

An Assessment of The Relationship Between The Availability of Financial Resources And Physical Planning Process In Emerging Urban Centre of Paidha, North-Western Uganda.

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Abstract:- The availability of financial resources is an important element in impacting the success of a planning process for an effective physical planning. The extent to which however, they are articulated in the process remained elusive both in scholarly and public discourse. The objective of this study was therefore, to examine the extent to which financial resources affect physical planning. In doing so, the study examined whether financial resources were adequate or not to facilitate planning processes in Paidha. According to the study findings, budget prioritization and ceilings are still a challenge in Paidha Town Council. This is partly due limited level of knowledge of physical planning among the officials of Paidha Town Council. As a result, there were no dedicated budget line for routine inspection of physical development plan compliance and enforcement tools in Paidha. In conclusion, in addressing uncoordinated patterns of physical development that characterize Uganda's urban centres, a critical starting point ought to be the analysis of physical planning process. The research of this kind is not only significant to other emerging urban centres facing poor a road network, mushrooming informal settlements and poor social services including poor pattern of residential and commercial developments but also to all institutions that are involved in planning these towns. Knowing the extent of need for financial influences in planning may assist local authorities to take the processes of planning seriously which will help enhance the sustainable development of emerging urban centres including Paidha.

Keywords:- Physical Planning, Financial Resource, Planning Enforcement, Physical Development Plan.

I. INTRODUCTION

In Uganda, as reported by Nicchia (2011) and UN-Habitat (2010), the newly gazetted Town Councils, Town Boards, and upcoming Rural Growth Centres constitute a predominant form of urbanization (Ministry of Local Government, 2010). Most of these upcoming towns were rural villages fifty years ago, so their housing, water, sanitation, and public health infrastructure are often poor or non-existent. According to the Nigerian Institute of Town Planners (2011), such conditions mentioned, require physical planning (Agbola and Watson 2013). However, despite the importance of physical planning, there has been lack of its thorough execution in Uganda (Lwasa, 2006). Thus, Olajuyigbe (2011); Conyers and Hills (1984) noted that, several decades ago hardly anyone devoted himself to research on the critical physical planning issues that were affecting the emerging urban centres (Nicchia, 2011; Nchito 2010). Today many scholars (Olujimi, 2009, Kayom, 2006; Nyakwebara, 2006; Lwasa, 2006) are analyzing factors affecting physical planning generally. Yet, some scholars (Omolo; 2011; Owusu, 2010; Koojo 2005) observed that the problem which has remained elusive both in academic literature and policy discourse is an analysis of planning process in urban centres generally.

This research therefore, focuses on Paidha as an emerging urban centre that is characterised by problems inherent in the planning process. As noted by Paidha Town Council (2008), some form of physical planning existed in Paidha. Implementation of physical planning schemes had also been done in some parts of the town. However, there is hardly any form of organized development taking place including in areas where physical plans have been prepared. This raises the questions of whether this means there is a lack of physical planning or poor physical planning. One conclusion often drawn by members of the general public is that all Uganda's urban centres, including Paidha, have either never been planned or urban physical plans are never implemented. According to Nyakwebara (2006) and Koojo (2005), this is disputable on the account that most developments coming up in the urban centres have got their plans approved by the relevant authorities. What is also confusing is that, although there exist robust legal and regulatory frameworks on physical planning, the pattern of urban development associated with the emerging urban centres has remained poor (Omolo, 2011). An attempt to respond to this dilemma resulted into this study - an analysis of the relationship between the availability of financial resources and physical planning in Paidha.

1. Objectives and Research Questions

The general objective of the study was to critically analyze the physical planning process that is affecting the emerging urban centre of Paidha in Zombo district, West Nile sub region in Northern Uganda. Specifically, the study examined, the extent to which the available financial resources affect physical planning in Paidha town.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The extent to which financial resources affect physical planning.

In the revelation of major constituents of physical planning process, Obeng-Odoom and Yeboah, (2010: 79), considered planning to be a process of preparing and implementing a set of decisions and actions at local, district, regional, and national levels. This should effect a transformation in the living conditions of the people of an area and their environment in ways that improve their existing socio-economic conditions and circumstances, their physical surroundings, and existing institutions. Preparing plans as noted by Obeng-Odoom and Yeboah, (2010: 79), is obviously the primary responsibility of professional planners (Agbola, 2007; Koojo, 2005). Much professional planning training hinges on providing nascent planners with skills to develop the ideas contained within plans and plan documents. Generating plans is perhaps the central creative act of the planning profession, the act that “gave planning its name. On the contrary, according to UN-Habitat (2009) the output of a planning intervention should not just be a physical development plan but a set of inter-related strategies for urban development including land, infrastructure, finance and institutional reforms (Conyers & Hills 1984). Physical planning process should also integrate disaster mitigation and recovery strategies.

Conyers and Hills (1984) noted five main factors that affect preparation and enforcement of plans. They include; nature of the planning process, organization of planning and implementation, content of plans and management of the implementation process (Olajuyigbe and Rotowa 2011). According to Strategic Urban Development Planning in Lake Victoria Region: Lessons of Experience report, conceptual weaknesses related to planning methodology is the main reason hindering enforcement of physical plans in the countries of Uganda, Kenya, and to some extent Tanzania. Master plans and structure plans as well as the more detailed local plans in the countries mentioned are notoriously inflexible to unforeseen changes at the plan generation stage, and they are not intended to seek the participation and ownership of key stakeholders including the private sector in the implementation process (Koojo, 2005).

The highly conditional nature of inter-governmental grant transfers in Uganda is an issue of worry (NPA, 2010). During the FY, 2011/12 the relative shares of conditional, unconditional and equalization grants in the total transfers to local governments were 90%, 9.61%, and 0.29% respectively. Conditional grants transfers tend to be ‘second-guess’ local priority setting, and often introduce policy goals that are in appropriate and reflect inadequate understanding of local issues. In this study, an attempt was made to find out whether physical planning also benefit from any grant(s) from central government or any other source and if no, why not?

According to the Auditor General Report of 2010/2011 financial year, local governments spent shillings 1.4 billion on activities that were not beneficial to the councils and were considered wasteful. Another shillings 1 billion was lost as a result of misappropriation of revenue and unauthorized expenditure (Auditor General’s Office, 2012). But on what activities do Paidha town council consumes her reasonable portion of funds? Is physical planning which is considered by government a key priority especially for urban authorities given prominence in the budget? If not why? These are the critical issues addressed in this paper.

The glaring financial problems facing local governments in Uganda is also not helped by the line Ministry of central government which is expected to monitor, supervise, set standards, policy and legal framework for physical planning in the country. Thus, the financial and technical capacity woes of urban authorities in Uganda is also strongly emphasised in the 2009 ‘*Issues and Recommendations Report*’ from stakeholders ‘consultations on the National Land Policy formulation. This report highlights that Urban Authorities do not always have the funds to hire technical persons to plan or implement approved physical plans. Uganda is not the only country facing serious financial problems as far as physical planning is concerned. Nigeria too, suffers from the same. Thus, Olajuyigbe and Rotowa (2011) observed that the new Ministry of Physical Planning and Urban Development in Ondo State, Nigeria was failing to administer development control since it had only 3 vehicles to monitor urban development in the whole State.

IV. RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

This was a case study research. It focused on the emerging urban centre of Paidha in northern Uganda. Paidha was selected as the field research area, based on its high rates of urbanisation relative to other towns of similar size, its border location and economic growth prospects. Both quantitative and qualitative

methodological approaches were considered appropriate for this research. A total of 190 central government and local government officials (respondents) constituted a sample of the study. These officials were drawn from institutions that are mandated to play critical roles in physical planning in Uganda. Interviews, observations, focus group discussions and in-house surveys were the main methods that facilitated collection of data on financial resource situation and preparation of physical development plans including planning enforcement as per the research objective. Comparison was used as a tool of analysis of data from observation and in-house surveys and appraisals. Content analyses and thematic approaches were also used to analyze qualitative data collected through focus group discussions.

V. RESEARCH ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

(a) Financial resources and preparation of physical development plans

Inadequate budgetary provision has continued to undermine physical planning in Paidha. This is illustrated in table 1.0.

Table 1.0: The Proportion of Physical Planning Budget as a Percentage of Total Council Budget in Uganda Shillings)-Paidha Town Council.

No.	FY	Council Budget Estimates	Total	Actual Council Budget	Physical Planning Budget Estimates	Actual Physical Planning Budget	Percentage (%)
1	2002/03	725635105		633703602	4702000	4058650	0.64
2	2003/04	520785967		458641383	44365000	42930000	9.4
3	2004/05	468984840		401217484	35800000	32037228	8
4	2005/06	468984840		401217484	14380446	11380446	3.2
5	2006/07	711488610		517480203	5000000	1235000	0.2
6	2007/08	924719891		682829267	0	0	0
7	2008/09	1299006790		778340994	13135830	7669050	1
8	2009/10	1434469715		652011803	4305250	3707500	0.5
9	2010/11	1279264837		889335000	8192000	7500000	0.8

Source: Paidha Town Council Final Accounts for various Financial Years (2002/3 – 2010/11).

Table 1.0 shows, in a period of 9 years (Financial Years, 2002/3 - 2010/11), on average, physical planning had been allocated a budget of approximately 1 percent of the total Council budget save for FYs, 2003/4 and 2004/05. An analysis of table 1.0 also reveals, physical planning, is one of the least prioritized functions in Paidha Town Council. Even the highest budget of Uganda shillings, 4, 293, 0000 (9.4%) that was allocated to physical planning in FY 2003/2004 was not sufficient to prepare a detailed scheme for one ward. According to the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development officials, even the total 9 year budget (110,517,874) – United States Dollars, 36,840) is not sufficient to carry out proper urban physical development plan. This is true because analyses of the costs of preparation of various urban physical development plans prepared for different towns in the country indicate, for Paidha Town Council to prepare both urban physical development plan and local physical development plans covering entire town, it requires over 500,000,000 Uganda Shillings (USD 167,667). At the current trend, Paidha will require approximately 45 years to raise USD 167, 667. This implies, Paidha Town Council to achieve sustainably planned urbanization is not achievable unless deliberate intervention is made.

Budget prioritisation in Paidha Town Council. An analysis of budgets for 9 financial years for Paidha Town Council revealed, construction (roads, buildings and other physical structures), finance and administration including political mobilisation as the main partakers of funds in its organisation. These sectors mentioned, receive conditional and equalisation grants from central government. One of the conditions of these funds is 10 percent co-funding. This implies, the local revenue of Paidha Town Council has to prioritise projects that receive conditional grants from central government. It was found, physical planning was not a beneficiary of conditional grants from central government and that partly explain its small budget allocation. However despite the fact that the departments mentioned are receiving big chunks of Council budgets, according to the respondents and also observation made by the researcher, their performances were still far from satisfactory. Respondents were right to question performance of these departments because the costs of provision of these services are also higher than the funds being received.

Budget Ceilings for Paidha Town Council. As shown in table 1.0, the budget ceilings of Paidha Town Council have been low compared to the costs of services it is expected to provide. It was found out that physical planning budget ceiling was low due to limited sources of revenue. In Paidha, own source revenue consists of

(a) property tax, (b) licenses, (c) land fees and (d) new taxes (local service and hotel taxes) higher growth in terms of percentages has been registered with new taxes followed by property tax and licenses. On the non-tax revenue side, market dues and parking fees is the most important drivers with shares of 60% and 10% respectively of total non-tax revenue. All these revenue sources according to the respondents have not been significantly increasing save for local service and hotel tax which are new. Respondents admitted that increase in physical planning budget is dependent on increase in other revenues in Paidha Town Council.

Level of knowledge of physical planning among the officials of Paidha Town Council.

The results of interactions with the officials of Paidha Town Council revealed limited levels of knowledge regarding physical planning. To the officials, physical planning is only about drawing plans in the office. This low level understanding of physical planning means, it cannot qualify for serious financial support. This finding, partly explain why physical planning budget has remained low in Paidha Town Council. The officials are right to exhibit limited knowledge on physical planning since the central government Ministry responsible for physical planning is not offering much support to local governments also because of budgetary constraints as shown in table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Cash limits for the Department of Physical Planning in the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development, (1995/96 – 2012/13).

Financial Year.	Budget for Physical Planning Department in the Central Government	Budget for Central Government Ministry responsible for physical planning.	Percentage share of physical planning budget in the Ministry	Number of Departments in the Ministry responsible for physical planning.
1995/1996	104,334000	3,061,550000	0.03	5
1996/1997	196,900000	2,664,832000	0.7	5
1997/1998	153,125000	5,149,811000	3	5
1998/1999	266,041000	8,773,227000	3	7
1999/2000	379,730000	5,045,191000	0.07	7
2000/2001	144,311000	6,003,599000	2.4	7
2001/2002	146,786000	7,257,000000	2	8
2002/2003	197,347000	8,335,937000	2	8
2003/2004	154,123000	8,941,057000	1.7	8
2004/2005	220,702000	6,262,343000	3.5	8
2005/2006	268,102000	10,976,304000	2.4	8
2006/2007	267,702000	6,834,909000	3.9	8
2007/2008	478,465000	6,294,962000	7.6	8
2008/2009	478,465000	14,831,198000	3.2	8
2009/2010	497,496000	Missing data		8
2010/2011	508,327000	19,365,289000	0.2	8
2011/2012	449,116000	19,174,226000	2.3	8
2012/2013	423,712000	14,453,839000	2.9	8

Source: MFPE (Estimates of Government revenue and expenditure for various financial years- 1995/1996 -2012/13).

The Department of Physical Planning is not the only one underfunded as illustrated in table 1.1. The whole Directorate of Physical Planning and Urban Development is not adequately funded as illustrated in table 1.2.

Table 1.2: Cash Limits for the Directorate of Physical Planning and Urban Development (MLHUD).

	2006/07 (In Billions of UGX)	2007/08 (In Billions of UGX)	2008/09 (In Billions of UGX)	2009/10 (In Billions of UGX)
Ministry Cash Limits	17.45	10.78	12.33	15.33
Directorate's share (both wage and non-wage)	0.33	0.51	0.56	0.56
Directorate %age Share (of Ministerial cash limit)	1.9%	4.7%	4.5%	3.7%

Source: Analysis of Ministerial Budget Framework Papers (FY, 2006/2007 – 2009/10).

The results of this study relate to findings of NPA (2010) where it was found out that Physical Planning Department in Paidha Town Council did not benefit from conditional grant from central government. According to the Town Clerk, physical planning does not feature among the critical priorities for the country. This explains why whenever Paidha Town Council receives equalization grant, it would be allocated to other departments not physical planning. This is equally supported by MLHUD (2009) which argues that, for physical planning to perform its function well, it should receive conditional grants from central government. This is justified in a report by Ministry of Local Government (2012/2013). The report adds, most local governments were prioritizing activities which were receiving financial support from central government. Thus, MLHUD (2009) was right to argue that physical planning too needs financial support from central government.

An analysis of Ministerial Policy Statements of Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development, 2006/7 – 2010/2011) revealed that due to inadequate funds, many planned interventions had not been implemented since 2006. They include, dissemination of the Physical Planning Act 2010, computerisation of physical planning, formulation of national spatial framework and regional spatial plans including formulation of urban performance monitoring system. In the absence of the National Spatial Planning framework, and Regional Physical Development Plans, it means physical development plans for Paidha are ineffective. From the foregoing, the trend of budget allocation in Paidha is therefore largely a result of the precedence set by government in allocation of national budget.

(b) Financial resources and enforcement of physical development plans in Paidha.

The integrity of the planning system depends on the readiness of Local Planning Authority, such as Paidha to take an effective enforcement action. In Paidha however, the gross under funding had greatly undermined enforcement function leading to poor implementation of physical development plans.

No dedicated budget line for routine inspection of physical development plan compliance. The results of the observations carried out, revealed that, the gross under funding had made it an uphill task for Paidha Town Council to monitor performance of her physical development plans. Monitoring requires availability of transport which unfortunately was a problem in Paidha. The finding, relates to that of Olajuyigbe and Rotowa (2011) who observed that acute shortage of transport was responsible for planning enforcement failures in Nigeria, which is a country with similar level of socio-economic development to that of Uganda.

Settlement patterns, density, layouts including building conditions in Paidha were not adequately monitored due to limited budget. It was found out that, in most cases, after approval of a building plan, construction work would commence without any follow up in terms of supervision to ascertain conformity with planning standards. Completion certificates were not issued for the private developments before occupation. Although receipts acknowledging payments for this service, were issued, actual completion certificates were not given to any developer. This, according to opinion leaders, was the reason why developments even in areas that were planned, continued to be uncoordinated. The result of rapid urban appraisal also revealed alterations of plans on sites with their attendant consequences. This implies building plans are submitted to Paidha Town Council for consideration and/or approval only to fulfil legal and administrative requirements. Other respondents also admitted that construction activities within Paidha were not regularly supervised.

No budget allocated to key enforcement tools in Paidha.

It was found out that zero budget was allocated to Prosecution, Direct Action and Injunction as key tools for delivering planning enforcement. Interviews with officials of Paidha Town Council revealed that, it was difficult to reprimand a developer with approved building plan who had violated planning standards at the finishes stages of his or her construction. It was found out that generally, taking culprits to court by Paidha Town Council was almost non-existent due to zero budget allocated for that purpose. The few demolition orders issued by the Council were equally not enforced.

Limited budget has affected approval of change of land use applications and physical development plans. One measure of efficiency of the planning system is the time it takes for the planning authorities to approve physical development plans and building plans including issuing of building permits. This indicator is especially important in Uganda's hard-to-predict economy when every month's delay can mean a hike in already high building costs (NPA, 2010). It is therefore not surprising, contractors and developers were attacking the planning system mainly because of bureaucratic delays. An interview with Paidha Town Council officials in 2012 indicated that the physical development plan for Paidha that was prepared in 2008 had never been approved by the then Town and Country Planning Board. Yet, it remained in force.

Interviews with central government officials revealed, application for change of land use (amendment to the physical development plan) takes six months or a year and nearly 30% gave over one year as a typical approval time. This is because, consideration of applications for change of land use were a preserve of National Physical Planning Board which unfortunately would take sometimes 3 months to meet. But even when this Board meets there would be always many items on agenda. It was reported, urban authorities in most cases were impatient to wait for the decisions of this Board. Also in the study sample 63% of respondents (urban community) answered that approval of a building plan in Paidha, takes almost a year. However, even after approval of a building plan, one must wait for the building permit which was rarely issued. A formal letter of building plan approval notification by urban authority also takes long to reach developers. The researcher asked respondents how long it takes them to receive a formal letter of notification of approved building. The majority (90 percent) gave one to two months as the lower boundary of their estimated time ranges. This period, according to the respondents, were far too long for most developers to continue waiting.

The results of the current study were found similar to that of Koojo (2005) who found out that delay in processing and/or approval of building plans contributed to poor implementation of 1994 Kampala Structure Plan. According to Koojo (2005) bureaucracy, corruption and unclear procedures were some of the factors responsible for delays in processing and/or approvals of building plans. This finding is related to those of the current study especially where it was revealed that approval of building plans could take almost one year. Unlike Koojo's findings, however, the delays in approval of building plans in Paidha is caused by lack of funds to facilitate the relevant committees of Paidha Town Council to do their work which include building plans approvals and/or considerations.

Meagre budget for road infrastructure. Majority of urban community and developers (90% and 86.5%) of the participants respectively were in agreement as compared to ten (10%) and 13.5% who did not admit that there was any serious impact. It was found out that poor road coverage had caused barrier to construction of permanent houses, pattern of buildings, solid waste management, and circulation. During focus group discussion, some members said it was becoming hard to put up high quality buildings in Paidha town. They said, many people would end up dumping their materials far from their construction sites due to lack of access roads. It was found out that because many development applications did not have proper site plans with access roads, the urban authority of Paidha did not bother about issuing planning consent. Yet as Okpala (2009) observes, issuing and/or refusal of planning permission is a core function of enforcement. It is therefore justifiable to conclude that inadequate financial resources is a factor to reckon with in the planning of Paidha town.

No budget for physical planning key equipment such as computers and global positioning system. It was found out that annually, only approximately 20% of already meagre budget for physical planning were occasionally allocated to purchase of simple drawing equipment like pens, portable drawing tables, T-square, French curves and drawing papers including drafting papers. Approximately 80% of the physical planning budget was allocated to salary and wage including per-diem and safari-day allowances for the Physical Planner while on official duty both within and outside Paidha. As observed, the manual method had affected quality of physical plans in Paidha is low. This was confirmed in the focus group discussions where it was reported that accuracy of plans was not reliable as reflected into overlaps on people's plot. And, this was a cause of disputes among urbanites.

Paidha does not have modern storage facilities for maps and plans including other documents. This had resulted in disappearance of official records. He revealed, lack of such data was affecting road planning in his department. Indeed when the researcher asked him to avail vital statistics on roads, the Acting Town Engineer could not easily trace his records. And, this was a confirmation that there were insufficient funds to support physical planning in Paidha. This finding was a confirmation to the question that was posed in Chapter Three – whether data and/or information was readily available in Paidha.

V. RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION

While the critical physical planning issues found out in Paidha cannot be exported wholesale to other countries, lessons can be learnt from them. In this paper, literature on other countries had been reviewed, so as to analyze the theories and add to the body of empirical knowledge. Many countries, especially within Sub-Saharan Africa, are confronted with similar problems relating to planning process (Inadequate financial resources). The findings, conclusions and recommendations drawn from this study therefore have relevance beyond the study area of Paidha and Uganda.

Theoretical implication

The theoretical basis for physical planning therefore needs to be revisited in order to guide a deeper understanding of the dynamics of physical planning process and how it can be made more effective. McLaughlin's planning process model (1969) that provided a theoretical framework for this study suggests a cyclical planning process as part of physical planning. It is however noted from this study that such a process is not likely for most emerging urban authorities with the obvious alternative of drawing a physical development plan being the more probable outcome of physical planning. This finding is consistent with that of Okpala (2009) but contradicts that of Howard (1965). Planning process therefore does not necessarily offer opportunities for financial resources as suggested by McLaughlin (1969).

Policy implication.

This study has used empirical findings to show that the current physical planning process is not contributing in achieving the anticipated impact. Policy implications from the study findings point to the need for actions to ensure adequate financial resources in planning process. Increasing financial resources can lead to positive impact on urban development. This should be done through prioritisation of physical planning preparation of physical development plans, road infrastructure, equipment, enforcement tools and monitoring of physical development plan compliance.

VI. CONCLUSION

From the analysis and discussions presented, physical planning process as practiced in Paidha is ineffective. It can be concluded that inadequate financial resources was one of the major hindrances to sustainable development of Paidha. It was found for example, due to limited budget, the physical planner lacked basic equipment like computers and storage facility for plans and maps including reports. There is a need to improve the effectiveness of physical planning through adequate financial resources which are the main causes of failure of implementation of physical development plans in Paidha. There ought to be reprioritisation of physical planning and it should operate within its financial limits in order to avoid making unnecessary mistakes.

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