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Title: I am in the market': a metaphor for settings - based approach to accelerated human development in Nigeria



Nigeria, like most African countries needs home - grown, Continent - friendly, innovative and participatory approaches to accelerated human development. Also, given the nature, extent and seeming endemicity of poverty across gender, age, ethnicity, and worsened by the non - committal implementation of the erstwhile Millennium Development Goals, innovative and omnibus approaches will ensure the successful implementation of the SDGs in Africa.

Poverty, the problem core of hunger, poor health and well being, lack / poor education and slums in urban areas can be reduced considerably by adopting the settings – based approach, using the open - air markets as launch pads. Open – air markets in Africa can be leveraged to encompass inclusion, that is, ‘Leaving no one behind’ and reducing inequalities.

Open – air markets are ubiquitous, and contain the largest concentration of the informal sector of the population who are mostly traders of various categories, hawkers, head load carriers, wheel cart pushers, water vendors, itinerant medicine sellers, cobblers, young and old males, females, the unemployed and the underemployed.

Mile 12 market, Oke –Arin, Idiro and Awolowo markets in Lagos, Nigeria were selected for this study based on their size, prominence and location in Lagos, a mega – city.

For this exploratory and qualitative study, focus group discussions, in – depth interviews and questionnaire administration (local language translation into Yoruba, Hausa, Igbo and Pidgin English) were employed.

Major findings from our study show that underemployment or disguised employment pervades, lack of access to education, health care, food insecurity / hunger, self - medication , despondency , lack of accommodation are the major problems. The educated wholesalers and retailers showed apathy towards the survey.

Government agencies and Civil Society Organisations can adopt markets and provide services such as flexible adult literacy classes, crèches / play areas, health posts, enrolment into the National Health Insurance through daily token contribution, skills acquisition and information/ viewing centres for education / recreation can be provided in markets.

Replicability and ability to generate indicators for increases in literacy rate, economic well being, and health insurance enrolment for a more robust, verifiable, and targeted approach to reducing poverty in Nigeria.