Sanitation committees (WASCOMs) since 1996. Sometimes, these community committees formed partnership with the public organizations in order to provide water supply and sanitation services. The WASCOMs are progressively being involved in community management of water infrastructures and sanitation services in Lafia town. The State Government also appointed Task Forces on Environmental Sanitation which includes the public, private, nongovernmental organizations and the police whose responsibilities is to essentially enforced NUDB and NASEPA's regulations on sanitation and the removal and disposal of solid waste on monthly basis. In this wise, the Community Self Help Groups also assist the Task Force with the manual labour required. The Local government also on the other

hand assist the various communities in their domain in order to enhance their participation in the monthly environmental sanitation exercise

Increasingly, NGOs are becoming more interested and committed to actively participate in the sub sector. An association of NGOs has been formed that seeks to collaborate with state to improve on delivery of water supply and sanitation services in Lafia town. The arrangement was further enlarged in 2005 with the admission of NGO and private organizations which were involved in water supply, sanitation, drainage construction, road repair and security, among other social services.

Table 3. Evaluation of the existing partnership strategy in the study area

S/No.	Participant	Functions Assigned	Level of performance
1	WASCOM	1. Collection of waste in the town 2. Construction of waste collection bunkers 3. Health and sanitary inspection 4. Provision of community well/hand pump 5. Repair and maintenance of facilities 6. Enforcement sanitation laws	Irregular Poor Irregular Poor Poor Regular
2	Municipal council	1. Assisting the CBOs with working implements 2. Enlightenment campaigns through ward heads 3. Payment of certain fee monthly to WASCOM 4. Sanitary inspection	Poor Irregular Irregular Irregular
3	NUDB	1. Monitoring and enforcing non-movement during sanitation exercise with police 2. Invest in policy making- regulatory framework 3. Enforce compliance of sanitary law 4. Provision of funds 5. Provision of vehicles during sanitation	Regular Poor Poor Poor Irregular
4	NSWB	1. Construction of boreholes 2. Installation of water facilities 3. Collection of water bills 4. Expert advice	Poor Poor Regular, but ineffective Based on request from WASCOM
4	NASEPA	1. public enlightenment campaign- seminar and workshops 2. enforcement of environmental laws	Irregular Poor
5	CBOs/NGOs	1. Direct investment in water and sanitation 2. Provision of well and boreholes 3. Awareness campaign 4. Expert advice 5. Protection of right of people to water	Fair Fair Regular, but ineffective Regular

		6. Capacity building and stakeholder consultations 7. Provision local/ simple equipments and Labour	Effective Poor Poor
6	City residents	1. Participate in the monthly sanitation exercise 2. Pay monthly bills for water and sanitation services	Fair Irregular

Author evaluation, 2011

The study has demonstrated how residents in Lafia town are coming up with innovative approaches for dealing with the environmental problems they face. With the assistance of some NGOs and other actors, the partnership approach seems to be having some considerable success. It is clear that the residents of Lafia are now involved in improving the quality of their living environment. However, this approach has limitations because it is not supported by a policy or legal framework. The roles of different partners/actors are often not well-defined and so do not address the issue of who will be responsible when things do not work.

CHALLENGES OF THE PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY

The challenges are: -

1. Lack of adequate legislation for civil society and private sector involvement and bureaucratic bottleneck are major challenges to increased involvement in partnership arrangements. The public and private sectors have little experience of working together to deliver services in Lafia town
2. Institutional challenge: the existing institutional framework in Lafia is not sufficiently conducive to enhance proper environmental management. There are actual and potential conflicts between the local authority, NGOs, CBOs and households. The existing institutional arrangements inhibit progress in urban environmental management.
3. NGOs/CBOs capability: these partners need to develop a better understanding of the roles of each of the various actors. A considerable investment of resources is required to improve their performance especially in terms of strategic management and action planning. The CBOs also engages on this but are facing with the problems of lack of co-operation between CBO members and between them and the community, lack of knowledge to make decisions, lack legal backing and lack of skilled manpower, exclusion of women in decision making, corruption and mobility of skill.
4. Attitude: in many cases, the people who have to implement policy changes are not sufficiently sympathetic or convinced that working with “one another” or “the other side” is worthwhile. We have some actors in Lafia who still do not see the need for collective action. There is a lack of

adequate experience and a paternalistic attitude on the part of local authority officials that stems from their training.

5. Lack of management capacity: The existing partnership strategy lacks the management capacity to perform their task adequately. It is characterized by poorly trained staff and a weak administrative set-up. It is an ad-hoc community committee charged with the serious responsibility of water supply and sanitation services, a task that is technical is suppose to perform through a department under agency but been done by community on uncoordinated manner.

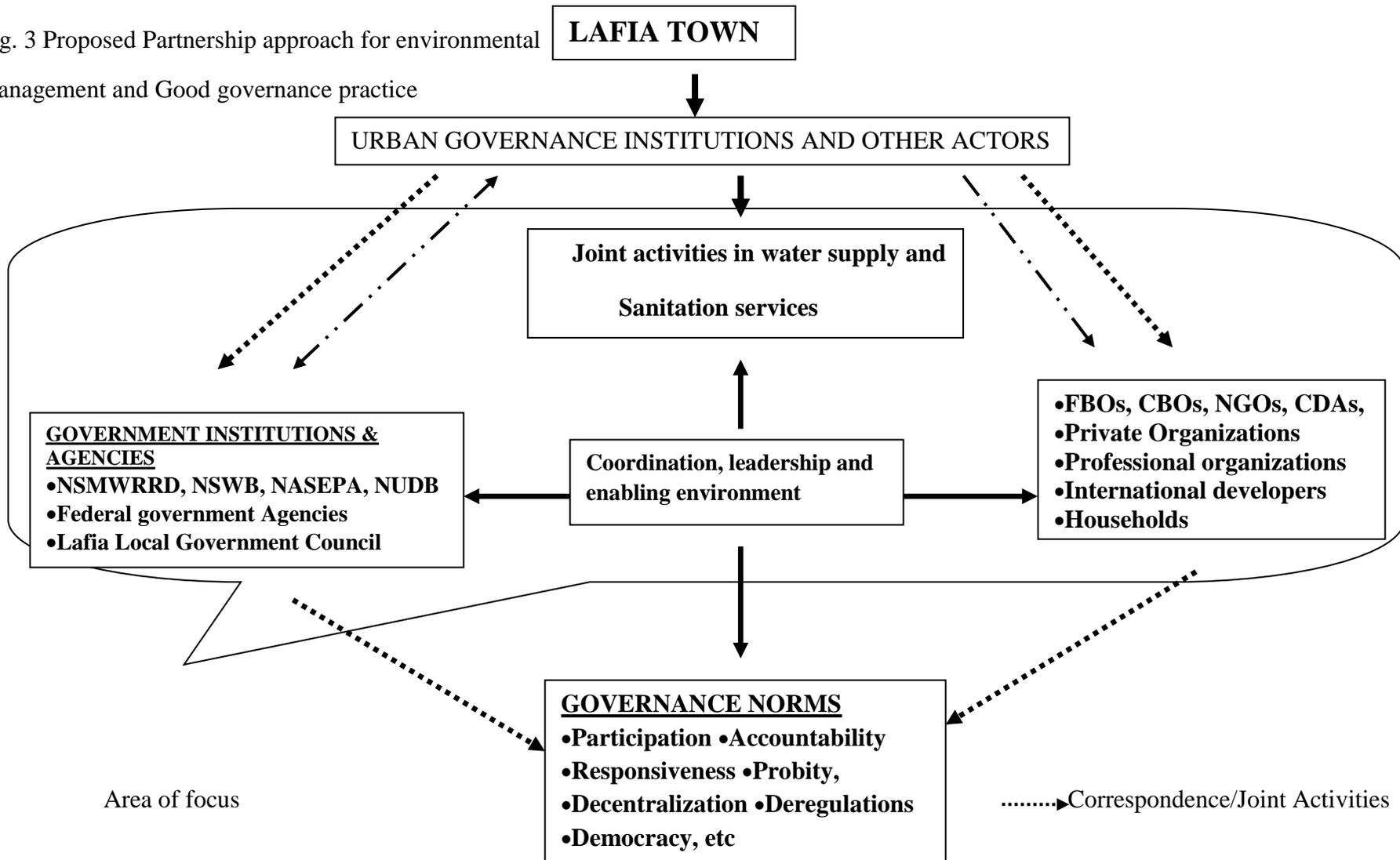
RECOMMENDATIONS

For the success of this partnership the study recommends:

- 1) The lack of a supportive legislature context is a constraint to governmental agencies capacity to incorporate participatory process within the management system. This should be provided clearly spelling out each stakeholder's role
- 2) Capacity building measures in the form of workshops, seminar, and other forms of public enlightenment campaign should be undertaken for all categories of stakeholders.
- 3) A management/regulatory coordinating committee should be established for this new partnership to coordinate all the activities of stakeholders to meet and partake in decision making. The committee shall be responsible for the following:
 - a) Effective interaction and information sharing between the stakeholders
 - b) Coordinating and reviewing the roles assigned to the stakeholders from time to time in order to facilitate and enhance the activities of the partners
 - c) Mobilization of resources (i.e manpower, equipment and finance) to be use in meeting specific requirements.
- 4) Credibility and transparency: effective cooperation between local government, businesses, NGOs and others is always difficult to achieve because of the wide range of participants involved, a low level of trust and little predictability in the process. The credibility of champions and other leaders involved as well as transparency in the process are critical determinants of long-term success.

PROPOSED PARTNERSHIP APPROACH FOR ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT IN LAFIA TOWN

Fig. 3 Proposed Partnership approach for environmental management and Good governance practice



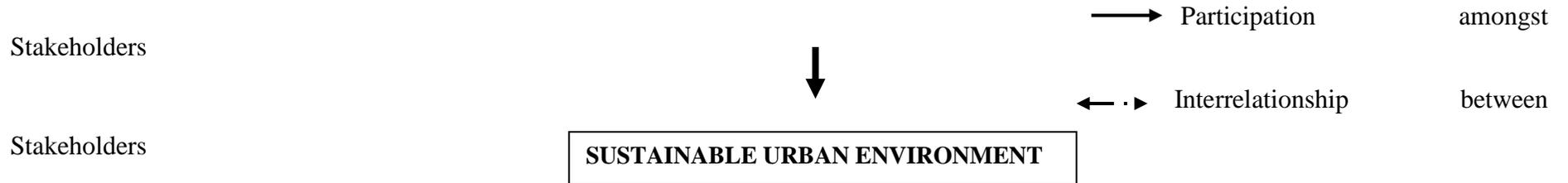


Figure 3 show the various Actors involved in urban environmental management with the urban governance institutions. The linkages between these institutions provide a potential for strengthening partnerships for sustainable urban environment.

A CASE STUDY OF PARTICIPATORY APPROACH IN SUSTAINABLE PROJECT

Good and best practices are initiatives undertaken by two or more partners at the national, city or community level that effectively address chronic social, economic and environmental problems. The original call for best practices was launched in 1995 during preparations for the Second United Conference on Human settlements (Habitat II) as means of identifying what works in improving living conditions on sustainable basis.

Sustainable Ibadan Project, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria

The sustainable Ibadan Project (SIP) is a United Nations Programme for Human Settlements initiatives for the institutionalization of the environmental Planning and Management (EPM) process in the sustainable development and growth of Ibadan City. The project commenced in 1995 with a focus on environmental management, urban governance and planning. The SIP is a collaborative effort involving Local Government, Communities, Federal Government, State Government and its agencies and multilateral/bilateral agencies.

Achievements of the SIP

1. In 1995, a city consultative forum was held to identify, assess and prioritize environmental issues and in a one week meeting of the stakeholders, three major areas of public concern were identified to be the priorities of SIP; waste management, water supply and institutionalization of the SIP process. Ten other issues were identified as crucial, namely; street trading, preparation of comprehensive metropolitan plan, property identification, protection of urban water sheds, establishment of an environmental information system, neighbourhood upgrading, drainage and flood control, environmental education and the use of the media, urban poverty, transportation and air pollution. Working groups and specialized committees were to be set by the SIP secretariat to evolve strategies on these issues/problems.
2. Working groups made of representatives of all stakeholders have been established for waste management, water supply and market environmental improvement in Ibadan. These working groups would develop action plans to deal with particular issues which would ultimately evolve into an urban environmental strategy quite different from the traditional master plan approach, but encompassing broader developmental, environmental and institutional strategies.

A project Trust Fund has been established.

The SIP is being implemented through the Environmental Planning and Management (EPM) technique which is a bottom-up participatory, interactive and collaborative approach to urban planning in which public technocrats work in conjunction with the organized private sector, voluntary groups and the civil society to jointly address environmental and socio-economic issues affecting the people and their environment.

Through SIP a lots of project were undertaken among which is: the Odo-Akeu Spring Improvement Project, commissioned in 1996 was jointly funded by the Akeu community, the Ibadan North East LGC and UNICEF contributing over 50% of the funds. Other projects are under way, and these have increased confidence in partnerships through the umbrella of SIP. The need for a partnership approach to city management on a collaborative manner is therefore firmly recognized by SIP.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The partnership approach holds good prospects for addressing many of the environmental problems which Lafia town currently faces due to her rapid urban growth. Government now realises that it has to work in conjunction with the private sector (e.g. NGOs and CBOs) in efforts to attain the goals of sustainable development. It is argued that policy thrust should not only be towards commercialization and or privatization but on forging credible partnership between various stakeholders to tackle and manage various environmental problems (Dung-Gwon, 1999).

The case studies examined in the paper show that different types of partnership could be forged to address different environmental problems at different; multiple and complex problems at city level to single environmental issues using different techniques of partnership. The range of problems tackled would differ as would the stakeholders involved. Partnership could be very formal and well structured or informal: contributory and collaborator as in Sustainable Ibadan project (SIP). The degree of success recorded will depend on the level of commitment by all the stakeholders to the project. Partnerships that adopt a collaborative model have better chances of success than those that do not.

The key argument in this paper is that, with the exception of smaller or specific situations, urban environmental management cannot successfully be achieved or sustained without

cooperation and collective action between different actors and the need for open, transparent and accountable system of government based on accepted democratic norms and principles. Government institutions and agencies have to change their attitude in the way of doing things by forging cooperation, mutual understanding and trust with the private sector, NGOs, CBOs and the people. The government needs to play a greater role in supporting these new initiatives by the local people. The partnership approach has a great deal of promise and might lead towards greater environmental sustainability. There is a need to monitor carefully these new initiatives, and detailed studies are required to examine the factors influencing the success and failures of the partnership approach.

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