CITIES: MAKING THEM A SAFE HAVEN

Cities can be said to be a kind of systems whose performance is based on many interacting parts and whose form is manifested in a relatively harmonized hierarchy of these parts (or subsystems). Depending on the perspective and who is defining a City, a City can be seen (or defined) in many ways. Cities develop by filling the space available to them in different ways and at different times. Some see cities as a place where their dreams can be achieved, where they can build their families and have a better living. Others see cities as a place with a large population and as a place where people seek to enjoy all the basic amenities that characterize a city.

CONTRIBUTION AS A YOUNG PLANNER

A city is an area where large number of people live fairly close together. Cities usually have their own separate governments and systems for maintaining and providing utilities and transportation.

In lieu of this large population, the city tends to reach its elastic limit, thus, the city is vulnerable to some threats. One of these threats, is Urban flooding, which can be attributed not only to Climate Change but also due to the formation of our cities, where virtually everywhere is paved and drainages blocked. For this reason there is the urgent need to crave for safe, resilient, sustainable and inclusive city (Asheim,1994).

Sustainability which is defined as a requirement of our generation to manage the resource base, such that the average quality of life that we ensure ourselves can potentially be shared by all future generations. (Asheim,1994). “Sustainable development is development that meets the

needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." (Brundtland Commission of the United Nations on March 20, 1987). Therefore to have a sustainable city, achieving a lasting economic, social and physical development is germane**.**

Cities grow or decline every time due to factor endowments, hence Resilience is also important with regard to cities facing disaster risks that are independent of climate change. Much attention is needed to disaster risk reduction viz a viz working with low-income communities in cities to identify how best it can be planned and implemented. Moving towards resilience is achieved with an active adaptation policy, identifying current and likely future risks, with institutional structures to encourage and support needed action by all sectors and agencies. We know that cities can be places where development needs are met (including a high quality of life) hence, the need for resilience thinking.(Akintunde 2016).

Cities are the engine of economic development, employment and opportunity. They can be diverse, lively and exciting places, especially for the young, but on the contrary many cities are polluted, congested, overcrowded crime-ridden. (Hanson 2017). Urban planning systems rarely include the poor, older people and the disables in flood prone areas. Majority of the population live in slums and flood prone areas. However, one of the biggest shortfalls of urban planning is that it still fails to include the poor in mainstream policies. The reason is that the poor are hardly known about, in fact, even government authorities are unaware about how many poor people there are in cities.

Talking about urban flooding as one of the disasters in cities, it has been an inescapable issue for several cities, because it is one of the physiognomies of built environs. It is becoming a gradually significant subject in various parts of the world and this is because global warming has brought

major transformation in rainfall pattern thus increasing overflow risk in cities (Kulkarni, et al., 2014).

Rapid alterations in land cover in the cities are attributed to increase in urban flooding and thus lead to jeopardizing lives and properties (Brody, et al., 2014). It is one of the trials which gradually threatens residents in most cities of developing world (Jha, et al., 2012) Urban flooding is a portent that originates problems to humans inhabiting flood prone areas in the cities, causes havoc to both palpable and impalpable properties and of course harms human beings due to prolong rainfall and in which drainage capacity cannot withstand (Kim, Dong-Kun, et al., 2016). This type of flooding is triggered by shallow overflow from impervious surfaces or overflowing drains (drains and culverts which are often blocked with waste) on to streets and car parks, pluvial flooding usually arises, when there is high intensity persistent rainfall (Ahmad and Simonovic, 2013).

Such land vagaries include extreme sealing of soil outward with resistant surfaces thus interfering with the city water dynamic, drainage structures that make certain flood water flows to water bodies more swiftly than it did under natural conditions (Huong, H., T., L. and Pathirana, 2013). Hence, there is more reason for proactive plans to mitigate this menace, by having a well-designed adaptive resilience city (Zhengnan, et al., 2015). In this case, a resilience city is a prerequisite to curb the threat of flood in urban areas and hence the relationship between flooding and land use/land cover cannot be underestimated or overlooked. Hudson, (2010), argues that "a resilient system is an adaptive system, since it is better thought as a process of communal learning, through the use of human capabilities and information to condense vulnerability and risk in the façade of the unidentified and unforeseen". In having a resilient

city therefore against urban flooding issues, a city should have the four resilience knacks i.e. reacting, monitoring, learning and anticipating (Hollnagel and Fujita, 2013).

One of the things Young Professional Planners should do is to introduce into Urban designs or land use zoning plans, Urban forest or green areas in cities, this could also be in form of urban farming. They are of great value to the environment in terms of air quality, lowering wind speed, aesthetics, energy preservation, reduction in noise effluence reduction in runoff and of course to reduce poverty in cities. (Foran, et al., 2015). As a young Urban Planner, I see that Urban Agriculture will not only bring about surplus food in the city but will reduce the rate of crime in the cities, by the unemployed youth, it will also serve as a source of income to the elderly ones in the city. Growing of vegetables, orchards or crops that can thrive well in flood prone areas in the city will increase the quality of air and lives of city dwellers.

Urban green spaces, according to scholars have materialized as a possible alternative to decrease urban flood, however, increase in urban sprawl is said to have caused a decrease in green spaces and thus an increase in the quantity of paved surface (Yao, Chena, et al., 2015). Hence, to curb the menace of urban flooding a novel approach should be used apart from the conventional ones which might have failed due to the incessant and intensity of rainfall and of course, increase in impervious surface due to the rate of urbanization. the patterns with which people develop and use the landscape have imperative inferences in cities.

Hence, the need for quality quantitative research to know the influence of Land use land change on urban flooding and the re-designing of cities to include more green spaces, comprising urban agriculture. This will reduce the risk in urban flooding and also creating jobs and food for the city dwellers. Thus, having an inclusive, resilience and sustainable safe haven cities.

Recommendation

1. Young Planners ought to put into consideration local pattern of Land Use Land Change when designing flood reduction programs. They can also be more tactical when determining where future expansion should take place.

2. Furthermore, Young Planners can come up with structural mitigation strategies, conducting more of quantitative research so as to proffer innovative solution to designing urban structures in an adaptive city. The use of systematic techniques in data collection and analysis is also imperative.

3. Young Planners should liaise with Research Institute in the city to conducting quantitative research, help to establishing robust digital databank structure which requires Local Area Network (LAC), with portal for data distribution. This can also be achieved through the use of Professionals like; Urban Planners, Landscape Planners, Engineers, Ecologist, Geo- spatial and landscape Architects. So also encouraging having urban green areas in the city; create buffer zones to the streams and rivers for urban farming and recreational parks in the city .

4. Public awareness should be given to city dwellers on the need for urban green/urban agriculture and the need to inculcate in their habit a proper disposal of waste.

5. Engaging youths and vulnerable unemployed ones in urban farming, by providing spaces and tools for farming. Preparation of city action plan for flood prone areas should not be left out.

6. Training and re-training of Young Professionals, in Housing and Urban Development, on environmental issues, the new trend in thinking resilience to having an adaptive city to the effect of climate change should be of outmost concern. And creating network with international developmental organizations, non-governmental agencies for both financial and technical assistance will be of great help

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