

# Chapter 14

## Exploring the Crowdfunding of Nigerian Volunteer Corps' Efforts in Urban Development

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### ABSTRACT

*In another chapter in this volume the author highlighted the potential role the various volunteer programs are expected to play in promoting urban development in Nigeria. This chapter, advocating urban development alternative to oil as driver of growth, carries the analysis further in three important ways: Firstly, by sharpening the ideas on the ways in which volunteerism enhance governance as the leading component of urban development, the poor state of which intensifies the many challenges. Secondly, the potential impacts of volunteer corps in social, economic, and knowledge development in selected key sub-national and national development problem areas. Thirdly, funding the huge volunteer programs that meets the speed and scale of expected urban development is considered to be beyond the traditional public finance mechanism and need the support of the emerging “alternative finance,” which include but are not limited to crowdfunding to deal with the emerging and persistent development challenges.*

### INTRODUCTION

Since the oil boom of 1970s most Nigerian cities have experienced quantitative onward and upward growth in terms of spatial expansion but without real qualitative development of new technology, new ideas and new ways of doing things. The very few places, like Lagos, that introduced qualitative development- in terms of industrial parks, active innovative startup ecosystem, and high quality real estate project- are clearly reaping the benefits, as their internally generated revenues are the envy of other cities. While Lagos is attracting large numbers of people daily, there are the resources, the job opportunities and expanding utilities to come with the inflow. On the other hand, most other cities have not only large population growth, subserviced significant urban expansion, and lack resources to deal with the persistent high urban poverty, inequality, and rising crime. Thus while these cities' growth was heavily based on the consumption of oil revenues, Lagos ensured local production for internal development.

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The Nigerian Volunteer Scheme, if well managed, can help use the Lagos type solution to urban development to uplift the country's urban system in stages. First, changing perception in consumption-based cities have arisen because of oil wealth, but unlike cities around the world have been the engine of development, these cities have been incapable of improved economic productivity, provide well-paying jobs, lift their citizens out of poverty or ensure a constant supply of essential services. Second, it is hoped that they will help propagate the Lagos type of urbanization model that with well-designed reform, urbanization can be transformative force leading to sustainable economic growth, inclusive social progress, poverty reduction in high environment quality. These can be achieved by, first, by tackling areas of urgent national development needs that are remedial in nature, and, second, by focusing on issues of longer-term development requirement of the nation. Using these measures and with the contributions of the volunteer corps, Nigeria will be able to achieve the type of transformation suggested by the World Bank (2016) in its report: *From oil to cities: Nigeria's next transformation*.

This chapter seeks to carry out deeper analysis on the potential role of the various volunteer programs are expected to play in promoting urban development in Nigeria. First, it aims to sharpen the ideas on the ways in which volunteerism enhance governance as the leading component of urban development, the poor state of which intensifies the many challenges. Second, it analyzes the potential impacts of volunteer corps in social, economic, and knowledge development in selected key sub-national and national development problem areas. Third, it advocates that funding the huge volunteer programs that meets the speed and scale of expected urban development is considered to be beyond the traditional public finance mechanism and need the support of the emerging "alternative finance", which include but not limited to crowdfunding to deal with the emerging and persistent development challenges.

The chapter is structured such that Section 2 discusses volunteerism and national development considering its broad range of components. Section 3 explores the potential impacts of volunteerism at the different levels of Nigerian administrative system. The funding issues are explored in Section 4. Section 5 discusses future research directions, while Section 6 provides some concluding remarks.

## **VOLUNTEERISM AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **Role of Volunteers in the Areas of National Urban Development Needs**

According to UNDESA (2014) world's urban population is projected to receive additional 2.5 billion people by 2050 and nearly 90 per cent of the increase will be in Asia and Africa. The UNDESA projection shows that India, China and Nigeria combined are expected to account for 37 per cent of this global increase by 2050. Further breakdown shows that India will add 404 million urban citizens, China 292 million and, Nigeria, which seems insufficiently prepared for this urban transformation will add 212 million urban residents (World Bank 2016).

To meet the emerging urban development challenges, especially the physical and social infrastructure needs new urban households, as well as the cumulative backlog of the present urban population living in slums, inadequate housing the role of volunteers need to be broadly defined. The lack of effective and accountable governance, for example, can be a barrier to progress, undermining national and local efforts to improve lives and the prospects of communities. For the sustainable development agenda to succeed, improving governance, tackling inequalities, and expanding voice and participation need to be addressed simultaneously. Volunteerism can help by giving voice to the diverse types of stakeholders

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