

Narrative Geographies

The Inequality Challenge. Innovative Solutions to a Global Issue

The Challenge

By 2050, being a young, disenfranchised slum dweller will be Nigeria's core urban condition. The future Nigerian city will be both demographically and infrastructurally young. The young are shaping the face of cities across the continent, but are politically under-represented, largely excluded from non-violent political processes in Nigeria and lack spaces for creative civic participation.

The Objective

'Narrative Geographies' is a collaboration between Chicoco Maps, Chicoco Radio and Google Street View Special Collections team. It addresses core drivers of inequality in Nigeria's oil capital, Port Harcourt: the urban majority's lack of voice in municipal decision-making and their underrepresentation in urban planning.

Developing a programme to connect a community media initiative and a participatory mapping project, the project allows residents of the city's informal settlements to voice their experience and put themselves on the map.

The Target Group

This project aims to directly engage young slum dwellers, particularly young women who live in Port Harcourt's informal waterfront settlements. These areas are typically 5m – 15m lower than the rest of the city: low-lying, flood-prone and with poor access, their geographical situation is indicative of their social vulnerability and marginalisation.

Project title	Narrative Geographies
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Country	Nigeria
Implementing Organisation	Collaborative Media Advocacy Platform (CMAP)
Duration	September 2018 – September 2019

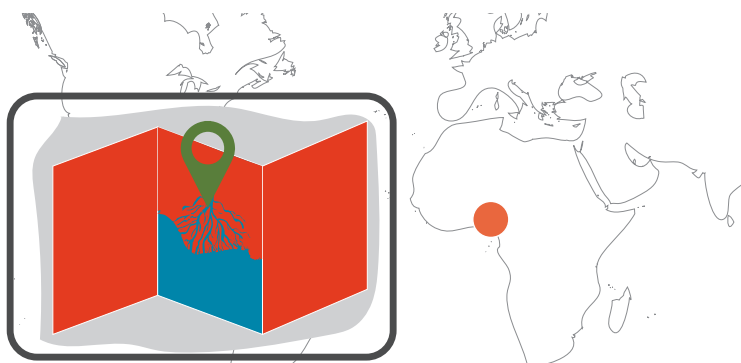
This extreme social and spatial inequality means that young residents in waterfront communities experience disproportionately difficult access to educational and employment opportunities, to health services and to platforms of public media production. These reinforcing inequalities are deeper still for young women and ethnic minorities in already marginalised communities.

The Approach

Today over 70% of Nigeria's city dwellers live in slum conditions. Growing inequality and exclusion in Nigeria's cities leave millions behind, lacking access to services essential to their basic needs and freedoms. If the struggle to overcome deepening social and spatial inequality is to succeed in Nigeria, it must succeed in Nigeria's slums.

The project sets out to change the negative and exclusionary narratives that shape perceptions and policies affecting informal settlements in Port Harcourt, by allowing residents of these communities to gather accurate and appropriate data and to share their own stories.

The project innovates by combining community media and participatory mapping approaches to establish a catalytic relationship between the creation of open public discourse and the co-production of public space. Mapping allows for an evidence-based discourse of engagement, while the community media initiative amplifies that discourse citywide.





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The project is creating a radio drama and discussion series set in the waterfront slums. The series explores residents' everyday experiences of urban design and urban violence, particularly the tensions between state planners and ordinary people who built the communities in which they live, as well the everyday challenges faced by young women in their neighbourhoods.

The mapping team will produce Google Street View maps of communities the drama is set in. Data from mapping will feed into story development. In turn, scenes for the series will be performed and recorded in the streets being mapped and embedded in the Street View archive.

The project mobilises a network of Chicoco Radio community correspondents to gather information around issues of tenure security, community infrastructure, service provision and personal security. This network engages communities in ways state agents cannot. Information is used to make radio programmes that air the views of residents on how their communities are represented in development processes. This information is also analysed by the mapping team and forms the basis of a design brief for a safe, green and inclusive community public space intervention.

Street View provides an ideal platform for the project's goals, seamlessly connecting places with immersive experiences in an intuitive and ubiquitous system. Anyone anywhere in the world will be able to take a virtual tour of the Port Harcourt waterfront communities, bringing greater visibility to the lives and homes of the people there.

The Milestones

So far, the project has achieved the following outputs:

- Cohort of young waterfront residents trained in mobile- and web-based data collection applications and data entry;
- Geo-referenced base maps of five waterfront settlements created by community mapping team;
- 15-part radio drama focused on raising awareness on gendered dynamics of waterfront communities women written by women-led team of waterfront residents;
- Capacity building programme for community-led cohort of actors, directors and technical production team in preparation for radio drama production.

Until the end of the project, the following outcomes are expected:

- A community-based mapping and planning team with improved operational capacity to provide research and design services. Young participants gain geo-spatial mapping skills, as well as audio-visual production skills;
- Demonstration of an effective participatory design process that takes into account community needs and priorities and provides inclusive spaces to gather all residents;
- Production and dissemination of a radio drama that improves operational capacity and increased listenership of a community radio enterprise;
- Production of a micro-site with immersive media and data useful to a range of city stakeholders. Launch a platform and learning ground for a research, visioning and design process that will lead to the production of a City Development Strategy.

About the Inequality Challenge

The Inequality Challenge supports innovative approaches that tackle inequality and the 'leave no one behind' principle of the 2030 Agenda with the ultimate goal to integrate and upscale those approaches into German Development Cooperation's portfolio. Initiated by the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), it supports ten projects in India, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Mongolia, Jordan, Serbia, Nigeria, Mauritania, Brazil and Mexico with up to 100,000 EUR.

GIZ manages the Inequality Challenge. For further information, please visit www.inequality-challenge.com or contact Tiffany Sacher, fundmanagement@giz.de.

Published by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

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As at May 2019

Design Ira Olaleye, Eschborn

GIZ is responsible for the content of this publication.

On behalf of Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

Division 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; reducing poverty and inequality