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EDITORIAL

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INTRODUCTION

Achieving inclusivity in contemporary cities is an elusive fit that has relegated most vulnerable households to the edge of destitution. Migrants, children, women, the elderly, and those living with disabilities are being forced to fend themselves inhumanly as existing supporting mechanisms are failing dismally to respond to their needs. While the magnitude of exclusivity differs significantly across global cities, the reality of the matter is that there is consistent evidence to suggest that most governments are negating their responsibility in this regard. What is more worrying is the inability of some of these governments to provide systematic policy frameworks responsive to vulnerable groups' plight. This is a worrying scenario prevailing in the face of international policy frameworks inaugurated to liberate humanity from all societal ills. The ravaging effect of covid-19 has not only complicated the situation, but further debilitated governments' financial situations to respond to pressing needs. Hence cities remain trapped in this quandary. This first issue of the *Journal of Inclusive Cities and Built Environment* strives to interrogate dimensions of Inclusivity in Contemporary Cities. The issue contains Seven (7) double-blind Peer-reviewed articles covering various aspects of inclusivity within cities. These articles are a collection of theoretical underpinnings that provide insight into inclusivity and supported by empirical evidence from various cities. An overview of papers in this inaugural edition is provided below.

Parke, D and Adebayo, P's article is on *Health, housing, and urban inclusion in the time of covid-19: evidence from Detroit and Durban*. The article explores how COVID-19 has illuminated the intersections between health and housing in the context of equity and inclusive cities. The article unpacks theoretical pathways that link housing to health issues and applies them to the COVID-19 situation. It analyses how drastic measures taken at the height of the pandemic (such as stay-at-home orders, social distancing and lockdowns) impact negatively on poor households such as the homeless and unemployed. More so, the pandemic sharpens the visibility of existing inequitable structures that shape the social and built environment and placed vulnerable populations at heightened risk. Anecdotal evidence from Detroit, Michigan, USA, and Durban, South Africa, allows for a preliminary exploration of these intersections. The paper concludes with recommendations for cities to improve equity and inclusivity.

Alalade, G. and Chipungu, L examine the *Challenges of Vulnerable Immigrants: A Focus on Refugees and Housing, Their Canadian Experience*. This article evaluates the problems of refugees and immigrants in Canada. It shows differentiated integration processes and some form of discrimination experienced by women and the elderly in the Canadian society. More so, it exposes poverty, insecurity and social exclusion among migrants living in precarious housing conditions. The depth of empirical evidence provided in this article challenges the prevailing notion of developed countries being more accommodative of vulnerable groups such as immigrants. More so, it is a pointer to the gross impact of migrations on national fiscus of governments in both developed and developing countries. The article concludes by advocating for the creation of economic opportunities for migrants and refugees supported by accessible information centres manned with officials who understands diverse cultural backgrounds. This would go a long way to alleviate the plight of migrants and refugees.

Naidoo et al. Critique the Modernist Approach to Post-Apartheid Housing Delivery and Urban Design, noting that Apartheid planning approaches have significantly contributed to the lower quality of marginalized groups' dwelling. This observation is based on the continued betterment of dwellings of privileged minorities within the South African City Spaces. In trying to unravel underlying issues, the authors critically review and question the extent to which the socio-spatial manifestations of segregatory design approaches contribute towards creating inclusive urban landscapes that can benefit contemporary South African communities. In their critique, the authors buttress their arguments by using living examples from the South African city of Durban's residential areas and the CBD. They conclude by arguing that lasting solutions to the current spatially distorted urban environments can only be obtained by addressing historical disadvantages that disconnected people's identity and their houses.

Wahab et al. appraised *Community Consultation in Risk Management: Examples from Nigeria*. Their discourse is premised on the notion that "disaster and risk" are a global pandemic and communities are the embodiment of stakeholders well positioned to manage global risk exposures. They argue that the immediate community plays a vital role in risk management. The article explores risk management strategies that were employed in the conflict-ridden state of Borno – Nigeria; where communities took the centre stage to bring no-mancy to their neighbourhoods. The authors contend that extensive consultations with critical stakeholders coupled with a healthy sustained collaboration among the stakeholders led to improved coordination in the fight against insurgency in Borno state communities. Further findings in this article shows that coordinated information dissemination between communities and the Task Force was an effective mechanism for community policing and risk reductions. In their analysis, the authors further noted that a low level of public awareness of disaster risk, unavailability of relevant data, weak capacity and lack of political will (amongst others) are stumbling blocks to risk management in communities. The article concludes by recommending that a community-based disaster risk management approach, which entails intensive and extensive consultation is ideal for building people's coping strategy against disaster risks thereby contributing towards creating safer and resilient communities.

Mbambo et al. analyse *the Use of IBTS to Address Housing Challenges in South Africa: A Case Study of Av Light Steel, Potchefstroom, South Africa*. This paper examines how Innovative Building Technologies (IBTs) could be used to offset the housing backlog and other related challenges in post-apartheid South Africa. The key areas of assessment included in this article are the affordability of building material, the time-frame for construction, and the system's sustainability. The study uses AV Light Steel and its sister company, Tshitshirisang Construction Company, as a case study from among the active IBT system manufacturers that use light steel for housing production in South Africa. Using empirical evidence obtained through participatory observation and semi-structured interviews with system producers, officials and beneficiaries of IBT products, the authors argue that beneficiaries attested to the efficacy of the IBT built houses. While the authors contend that IBTs can be used in solving the housing backlog and other related housing challenges, there is still need to market the products so that they can obtain buy-in from various stakeholders involved in housing production.

Ogunmodede, O and Olufemi, O focus on *Safeguarding the Food Basket From Oil Pollution In Nigeria: Post-Oil City Perspective*. This article argues that the extent of ecological and health damage of oil spills, and pollution in Nigeria is unquantifiable. Such oil pollution has resulted in systematic degradation of the environment, health, livelihoods and food systems of people residing in oil spill areas. In their bid to determine the extent of damage, the authors used secondary data reviews on oil spills. They contend that decades of environmental inequities significantly contributed to oil spills, environmental toxicity, contamination, and affects food and people's health in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Further findings revealed that oil spills result in the collapse of the local economy and negatively impacts on lives and livelihoods by stifling food production and food security. Above all, it is envisaged that oil spills have substantial health implications both for humans in the region and the ecosystems. The paper concludes by advocating for an inclusive approach that detoxifies the environment in the post-oil city thereby preserving livelihoods and health, restoring human dignity and promoting environmental justice.

Finally, **Gondwe, J. and Manda, M.** focused on *Localizing Children's Play Spaces Through The Child-Friendly City Lens: Towards Children's Inclusivity In Mzuzu City, Malawi*. The paper draws on a review of childhood discourses on child-focused literature and content analysis of some of Malawi's planning instruments to argue that Mzuzu City is not a child-friendly city. Specifically, the planning instruments that include planning law, national urban policy, the planning guide book and Mzuzu city structure plan that dictate public space apportioned for various activities are noted to fulfill the needs and aspirations of adults. Furthermore, even though a malleable definition of childhood is likely to accommodate the lived experiences of children living in the City, child agency is conspicuously absent. This paper suggests that there is a need to reframe these planning instruments to reimagine the built environment to capture the needs and aspirations of children as it does for adults.

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