

## **Co-production: An opportunity for pro-poor Urban Development in Lagos, Nigeria**

Timothy Nubi, Taibat Lawanson and Basirat Oyalowo  
Centre for Housing Studies, University of Lagos, Nigeria

### **Introduction**

In recent times, there have been a series of spatial displacements and forced evictions<sup>1</sup> in Lagos, often resulting in luxury gated communities replacing hitherto informal settlements and thriving local communities. This process of gentrification has largely exacerbated inequality and discontent across the metropolis<sup>2</sup>. In fact, Lagos has a Gini coefficient of 0.64<sup>3</sup> reflective of a huge gap between the rich and the poor. The government often cites the rationale for such displacement as arising from poor environmental conditions and illegality of such settlements, and in many cases, residents are not aware of their rights to community redevelopment with equitable rights under the laws guiding redevelopment of communities in Lagos.

The Ilasan Redevelopment Project however presents an opportunity to rewrite the narrative for pro-poor development in Lagos, as the project seeks to provide decent and affordable housing to over 2000 households that had been impacted by multiple forced evictions in the past through a co-production approach. The **co-production approach promotes joint working and partnerships** amongst stakeholders. This chapter therefore outlines the historical context of the case study, the justification for the adoption of a co-production approach to urban redevelopment, and the activities that made up the Ilasan Redevelopment project. It concludes by reflecting on the opportunities for pro-poor development in a city that records over 200 slum communities<sup>4</sup>

### **From Maroko to Ilasan: The journey of endemic vulnerability**

Present day Ilasan is home to about 2000 households who were victims of one of the largest forced evictions in modern history<sup>5</sup>. The July 14<sup>th</sup> 1990 slum clearance of Maroko affected

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<sup>1</sup> Otodogbame, badia east

<sup>2</sup> Gentrification: use lawanson and omoegun, 2018

<sup>3</sup> Gini coefficient OPHI, 2016

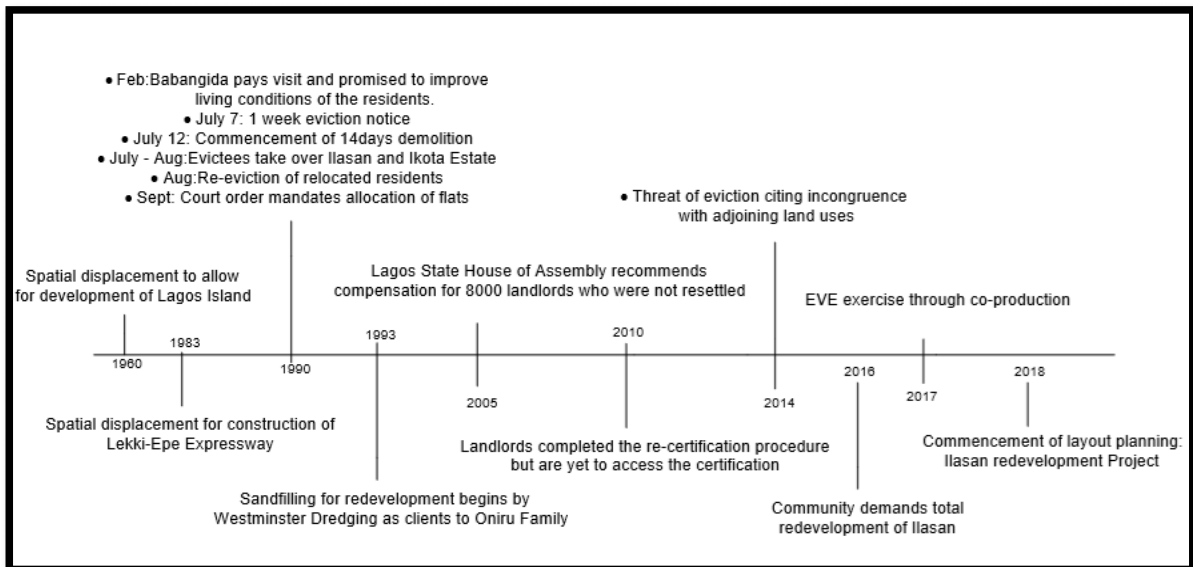
<sup>4</sup> Gandy 2006

<sup>5</sup> Centre for housing rights and evictions, 2006

300,000 inhabitants, 10,000 households, 15,000 buildings and 38 autonomous villages<sup>6</sup> on 732 acres of land<sup>7</sup>. A time line of activities reveals that the community is perennially vulnerable to evictions (See figure 1).

At the time of the exercise in 1990, many families relocated to Ilasan and Ikota estates, outside the city (See Map 1), two government estates that were under construction at the time, where they were again forcefully removed. However, after a series of court cases, the Lagos state government was mandated to allocate those flats to the victims of the evictions, seeing that they possessed some form of legal titles to the lands they were removed from, and were entitled to compensation<sup>8</sup>.

Since moving to the estate, there has been minimal government intervention in the area. The uncompleted buildings remained as is, with many houses consisting only of a foundation; others had no plastering, doors, windows, roofs, electrical fittings, toilets or plumbing of any kind. A large number were, and still are, in a dangerous state of disrepair. Furthermore, the facilities and services available are no better than at Maroko, and in many instances, far worse. Ilasan estate is prone to perennial flooding in addition to lacking basic services. (See pics 1-6).



<sup>6</sup> Maroko-Orile, Ilabere, Oroke, Apapa- Eleko, Igbosere, Apese, Olukotun, Iru, Araromi, Tukur, Okokuku, Ipeun, Magbon, Igbo, Abule-Ode, Mepo, Itinrin, Inupa, Ilado, Agbadan, Ahoyaya, Famiyiwa, Aniyameta, Idiroko, Onireke, Morekete, Gedegede, Moba, Obalensoro, Ogoyo, Alagutan, Ikoyitodo (Nwana, 2012). As these villages grew, they merged into a single town known as Maroko.

<sup>7</sup> Agbola & Jinadu, 1997, NWANNA, 202;SERAC, 2013

<sup>8</sup> Court order mandating maroko victims to be allocated apartments at ikota

Figure1: Timeline of Activities: Maroko to Ilasan

With the rapid growth of Lagos, urbanisation extended across the city, with the Lekki axis, where Ilasan estate is located catering for middle and high-income earners. As such, land value around the axis increased, with consequent threats to the tenure security of Ilasan residents. In 2010, the Lagos state government mandated Ilasan residents to undergo a re-certification process to ascertain their legal rights to the estate. In 2014, there was also an attempt to relocate the entire estate to Epe, a town several kilometres outside Lagos. According to the residents, the then commissioner for housing stated that Ilasan Housing Estate had become *'a gold mine' and no longer suitable for the evictees, as the people staying on this axis are not like us*<sup>9</sup>. The residents resisted vigorously stating: *'We would rather die by the bulldozers than relocate from our estate again'*<sup>10</sup>. Hence, the long standing adversarial and mutually distrustful relationship between the residents and government agencies festered.

The residents' association in September 2015 petitioned the newly elected Lagos state government for a 'total redevelopment of the estate'<sup>11</sup>. The Lagos State Building Investment Company (LBIC) as the liaising government agency constituted a committee for the redevelopment process with membership drawn from the community, supporting NGOs, academia and government<sup>12</sup>. The mandate of the committee was to oversee the process of redevelopment of Ilasan Estate and recommend approaches for its implementation.

### **Ilasan Redevelopment Project: Why Co-Production?**

Co-production is the process through which inputs from individuals who are not 'in' the same organisation are transformed into goods and services<sup>13</sup>. In the context of urban development, it is an opportunity for relevant stakeholder to work collaboratively in order to enhance our understanding of urban issues, inform appropriate actions, produce defensible policy and

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<sup>9</sup> Resident of the estate

<sup>10</sup> We would die rather than let go of our housing rights

<sup>11</sup> 2016 letter to state government

<sup>12</sup> The Community Development Association and the Landlord's Association (Maroko evictees) represented the people. The Lagos Building Investment Company was the anchoring government agency, while the Social and Economic Rights Action, the supporting NGO for the Landlords association represented the human rights of the residents. The academia was represented by the Centre for Housing Studies, and saddled with the responsibility of co-ordinating the process

<sup>13</sup> Ostrom 1996:definition of coproduction

increase the legibility of policy<sup>14</sup>. Co-production of knowledge by academics, practitioners and civil society actors is critical to developing workable city-level solutions to pressing African urban development problems<sup>15</sup>. In the context of Ilasan Redevelopment project, it is particularly important as a strategic approach based on equity, justice and a recognition of previous traumatic experiences.

After a series of meetings (see pic), the committee first task was to produce an evidence base and justification for the Redevelopment exercise, hence the Enumeration and verification (E.V.E) and Asset Mapping exercise to determine the state of physical, social and economic infrastructure in the estate. While the enumeration process was to develop a comprehensive database for the re-planning of the estate, the verification exercise was to establish the claims of rights of the Maroko evictees and ensure these rights were protected, in order to avoid a situation where redevelopment results in gentrification, and proposed beneficiaries left behind<sup>16</sup>

### **The Ilasan Redevelopment Project: Producing the Evidence Base through co-production**

There were a series of targeted **focus group discussions this should read town hall meetings and meetings with Ilasan community leaders accompanied by their human rights organization leader I.e SERAC** in the community to provide an opportunity for a wider cross-section of residents to participate, and also solicit for co-operation during the entire redevelopment project. Some residents were opposed to the project until '*go-along* method<sup>17</sup> was recommended for data collection, and 12 volunteers were recruited from the audience for the exercise.

The Enumeration and Verification process involved a complete profiling of the community, with the CDA and landlord's association leading the process and establishing the trust necessary to gain access to residents' homes to ascertain the condition of individual housing units, retrieve existing allocation papers and carry out the socio-economic survey (See Pic).

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<sup>14</sup>Zarina Patel **Univer-City Partnerships**: Co-production for urban sustainable development in Cape Town; presented at AURI meeting, Nairobi, Kenya, 2014

<sup>15</sup> Co-production: auri

<sup>16</sup> Badia east gentrification process

<sup>17</sup> This method represents a combination of field observation and interviewing and permits establishing contextual insights of traditional ethnographic methods without the long-term intensive fieldwork. For further details see Carpiano, R.M., 2009. Come take a walk with me: the "go-along" interview as a novel method for studying the implications of place for health and well-being. *Health & place*, 15(1), pp.263–72

The three-day E.V.E was followed by an off-site verification of titles to permit those who were absent during the field exercise. After collation of all data, a **public presentation was done in the community, and residents expressed constructive feedback and recommendations on how to proceed with the actual redevelopment** project. It should read: the report with detailed analysis was sent back to the community for presentation and corrections. The community members' observations were collated for revision in the final report.

The major recommendations were comprehensive flood control via extensive drainage works around the entire estate as well as the provision of basic services particularly water and recreational facilities. In order to ensure complementarity of use with adjoining properties, it was also recommended that the low-income estate be upgraded to mixed-use mixed-income neighbourhood by inviting a developer to generate a relevant layout plan and business proposal.

this should be. It was found that indeed a high proportion of the residents wanted a total redevelopment of the estate WITHOUT DISPLACEMENT OF MAROKO.EVICTEES. This would ensure the provision of sustainable models of infrastructure in electricity, roads, drainages and water supply. In order to....neighbourhood. However, due to the low income base of the community, a funding mechanism that trades the value of the land as residents' equity for construction finance is being sought.

The report was submitted in December 2017 to the LBIC, who have committed in principle to implementing these recommendations, using the principle of co-production.

## **Conclusion**

The case of Ilasan Redevelopment Project presents an important approach to achieve poor urban development in Lagos. These are encapsulated in the following opportunities which were revealed in the course of the project.

- **An opportunity to build trust between adversarial interest groups:** Despite decades of distrust and hostility, the adoption of the co-production process resulted in the residents and the government engaging on a common issue in an atmosphere of mutual respect. Thus, even though the police were engaged at the onset of the project to keep the peace, their services were not required as all parties committed fully to the project.

- **An opportunity for civic engagement:** The co-production approach utilized successfully in the Ilasan Redevelopment project presents an opportunity for citizens to take a more active role in the development of their communities. The poor rely on communities of trust and informal governance structures, but often lack the capacity to successfully address their issues especially to the government. The co-production process thus afforded them the opportunity to leverage this social asset as partners at the decision-making process relating to their community.
- **An opportunity for Replication of ‘Urbanisation at Scale’:** The co-production approach adopted was a partnership between a willing community, government agency to drive the project, a human rights organization, and an academic partner working together to achieve a predetermined objective. Due to the success of the exercise in Ilasan, the Centre for Housing studies has been engaged by the LBIC/ Lagos state government to replicate the process in about 16 other low income public estates across the Lagos Metropolis in need of redevelopment, regeneration and repair.
- **An opportunity for Alternative Planning Approaches:** The Ilasan Redevelopment project presented an opportunity to explore alternative planning approaches, including the citizen led ‘go along’ method for urban profiling, transiting from low income to mixed-income land use through land pooling, and a redevelopment plan that doesn’t put the lives and livelihoods of the urban poor at risk.
- **Land value capture for evictees benefit. the ilasan site is worth billions. the co.production prcess yielded an added advantage as residents are ready to trade in the value of part of the land as their equiy on finance the project. this land value capture will crash the cost of unit flats or apartments to be reallocated to the evictees. thia model can be applied to othet communities in dire need for redevelopment.**