



Lilongwe City Council

Public Participation in Urban Planning – Case of Lilongwe, Malawi

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Brief Geographical Background of Malawi.

- Commonly known as the “*warm heart of Africa*”, Malawi is a small land-locked country in the Southern part of Africa.
- Bordering Zambia, Mozambique and Tanzania, Malawi has a land area of approximately 120 000 square kilometers supporting a population of approximately 17 million people.
- Lake Malawi, takes up to 20% of the country’s total land area and happens to be one of the biggest lakes in Africa.
- This lake is a key tourist attraction in Malawi, famous for nothing but its special type of fish commonly known as ***Chambo (A Tilapia specie)***.

Background



Brief Background – Malawi.

- Malawi is divided into three regions namely; the Northern region, Central and Southern regions. Each region comprises a number of rural and urban districts.
- The main Urban area in the Northern region is Mzuzu city with a population of 128, 432 persons(NSO, 2008)
- Blantyre and Zomba Cities are found in the Southern region with populations of 661, 444 and 87,366 persons respectively(NSO, 2008).
- The two, if combined would make the biggest Urban region with a total urban population of 748,810 persons.
- In 2008, Lilongwe had a population of approximately 669, 021 people with a population density of 1500 persons per square kilometre (Lilongwe City Development Strategy (CDS), 2010).

Part of the Lilongwe Garden City
CBD



Background – Locating Lilongwe City .

- The City of Lilongwe is the largest and capital City of the Republic of Malawi.
- It was established as a key trading centre in 1906 but eventually grew to become an administrative capital city with a purpose-built town in 1975.
- Named after Lilongwe river that runs across, from the West to the Eastern side of the city, Lilongwe City is located on a plateau in Central Malawi forming part of the East African Rift valley, situated at an altitude of 1050m above the sea level.
- The City lies on the Latitude of 13.59 degrees South and Longitude of 33.47 degrees to the East.

Background – Population & Size.

- Lilongwe city has the current day population of 1,161,408 and is estimated to be at 1,500,000 by 2030.
- The City covers an area of 393 square kilometers.
- Lilongwe city has relatively poor social indicators - 76% of the city's population lives in unplanned settlements (with poor water and sanitation, electricity, education and health services and road network), (Lilongwe CDS, 2009)

Highlight of Opportunities.

- Lilongwe is of strategic importance to Malawi.
- By design, Lilongwe City should offer its residents and businesses, quality and reliable infrastructure, services and facilities within a well planned city.
- Lilongwe City offers numerous economic opportunities for example; Retail trade, Banking, Construction, Manufacturing of products, Transport, Tobacco processing etc
 - **34.7% employed in private sector**
 - **23% in public sector**
 - **29% specifically in an agricultural sector**
 - **13% are Self employed.**

Opportunities cont..d.

- Parliament has recently passed Key Land bills which may help accelerate socioeconomic dvpt.
 - Establishment of training courses in land management in Malawian Colleges.
 - Existence of the Local Development Fund to provide resources for local land servicing programmes.
 - Political will to provide adequate low-cost housing plots.
 - Possibility of partnerships with organisations and the Donor community.
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Highlight of City Challenges:

- High rate of Urbanisation aggravated by rural to urban migration which has resulted in the mushrooming of slums and Informal settlements.
 - High population growth which entails increased demand for land, affordable housing units, safe water, health care among other basic services.
 - Poor road network
 - In effective waste management practices
 - In effective implementation of planning and land management systems.
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Interventions being undertaken to improve on land management and service provision.

- The Council has embarked on a number of programs aimed at improving the management of land and consequently minimizing the development of unplanned settlements in Lilongwe
 - Partnership with relevant organisations to undertake low cost housing and other projects including WASH projects.
 - Participatory Slum upgrading
 - Squatter adoption in high density areas
 - Provision of subsidized serviced land to cater for the housing needs of the urban

poor

Vision Statement

Lilongwe is expected to be the model of Malawi Vision 2020 as it will be environmentally sustainable, self-reliant with equal opportunities for active participation by all, and a technologically-driven middle-income economy by 2030.

LCC Strategic Objectives and SDGs.

The Lilongwe City Council (the Council) has the following Key Strategic Objectives that augor very well with the globally accepted SDG number 11.

- ▶ Ensure a well-planned, managed and regulated land use system that facilitates development and growth where land and shelter is accessible to all, meeting minimum standards, offering sustainable services and tenure security.
- ▶ Ensuring access to quality and reliable water, sanitation, electricity, waste management and a safe transport infrastructure, ensuring sustainable utilisation and management of resources.

Strategic Objectives Cont'd.....

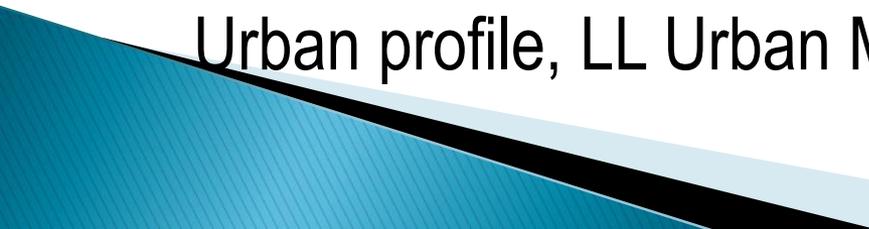
- ▶ Ensure a city that is in harmony with nature and has capacity to address issues of climate change, especially pollution, and protects and expands environmental assets.
- ▶ To ensure a well-governed, transparent and accountable Council with clear decentralised powers and functions, where participatory decision-making is systematically strengthened and adherence to the rule of law is cultivated.

Urban planning Approaches and Sustainable Development Goals(SDGs)

- ▶ Although our urban planning procedures are governed by the Town Planning Act 2008, they have been crafted in such a way that they allow for public scrutiny.
- ▶ In line with the above, our planning procedures provides space for citizens to provide their input in the City Strategic plans and are actively involved for example in all urban renewal projects to ensure that their settlements are safe and sustainable.
- ▶ The citizens are given an opportunity to participate in discussions of their Urban plans mainly at three levels as follows:

- 1. At Policy level**
- 2. Informal Settlement Planning level**
- 3. Prime Areas Planning level**

Policy Level.

- In Malawi, citizens are consulted in the course of formulating policies including Urban Planning related policies.
 - This is done at both national and city levels.
 - In the formulation of National Land policy in 2002 and Land related laws for example, the Government undertook a series of consultative meetings at all levels to get views from ordinary Malawians including city dwellers.
 - Similarly, citizens of Lilongwe were widely consulted in the formulation of Lilongwe City Strategy, 2010, Lilongwe Urban profile, LL Urban Master plan etc.
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Planning for Informal Settlements.

- ▶ The city of Lilongwe has for decades been championing participatory planning in its Informal Settlements.
- ▶ This approach has specially been intergrated in all slum upgrading programs in the city.
- ▶ This allows the Council to work directly with citizens and other key partners to define the plans for the areas to be upgraded. Planning is community driven
- ▶ While others are involved in community mobilisation, some help to undertake profiling of structures and enumeration.

Planning in the Prime Areas of the city.

- Although, the pre-liminary City planning concepts and designs are done by technocrats in their respective fields based on the City's Master plan, the products for example Layout plans, structural plans are subjected to public scrutiny before they get implemented on the ground.
- Ideally, plans after they have been designed by technocrats, they are brought before relevant Council Committees for further scrutiny.
- Council Committees comprise Councillors who actually represent the views of the people in their respective wards.
- Their contribution is based on what they feel is in the best interest of the people they represent.

Benefits of Public Participation in Planning.

- Engages more people and hence more views on a particular issue are gathered.
 - Promotes a more mature debate on national or City priorities .
 - This is also helpful in reshaping relationships between City technocrats, Councillors or politicians and citizens.
 - Ensures that planned Services are better targeted and cost-effective.
 - Enhance social cohesion among citizens.
 - There is Local ownership of City projects which are implemented based on the input of citizens.
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Challenges with Public Participation.

- Sometimes, the Consultative process could be costly depending on the approach used.
- It works better with a strong political will.
- Involvement of the people sometimes tend to raise false expectations which if they are not corrected may cause problems during implementation.
- Sometimes, views of an ordinary citizen may not be in line with the city blue print.
- Rejecting such views may seem as if the planning authority does not have interest in consulting its citizens.

CONCLUSION.

- ▶ Public Participation is key to the development of sustainable cities.
 - ▶ Improved urban transportation infrastructure, economic growth, improved livelihoods, poverty reduction certainly depend on well defined consultative process with citizenry.
 - ▶ The city that lacks public participation in planning is a city that is less owned by its own residents and so may not be sustainable.
 - ▶ Such a city has no place in the world of today.
 - ▶ And I am glad Lilongwe is not one of them.
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Thank you!

