



# Explanatory Factors for the Success and Level of Implementation of the Greater Port Harcourt City Master Plan

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## Abstract

The Rivers State government saw the need and through Arcus Gibbs, a South African firm in 2008 prepared a masterplan for the area called Greater Port Harcourt City. The interest was to build a thriving city, economically vibrant and diverse, a world class city, a garden city whose citizens enjoy an enviable quality of life, a sought-after tourist destination, a model city, an inspiration and a monument to what can be achieved through determined and coordinated effort" (Rivers State Government, 2008). Currently, the success and level of implementation of the said master plan has not much been recorded. It is therefore the aim of this paper to ascertain and discuss the explanatory factors that are responsible for the pace of implementation of the Greater Port Harcourt City Master Plan (GPHCMP). This triangulation mixed method study in order to sieve out the elements of both qualitative and quantitative data utilized stakeholders mapping as a strategy to get meaning information. Stakeholders were therefore grouped into three: primary, secondary and tertiary, taking into consideration their adjudged importance and influence. The communities (Mbodo-Aluu, Omagwa and Igwuruta) stood as primary stakeholders and so community stakeholders consultation / engagement and in-depth key informant interviews were conducted. The findings revealed the explanatory factors for the success and level of implementation of the Greater Port Harcourt City Master Plan which are; commitment and capacity of the planning agency, poor stakeholder involvement in the implementation process, economic downturn, bureaucracy in land allocation and policy inconsistencies in governance.

**Keywords:** Explanatory Factors, Level of Implementation, Master Plan, Port Harcourt

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Sustainable development policies, programmes, plans and projects are born out of human desire for positive change in man's social, cultural, economic and physical environment. As a result of this and in the midst of Port Harcourt (the treasure base of the nation Nigeria and the garden city) been stripped of its beauty due to rapid increase in population, distortion of city plan and poor management, uncontrolled and unplanned spatial expansion and infrastructure decay and inadequacy (Aleruchi, 2010), the Rivers State government saw the need to prepare a masterplan. Arcus Gibbs, a multi-disciplinary consulting South African firm was engaged in 2008 and they developed a master plan for the Greater Port Harcourt Area which spans across eight (8) local government areas namely Port Harcourt (Old Port Harcourt), Parts of Oyiibo, Okirika, Ogu/Bolo, Obio/Akpor, Ikwerre, Etche and Eleme local government areas respectively covering an area approximately 1,900 square kilometres (9,190,000 hectares of land) with a projected population of about two million people (Ede *et al.*, 2011). The Masterplan had a two-pronged focus; one was to set out the path to urban renewal and transformation of the old city, and secondly provide direction for the development of the New City in accordance with the vision. This is to be achieved in two areas: urban renewal of the old city and building of a new city for the 21st century with high urban quality and planned open spaces that will become a worthy global player that will be an example to other African countries (GPHCMP, 2008).

The lifespan of the masterplan was for fifty (50) years. The key anchors of the GPHC master plan are the Port Harcourt International Airport, the Old Port Harcourt City and the Onne Sea port. The master plan is an aggregate of landuse masterplan, transportation master plan (Roads masterplan, public transport plan, freight transport plan), water masterplan, waste water masterplan, storm water masterplan. Energy masterplan, integrated waste management plan and social services infrastructure masterplan (Aleruchi, 2010). The GPHC masterplan was to be implemented in phases commencing with the first phase of A, B, C and D and spanning from the Port Harcourt International Airport Omagwa junction across to Prof, Tam David West Boulevard and extends to part of Igwuruta. The layout for the phase 1 area comprised of clusters of neighbourhoods: low, medium and high densities, mixed use complexes, schools, churches, golf course and estates, internal road network and storm water drains occupying a total land mass of 1,692.07 HA (16,920.7sqkm).

This idea is actually holistic and comprehensive with a world class city in view. The idea was to modernize the old city (Port Harcourt) and re-awaken it to its original garden city status, improve the standard of living of all people living in the city by providing better living environment that are properly serviced with good access to social services and infrastructure, create a modern business hub that will accelerate economic growth and development supported by

appropriate economic policies and governance; and attract private sector investment and participation in infrastructure, housing, retail, offices and other commercial facilities.

The Greater Port Harcourt City Development Authority (GPHCDA) was therefore a regulatory body established by law on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April, 2009; and as the Greater Port Harcourt City Development Authority Law No 2. Of 2009. Its mandate was to facilitate the implementation of the Greater Port Harcourt City Master Plan and develop a new city called the "Greater Port Harcourt City".

It is worthy to note that the implementation of such positive idea (referring to the GPHC Masterplan) does not just happen. Sir Isaac Newton in his first law of motion states that a body continues in its present state of rest or uniform motion in a straight line unless an external force acts on it. In his third law, he opined that action and reaction are equal and opposite. The stated laws points to the fact that there are forces that determines action and reactions; and that the applied velocity of these forces will determine the result - the success, the level of implementation and/ or the failure of the project or plan. The Greater Port Harcourt City (GPHC) master plan as a development plan, an official document of the Rivers State government domiciled with the Greater Port Harcourt City Development Authority (GPHCDA) for adequate implementation will definitely meet with these relevant forces. These forces in this paper are tagged 'explanatory factors'.

The place of implementation of the GPHC master plan in the planning process therefore cannot be underestimated. Implementation which definitely takes into account several activities (provision of finance, use of finance, procurement, stakeholders' engagement, establishment of relevant bodies, monitoring and regulation teams, planning, physical construction works etc) is connected with the execution of the plan (Ugwuorah and Igwe, 2005). Implementation of the Master Plan determines the level of development of the geographical area it is meant to address. A Master Plan is usually designed for a specific period of time, between ten and thirty years. It consists of an inventory of existing development in the geographic area of interest as well as proposals for future development. Master Plan prepared for urban area development, the improvement of older part of a city or for the development of a new town or peri-urban areas is a policy documents (Keunta, 2010); that influences the growth of urban population, land use, infrastructure development and service provision.

Failure to implement plans has long been considered a significant barrier to effective planning (Berke *et al.*, 2006). Calkins (1979) names the lack of plan implementation as "new plan syndrome", explaining that plans are continuously redone or updated without regard to the implementation status of the original plan. The lack of understanding of the degree to which plans are implemented and of the determinants of effective implementation have hindered planners from making better plans.

In Nigeria and indeed many developing countries, the practice of comprehensive physical planning is common. This popularity is evident from the numerous Master Plans which have been prepared for various towns in the post-civil war era (i.e., as from 1970) in Nigeria, especially following the creation of states in 1967.

The first attempt to produce a comprehensive urban Master Plan in the country was Koenigsberger's Master Plan for Metropolitan Lagos, prepared in 1962 (Ede, Owei and Akarolo, 2011). This was followed by Travillion's Master

Plan for Kano prepared in 1963. In 1967, Max Lock produced the Kaduna Master Plan. Between 1970 and 1980 Master Plans were prepared for urban centres in a number of states created in 1967 and 1976 (Ede, *et al.*, 2011). These cities include Jos, Benin City, Sokoto, Yola, Maiduguri, Calabar, Ilorin, Owerri, Bauchi, Akure, Minna, Makurdi, Port Harcourt, and Abuja. In addition to these, many state governments prepared Master Plans for towns in their respective states. For instance, in Rivers State, the post-civil war period of the 1970s witnessed an extensive preparation of Master Plans for towns in Rivers State. In Port Harcourt, physical planning began with the application of the Garden City concept by the colonial administration in laying out the old Township and Government Reservation Area (GRA), followed by the first Master Plan prepared by Professor Elon, an Israeli (Obinna, Owei and Okwakpam, 2010).

As the city continuous to grow rapidly with expansion in economic activities and population, it became quite obvious that the initial planning schemes were not adequate to respond to the dynamics of population growth and spatial expansion of Port Harcourt. Responding to this, the first military administration of Rivers State under Commander Alfred Diete-Spiff quickly launched a major planning initiative, first to designate the headquarters of the administrative divisions of the state as urban centers and then secondly to prepare Master Plans to guide their development. A total of nineteen Master Plans were therefore prepared. The Port Harcourt Master Plan of 1975 was prepared by Swedish Consultants: Specialists Konsult. It was the last one of this generation of Master Plans (Owei, *et al.*, 2010). A second generation of Master Plans was initiated by the administration of Chief Melford Okilo between 1979 and 1983.

Under a hastily created Directorate of New Towns and Conurbations, Master Plans were prepared for Boro (Kaiama), Oyigbo, Woji, Abua, Ekeremor and Bori New Towns, though the initiative died as the administration was ousted on December 31, 1983.

The most recent response by the Rivers State Government is the focus of this study – The Greater Port Harcourt City Masterplan (GPHCMP) geared towards building

"a thriving city, economically vibrant and diverse, a world class city, a garden city whose citizens enjoy an enviable quality of life, a sought-after tourist destination, a model city, an inspiration and a monument to what can be achieved through determined and coordinated effort" (Rivers State Government, 2008).

" the whole project was "a call to duty with the mission to build a world class Garden City, thriving economically, operating efficiently, prosperously and assuring its residents a quality of life envied for its peacefulness, comfort and sustainability" (Aleruchi, 2011).

It is therefore the objectives of the research paper to ascertain and discuss the explanatory factors responsible for the pace of implementation of the GPHCMP.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

A Master Plan is a dynamic, multifaceted and comprehensive document that has different interpretations given by different scholars, but the intention has always been the same. For Kent (1964) the document serves as

"ordinances or general plan with official statement of a municipal legislative body which set forth its major policies concerning desirable future physical development of an area". The perception of Roger (1999) regarding Master Plan is "a traditional document in Britain with master or comprehensive planning that develops a plan to cover development, use of land in order to maximize the overall benefit, and then ensuring adherence to the scheme in the urban area". Black (1975) on his part refers to the term as "the official public document adopted by a local government as a policy guide to decisions about the physical development of a community". Whichever perspective the document is being looked upon, Master Plans are documents designed by town planners and allied professionals with legal backing which involves series of activities of all sectors in any geographical area.

However, the aim of a Master Plan determines the roles the Master Plan plays. In any democratic society where the legislative body is involved in the master planning processes, a Master Plan document is one that should be able to draw the attention of stakeholders regarding challenges and opportunities (Black, 1975). For Black (1975), a Master Plan should be able to initiate policies through long-range appropriate phasing of the plan to provide a task for each period within its implementation period. Also, Kent (1964) asserts that a Master Plan should be able to serve as an avenue to convey policy directions by implementing agencies. He further asserts that a Master Plan document should also serve as an educational tool for those who access it. In the opinion of Roger (1999), a Master Plan should be able to serve as an avenue for exploration as it suggests many functions to the planning staff; the executives; operating agencies for physical development; voters; politician and the public at the drafting of the plan and its adoption. A Master Plan gives implementation direction for every development especially in the preparation of zoning ordinances, sub-division control, urban renewal, etc.

### Plan Implementation

Pressman and Wildavsky (1973) reiterated that implementation signifies, "to carry out, accomplish, fulfill, produce, and complete." It also represents a process of interaction between goals setting and actions geared towards achieving set goals. By this assertion implementation connotes an action-oriented process which provides the basis of transition from the abstract in the form of conceptualization to reality. In the opinion of Bryson and Bromiles (1993); Conyers and Hills (1984), plan implementation involves the translation of broad policy goals or objectives into feasible results in the form of specific projects or program of action geared toward solving an identified challenge of the community.

The above definitions indicate that plan implementation is about acting; at the same time acting in the right direction can be problematic sometimes due to future uncertainties. However, a systemic implementation of each step by closely monitoring each action can be pivotal in the quest to ensure smooth plan implementation. This process denotes plan implementation management (Conyers and Hills, 1984). For Conyers and Hills (1984) plan implementation management is an attempt to combine measures to control or coordinate the various components ranging from individuals to agencies involved in the implementation process. Plan implementation management is eminent at all levels and branches of planning as it tends to identify deviations in the implementation process, rectify them and ensure that such deviations are not repeated. For instance,

national resources must be directed toward an end, and not diverted away from plan purposes. This means that, if the plan is to be meaningful, it must be reflected in the budget; if the plan goes one way and the budget another plan is ignored.

### Factors Affecting Plan Implementation

There are several factors inhibiting effective plan implementation because it requires skills and knowledge regarding what to do, how to do it and when to do it. It also involves mobilizing, organizing and managing resources needed to undertake the action preached by the plan. Plan implementation can be affected by a myriad of factors. For instance, Barrett and Fugde (1981) highlighted that plan implementation can be affected by the following factors: knowing what to do; having the required resources, having the ability to assemble, ability to control and manage these resources to achieve the desired outcome, effective communication and knowing who does what.

Talen (1995) further grouped these factors that affect the success or failure of plan implementation into two categories, namely internal and external. The internal factors of plan implementation focus on the weaknesses of the plan, the complexity and comprehensiveness, planning practices, and planners' biases and roles. Plan quality is viewed as an internal factor that influences plan implementation. Also, external factors, on the other hand, include complexities of local political contexts the degree of local societal consensus about planning issues; uncertainty and available knowledge about the issues at hand and the support (or lack thereof) for planning regarding funding or political support (Laurian *et al.*, 2004; Dalton and Burby (1994).

### Factors Internal to the Plan

#### i. Plan Quality

As elaborated above high-quality plans contain relevant community issues, enhance understanding and communication and provide a useful guide for implementing decisions (Berke *et al.*, 2006). Hallmarks of a high-quality plan includes an explicit identification of relevant community issues, a strong fact base, internal consistency of issues, goals, objectives and policies, the monitoring provisions, public participation and clarity (Berke *et al.*, 2002). A plan dictates the direction of implementation such that its quality can influence the success of implementation.

#### ii. Commitment and capacity of the planning agency

The commitment of the planning agency as well as its capacity have a huge influence on the success of plan implementation. Most plans are doomed to fail upon their arrival due to limited political will to implement them. In a study conducted by Dalton and Burby (1994) on the implementation of state planning mandates concerning the management of environmental hazards, they found out that agency commitment had a significant and positive effect on the implementation of local development management programs. Berke *et al.*, (2004) assert that commitment of planning agency directly affects implementation more than the availability of resources.

#### iii. Public Participation

Dalton (1989) noted that the absence of community-wide support for a plan and the degree of pro-growth attitudes in a community can adversely affect implementation. Berke *et al.* (2006) found a direct correlation between the attitudes of the political elites towards plan and its

implementation. This finding indicates that any disjuncture between the community aspirations and underlying goals of a plan can thwart the whole process of implementation. Awareness building is critical for smooth implementation of the plan. Burby (2003) contends that knowledge and awareness of target groups help address most public-policy issues relating to land use. Enhancing local awareness through educational programmes can help educate the citizens on the likely roles they can play to ensure that projects in their communities are implemented. It can also represent an opportunity to understand community problems better.

#### iv. Enforcement style

The enforcement method can determine the success or failure of plan implementation. Some of the enforcement styles for effective plan implementation include deterrence, facilitation, and the use of incentives and informational techniques (Burby et al., 1998; Kagan, 1994; Scholz, 1994). The enforcement style mostly determines how the plan is interpreted. This, in the long run, determines the “how” and success or failure of plan implementation. For instance, a deterrent enforcement style, emphasizes a “strict interpretation of plan policies, a reliance on legalistic and punitive rules (zoning and subdivision ordinance), a minimal provision of technical information and assistance, and written rather than verbal modes of communication in processing permit application” (Berke et al., 2006).

#### v. Complexities of the Local Political Context

Political structure and government systems affect the smooth operationalization of plans. In developing countries where planning is mostly top-down, plans at the local government level are usually abandoned upon a change of government (United Nation Public Administration, 2007). For instance, in Ghana, the affordable housing project/plan was discontinued when there was a change in government in 2012. Also, political instability prevents local authorities from implementing their plans. This situation is the number one cause of retarded growth in most of the unstable countries in the world.

#### Uncertainties

Planning focuses on improving the future by working in the present. However, the future is filled with uncertainties (Wildavsky 1973). Some of the unexpected events that could impinge on smooth implementation of plans include change of government, natural disasters, unplanned consequences, and other emergencies. The question that comes to mind is how best planners can manage uncertainties to achieve their planned goals.

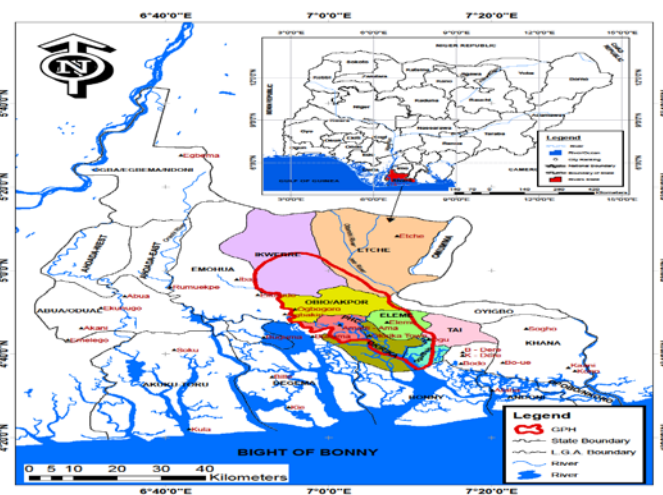
#### Economic Downturn

Smooth plan implementation hinges on the availability of financial resources. Local governments efforts to improve their society through effective planning can never be possible if the economy falls apart (OECD, 2013). For instance, during the recent economic downturn in the U.S.A, most of the local governments could not implement most of their capital-intensive projects (Barrett and Fugde (1981). This situation affected the ability of most local governments to achieve their planned goals.

### 3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT THE STUDY AREA

Old Port Harcourt City was a port city established in 1913 during British colonial rule. It was named after Lord Lewis Harcourt, the then British Secretary of State for the Colonies (Owei, et al., 2010; Ede et al., 2011). Due to its geographical location (near the coast), the city was established as a rail and seaport terminal for the exportation of coal and agricultural produce from the hinterland (Wolpe, 1974; Ikehukwu, 2015). The discovery of oil and gas in the late 1950 accelerated the industrial and commercial expansion of the city leading to its uncontrolled development and rapid expansion. By 1965, the municipality became the site of Nigeria’s largest harbour and the centre of Nigeria’s petroleum activities (Wolpe, 1974; Izeogu, 1989). With that, there has been a constant influx of people into the city. Apart from the rise in population, the city has seen a corresponding physical expansion. Presently, the city’s planning authority has struggled to cope with the rapid uncontrolled expansion population influx and overcrowding (ERML, 2009). Other studies have added that the existing infrastructure in the city has been in a deplorable condition, overburdened over time (Owei, et al., 2010; Ede, et al., 2011).

The Greater Port-Harcourt City (GPHC) Master Plan as it stands includes the Port Harcourt City (Main Town) and the contiguous areas laid out for urban redevelopment, expansion and modernization. It is an agglomeration or conurbation of the old Port-Harcourt City and parts of other Local Government Areas (LGAs) defined in the Greater Port-Harcourt City Master plan. The eight LGAs comprise Port-Harcourt, Obio-Akpor, Okrika, Oyigbo, Ogu-Bolo, Etche, Eleme and Ikwerre (See figure 1). Oyigbo, Eleme, Okrika, and Ogu-Bolo LGAs are located in the east and south of the Central Business District. Obio/Akpor is situated north of Port-Harcourt LGA; Ikwerre LGA is situated north-west of Obio/Akpor LGA, while Etche LGA is in the north-east.



**Fig.1 Map of Greater Port Harcourt City. Insert is Map of Nigeria Showing Rivers State** (Source: Office of the Surveyor-General, Rivers State, 2020)

A Master Plan is a comprehensive document aimed at strategically developing areas of need as perceived by stakeholders in that locality. City development underpins the conception and subsequent implementation of any Master Plan. An example of such is the Greater Port-Harcourt City Master Plan. The Master Plan (GPHCMP) is a 50-year strategic plan designed to integrate the old and new Port Harcourt City. The integrated Master Plan consists of



transport, road, water, storm water, wastewater, land use, social infrastructure and energy (gas and electricity) plans developed to be implemented in three phases. All phases of the development (including existing and future projects referred to as 'GPHC Development Projects') are scheduled to be completed by 2060 (VERML, 2009).

The vision of the plan is "to transform the Greater Port-Harcourt Area into a world class city that is internationally recognised for excellence, and for the area to become the preferred destination for investors and tourists," (VERML, 2009: ES-1). Spatially, the plan covers an area of approximately 1,900 km<sup>2</sup> spanning eight Local Government Areas. It includes all of the old Port-Harcourt city and parts of Oyigbo, Okrika, Ogu/Bolo, Obio/Akpor, Ikwerre, Etche and Eleme Local Government Areas (LGAs) (VERML, 2009; GPHCDA, 2010). The New City will be an extension of the Old Port Harcourt City and will allow for urban growth through planning and de-densification of the Old City, while gradually integrating both cities into one single unit (GPHCDA, 2008, 2010).

The Greater Port Harcourt City Development Authority (GPHCDA) is the authority responsible for implementing the GPHC Master Plan. GPHDA was established by the 'The Greater Port Harcourt City Development Authority Law' No. 2 of 2009 (GPHCDA, 2010). GPHCDA has been charged with the responsibility of facilitating the implementation of the GPHC Master Plan and developing the New City (GPHCDA, 2010). The objectives of the plan are primarily economic; that is, to enhance the standard of living and well-being of people in the city by transforming it into a functional, efficient, world class city with first-rate infrastructure and delivery of quality services (ERML, 2009; GPHCDA, 2010). The successful implementation of the Master Plan is projected to yield improved commerce options as well as increased investment opportunities. Apart from yielding economic benefits, previous studies have argued that economic development should also be placed in the environmental context for protecting environmental quality

The comprehensive Master Plan comprises the land-use plan and other sectoral plans. Implementation of the entire Master Plan has been phased, commencing from Phase-1 through Phase 2 to the Phase-4 projects. Phase-1 layout is located in the northern axis of the Master Plan near the Port-Harcourt International Airport and is sub-divided into four manageable sub-phases A, B C and D (see Fig. 2). Phase-2 layout is located in the eastern axis near Etche LGA, while Phase 3 Project is located in the south-eastern part of the Master Plan near Onne Seaport at Eleme. All phases will be connected by the Priority Road (M1 North-South Link Road), which is a dual-carriage freeway (VERML, 2009).

**Fig.2 Map of Phase 1 Layout showing 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D Sub- Projects of the GPHCMP.**  
(Source: Arcus Gibb, 2009)

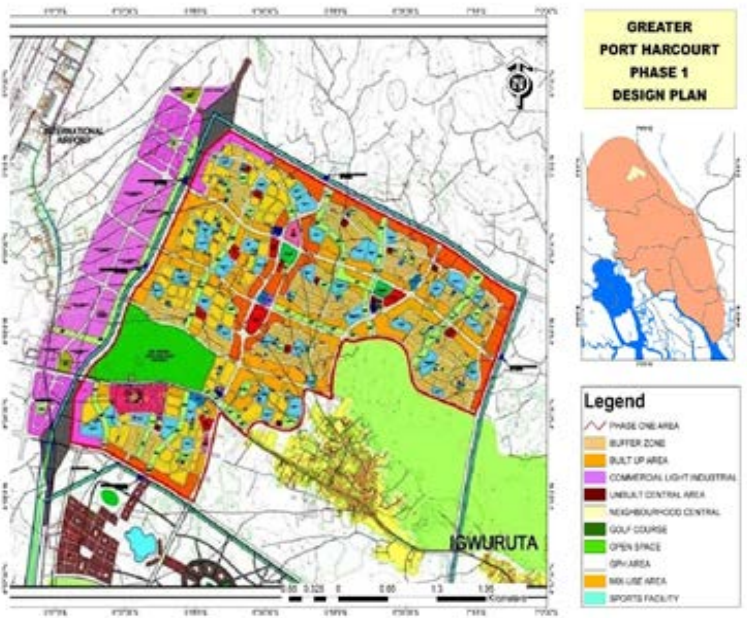
The main anchors are Onne Seaport, Port-Harcourt Harbour and the Omagwa international Airport.

Generally, the land use plan consists of high, medium and low-density residential areas; commercial and industrial areas; cemetery; dumping site; International airport; University; open spaces, including riverine areas, golf courses, parks, gardens with landscape elements; rivers; metropolitan node; roads including major, minor and other roads as well as future growth areas. Facilities include 24-hour electricity supply infrastructure; a network of good roads/streets and public transportation system; drainage and storm water management system; engineered sanitary landfill for solid waste disposal; surveillance; and efficient security systems among other things (VERML, 2009; GPHCDA, 2010).

#### 4. RESEARCH METHODS

The study utilized stakeholders mapping as a strategy to get meaning information. Stakeholders were therefore grouped into three: primary, secondary and tertiary, taking into consideration their adjudged importance and influence. The communities (Mbodo-Aluu, Omagwa and Igwurutali) stood as primary stakeholders and so community stakeholders consultation / engagement and in-depth key informant interviews were done to sieve out the elements of both qualitative and quantitative research (a mixed method) for the study. The essence was to identify and interview the various stakeholders involved in the implementation of the Greater Port Harcourt City Development Master Plan and ascertain their level of involvement.

The target population is composed of household members from each of the three communities and was regarded as a Primary Sampling Unit (PSU), and Multi-stage sampling (Kish, 1965) was then applied to select household respondents. Sketching each PSU, including housing units and assigning codes to them; Listing residential housing units, and their constituent dwelling units to obtain an ordered list of dwelling units (hence households, since each dwelling unit is occupied by a household) in the community to serve as a sampling frame and drawing the sample of households from the ordered list of households, applying systematic sampling (a probability sampling method) (Kish, 1965) , choosing the head as the respondent in each selected households were part of the stages of the investigation.



(Glasson *et al.*, 2005; Ede, *et al.*, 2011; UNECA, 2011; Akukwe and Ogbodo, 2015).

The total number of households in each of the three (3) PSUs was obtained through listing, as described above. The Taro Yamane formula was then applied to determine the appropriate (representative) sample to be studied (See computation below).

The Taro Yamane formula is given as:

$$n = n = N / [ 1 + N (e)^2 ] \dots\dots\dots (1)$$

Where: n = Sample size, 1 = Constant, N = Population Size, e = Sampling error (5%) = e<sup>2</sup> = 0.0025.

**Table 1: Sampling Details**

S/No.	Sampled Communities	1991 Population	2019 Population (Projected Using 6.5% Growth Rate)	Actual No. of Households (HH) (Obtained from Listing)	No. of Households Selected
1	Mbodo-Aluu	834	4,861	6,147	45
2	Omagwa	2,805	16,356	21,545	157
3	Igwurutali	3,821	22,280	27,355	199
<b>Total</b>		<b>7,460</b>	<b>43,499</b>	<b>55,047</b>	<b>401</b>

(Source: NPC, 1991; NPC, 2018; NBS, 2016; Researcher’s Fieldwork, 2019).

\*Note- The actual number of households obtained from listing was used in sampling the projected figures are only included here for purposes of comparison.

**5. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

The factors responsible for the pace and level of implementation were discovered from the stakeholder mapping and discussions with the various identified stakeholder groups. Commitment and capacity of the planning agency, poor stakeholder involvement in the implementation process, economic downturn, bureaucracy in land allocation and policy inconsistencies in governance were found to be the key explanatory factors responsible for the pace and level of Implementation of the GPHCMP.

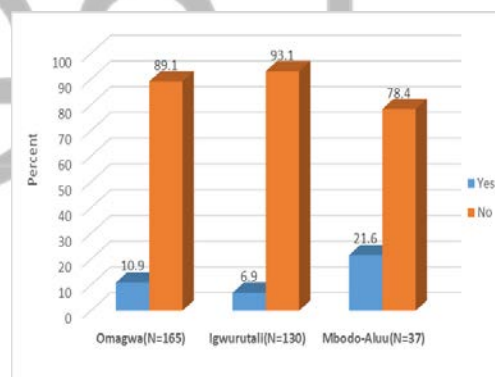
**Commitment and Capacity of the Planning Agency**

The commitment of GPHCDA (Planning Agency) as well as its capacity has a huge influence on the success of implementation of the GPHCD Master Plan. Most plans are destined to fail upon arrival due to limited political will to implement them.

In a study conducted by Dalton and Burby (1994) on the local implementation of state planning mandates concerning the management of environmental hazards, they found out that agency commitment had a significant and positive effect on the implementation of local development management programmes. Berke, *et al.* (2004) report that commitment of the planning agency directly affects implementation more than the availability of resources.

**Poor Stakeholder Involvement in the Implementation Process**

Fig. 3 shows that only 10.9%, 6.9% and 21.6% of respondents at Omagwa, Igwurutali and Aluu, respectively, reported that community stakeholders were consulted in the implementation of the Master Plan, while 89.1%, 93.1% and 78.4% of respondents reported that stakeholders were not consulted and have not seen the Master Plan for the development of the area.



**Fig.3: Community Stakeholder Consultation in Master Plan Implementation**

(Source: Author’s Field Survey, March 2020)

**Economic Downturn**

Smooth plan implementation hinges on the availability of financial resources. Government’s effort to improve the society through effective planning can never be possible if the economy falls apart. For instance, during the recent global economic downturn in Nigeria, most governments at all levels could not implement most of their capital projects. This kind of situation affects the ability of most governments to achieve their planned goals. This has been the case of the Greater Port Harcourt City Master Plan implementation.

**Bureaucracy in Land Allocation**

Table 2 shows categories of applicants and land allocation in Phase 1A. The information was obtained from a Key Informant interview with one of the Directors of GPHCDA. It shows that 46.2% of the allocation was made to the political class/office holders, 20.8% to civil/public servants,

23.1% to professionals/ business class, while 9.7% was allocated to non-indigenes. The table reveals that only about one quarter of applicants were allocated land in Phase 1A.

The study has revealed that some of the allottees actually undertook development of their allotted plots but could not build to completion. Further investigation revealed that there was no proper enforcement by the Authority. Lack of political will of government to continue with the GPHC project was one of the excuses given for failure to complete the developments.

**Table 2: Categories of Application for Land and Allottees in Phase 1A**

S/N o.	Categories of Applicants	Number of Applicants	Allocation
1	Political Class/Office Holders	62	62
2	Civil/Public Servants	180	28
3	Professionals/Business Class	157	31
4	Non-Indigenes	134	13
	<b>Total</b>	<b>527</b>	<b>134</b>

(Source: GPHCDA, 2020, Author's Field Survey, March, 2020)

### Policy Inconsistencies in Governance

Political structure and government systems affect the smooth operationalization of plans. In Nigeria where democracy is not stable and planning is mostly top-down, plans are usually abandoned upon a change of government. For instance, in Nigeria, the affordable housing project/plan was discontinued when there was a change in government in 2015. Also, political instability and varying leadership ideologies prevent planning agencies from implementing their plans. This situation is the number one cause of retarded growth in most of the States in Nigeria. This has hindered the implementation of the Greater Port Harcourt City Master Plan as the present administration (under PDP) in the state do not see the Greater Port Harcourt project as one of its priority project that was conceived by the previous administration (under APC).

### 6. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study on ascertaining the explanatory factors for the success and level of implementation of the master plan revealed that there was no form of stakeholder engagement and sensitization prior to the declaration of the area as a planning area by the Rivers State Government. Therefore, people did not have a good understanding of what the Master Plan was all about and what they stood to benefit from its implementation. Ogbazi (2008) noted that public participation in decision making is traditionally the centre-piece of democracy. With the non-participation and involvement of the host communities in the decisions which invariably include the implementation of the Master Plan, it is not surprising that there have been bottlenecks in the implementation of the Master Plan. This also goes to show that citizens especially the rural dwellers need to be involved in the planning of development projects. The UN

Commission to Africa (1973), stated that apart from ensuring that development strategies are aimed at creating an atmosphere whereby rural dwellers and members of communities are integrated in the national socio-economic and political fabric, they must also be directly involved through organizations and institutions, in all phases of the development process.

The study further revealed that only about 7.6% of the respondents (community stakeholders) were consulted in the preparation of the Master plan, while 91.9% were not consulted and have not seen the Master Plan for the development of the area.

Further analysis revealed excessive bureaucracy in the land allocation process; land developers in the GPHC find it difficult to acquire land for development because of bureaucratic bottlenecks in land allocation, subdivided land for residential development in Phase 1A allocated to the public by the Authority indicates that forty-six percent (46.2%) of the allocation was made to political office holders, 20.8% to civil/public servants, 23.1% to professionals/ business class, while 9.7% were allocated to non-indigenes. So many years after these allocations no substantial development has been carried out in those well planned neighbourhoods.

There is clear evidence that political structure and government systems affect the smooth operationalization of plans, especially in Nigeria where democracy is not stable and planning is mostly top-down, plans are usually abandoned upon a change of government. The Greater Port Harcourt City Development was envisioned by the previous administration in the state, the change of government to different party other than the previous administration who do not see the GPHCDMP as a priority in its development agenda has also helped to stall the implementation of the Master Plan.

### Stakeholders Involved in the Implementation of the GPHCD Master Plan

A project is successful when it achieves its objectives and meets or exceeds the expectations of the stakeholders. Stakeholders are individuals who either care about or have a vested interest in a project (David and Steve, 2012). They are the people who are actively involved with the work of the project or have something to either gain or lose as a result of the project.

In the opinion of Stone (2014), critical stakeholders can make or break the success of a project. Even if all the deliverables are met and the objectives are satisfied, if key or critical stakeholders are not happy, nobody is happy.

The primary stakeholders were the Government; GPHCDA; Communities; Other Government Development Agencies like Rivers State Ministry of physical planning and urban Development; and Rivers State Ministry of Works. Amongst them, (residents of Mbodo-Aluu, Omagwa and Igwurutali communities) were seen to be most relevant to the study and their inputs were regularly and effectively utilized.

The Secondary stakeholders are Contractors, Press; Arcus Gibb (the designer), Firms, Local NGO's and International NGO's. In this group, a former Arcus Gibb staff noted that, the vision of the successful implementation of the Master Plan has been killed by non-release of finances to the Authority from 2015 to date. It was further revealed that his former employer (Arcus Gibb) has closed down the office and since relocated back to South Africa.

Relatively corroborating the above, the press (the Federated Chapel of the Nigerian Union of Journalist (NUJ), Rivers State) when contacted about their perception on the implementation of the Greater Port Harcourt City Development Master Plan said that there is no

implementation of any Master Plan in the proposed New City. The only thing they attest to was the construction of the New Stadium (Adokiye Amiesimaka Stadium and possibly the New GPHCDA office) while, other developments had been stalled.

In the tertiary category which are the UN-Habitat, Amnesty International and Other World Organizations, there was no engagement as offices of the identified and listed stakeholders' could not be located as at the time of the study.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Conclusions

The Rivers State government saw the need to prepare a masterplan. Arcuss Gibbs, a multi-disciplinary consulting South African firm was engaged in 2008 and they developed a master plan for the Greater Port Harcourt Area which spans across eight (8) local government areas namely Port Harcourt (Old Port Harcourt), Parts of Oyiibo, Okirika, Ogu/Bolo, Obio/Akpor, Ikwerre, Etche and Eleme local government areas respectively covering an area approximately 1,900 square kilometres (9,190,000 hectares of land) with a projected population of about two million people (Ede *et al.*, 2011). The lifespan of the implementation of the holistic masterplan was fifty (50) years. Since the commencement from 2009 till 2020 with the kick off of the GPHCDA Phase 1A area projects, several challenges has impeded its implementation to achieve a world class city.

The explanatory factors that were identified and discussed in this paper which are responsible for the pace and level of implementation of the GPHC Master Plan include; the commitment of GPHCDA (Planning Agency) as well as its capacity, poor stakeholder engagement, economic downturn, bureaucracy in land allocation and policy inconsistencies in governance

### Recommendations

Considering the explanatory factors responsible for the pace and level of implementation of the Master Plan, it is evident that judging from the period under review, the target of achieving a world class city within the anticipated period of fifty (50) years is not feasible.

Nevertheless, following the findings of the study, the following recommendations are put forward that would prompt effective management and implementation of the Master Plan.

- i. Enactment of legislation to ensure that planning agencies (such as GPHCDA) are independent of the vagaries of party politicking. Thus, funds for plan implementation should continue to flow, irrespective of changes in government.
- ii. There should be commitment on the part of the Planning Agency, in this case GPHCDA, to drive the implementation process to its logical conclusion.
- iii. There should be proper stakeholder engagement (Citizen Participation) before and during the masterplan implementation process. Stakeholder engagement is very fundamental in achieving a successful planning process and should be encouraged. Some avenues through which GPHCDA could involve citizen in plan implementation include: community fora, neighborhood meetings and focus group discussions. The design and execution of projects outlined in the plan should be discussed and voted on to ensure that they reflect the needs of the people. Citizen engagement in the plan implementation will infuse a sense

of ownership in the people and encourage them to monitor the progress of the implementation

- iv. The masterplan is a development blueprint and should be adopted and adhered to by stakeholders irrespective of changes in government.

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