



## Eastern Africa Journal of Contemporary Research (EAJCR)

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#### **Article information:**

To cite this article:

Pambila, G. F., & Kazaura, G. W. (2025). Communication channels and stakeholders' participation practices in master planning and implementation processes in Tanzania. *Eastern Africa Journal of Contemporary Research*, 2025(1), 31–52.

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The Eastern Africa Journal of Contemporary Research (EAJCR) is both an online (ISSN: 2663-7367) and print (ISSN: 2663-7359) double-blind peer-reviewed quarterly journal published by the Directorate of Research and Publications of Greta University, Kenya.

EAJCR aims at advancing the frontiers of knowledge by publishing contemporary multidisciplinary conceptual/ theoretical and empirical research articles as well as case studies and book reviews.

# Communication Channels and Stakeholders Participation Practices in Master Planning and Implementation Processes in Tanzania

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## Abstract

*Communication is one of the significant pillars of effective stakeholder participation. However, there is a limited study of how planning systems communicate with stakeholders in the master planning and implementation processes in Sub Saharan Africa (SSA). This paper assesses how the City Council of Dodoma (CCD) communicated with stakeholders, particularly the local community during the preparation of the 2019 Dodoma master plan. A mixed research approach and a case study strategy were deployed. Qualitative and quantitative data were collected using semi-structured and structured questionnaires which were then analysed using content analysis and descriptive statistics. The study findings revealed a severe communication breakdown as 97 percent and 100 percent of the interviewed households at Madukani and Msalato wards respectively were not informed about the 2019 Dodoma master plan. Shockingly, 96 percent and 100 percent of households at Madukani and Msalato wards respectively did not attend public hearings in 2019, coupled with low understanding of the master plan. This signifies that open communication and local community inclusion in decision-making were marginally cherished in the master planning and implementation processes. The practice by the CCD technocrats counters the Communicative and Collaborative Planning Theory. Therefore, the study findings call for effective communication with the local community using formal and informal communication channels.*

**Keywords:** *Communication, Land use, Master planning, Participation, Stakeholders*

## 1. Introduction

Effective communication is a key component in the participation process because avoiding it



is likely to have a great effect on city development (UN-Habitat, 2024). Communication channels are an important component for information dissemination in the planning and implementation processes of physical plans (Lin, 2023; UN-Habitat, 2024). Communication channels include websites, social media, journals and newspapers, physical posters, digital forums, and events (Kopáček, 2021; Lin, 2023).

Despite the importance of communication in the planning and implementation processes of physical planning, it remains a challenging phenomenon between the planning systems and the citizens (Kopáček, 2021; Lin, 2023). Experiences from the Netherlands and Norway show that the gap between desired and actual participation is contributed to ineffective communication. Often a one-way flow of information from decision-makers to the citizens exacerbates a lack of assurance whether the citizens' ideas and concerns are taken into account (Bolt & Jong, 2021).

Experience from Croatia, shows that effective two-way communications with stakeholders early in the planning process enable stakeholders to understand the plan, especially the cost and benefits, and align with their interests, thus leading to a spatial plan with a high level of social acceptance (Lovrić & Lovrić, 2018). Communication challenges in the planning process can be addressed through the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), such as crowdsourcing (use of the internet, social media, and smartphones), Public Participation GIS (PPGIS), participatory GIS (PGIS) and Volunteered Geographic Information (VGI) (Kantola, 2021; Kopáček, 2021). Technological advancement has increased communication and interactions between the general public, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and governments in policy and planning processes (Kantola, 2021; Kopáček, 2021; Lin, 2023).

However, technology has been limited to some of the local community members who are either not able to access it or the system is being too technical to be understood and followed, especially by the aged groups (Kopáček, 2021; Smørdal et al., 2016). The challenge for effective information dissemination remains to invent the technical tools that enable have and have-nots to access, afford, and participate in urban planning decision-making processes (Kantola, 2021; Smørdal et al., 2016).

The literature in sub-Saharan Africa shows that professionals do not provide adequate information to stakeholders given the fact that stakeholders, especially the local community, often have limited information which leads to unequal knowledge and bargaining power in the planning and decision-making processes (Echendu, 2023; Lin, 2023). It is highly contested how to get the public involved in the decision-making process due to ineffective communication (Adjei Mensah et al., 2017; Lin, 2023). Technocrats tend to block communication by making complex plans that cannot be followed by the local community (Echendu, 2023; Nnkya, 2007).

The master planning approach originated in the Global North in the 20th century as a planning tool to guide urban growth and development (Fainstein, 2010). The Master planning approach was practiced on the top-down coupled with rigid land use zoning (Fainstein, 2010; Watson, 2009c). Rigid zoning regulations that are not pro-communication to the local community have contributed to master plan violations in many parts of the world (Echendu, 2023; Wapwera,



Due to the ineffectiveness of master planning as a planning tool, the paradigm shift from the top-down to bottom-up planning approach was adopted from the 1960s to 1970s in Global North (Fainstein, 2010). However, stakeholders' participation is constrained by a lack of transparency, democracy, accountability, and elite concerns are prioritised at the expense of disadvantaged community members (Follador et al., 2020; Lilja, 2017; Yuan et al., 2020).

In sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), the master plan has been used as a planning tool in many countries since the colonial regime and after the post-colonial era (Harrison & Croese, 2022). However, master plans in SSA have less taken on board the social, economic, and cultural aspects (Nunbogu et al., 2018; Pambila et al., 2023). Master plans in the SSA cities are subjected to various challenges, amongst others are, low levels of local community participation, the top-down planning tradition of bureaucrats, and ideas ineffectively integrated into the decision-making process (Abubakar & Doan, 2017; Cirolia & Berrisford, 2017; Kaamah et al., 2023; Korah et al., 2017; Loh, 2011; Pambila et al., 2023; Watson, 2014a).

Equally, master plans in Tanzania have been constrained by a pair of challenges, which include ineffective stakeholder participation, poor technological resources, and financial resources (Kasala, 2015; Lazaro & Yang, 2019). Due to these challenges, cities, municipalities, and towns in Tanzania have been developed inconsistently with master plans, coupled with various challenges such as encroachment of ecological areas, informal settlement development, violation of land uses, and zoning regulations (Magina et al., 2020; Peter & Yang, 2019). Amongst other factors, this situation has been attributed to a lack of honest mediation and inclusion of all stakeholders in the planning and implementation processes (Namangaya & Mushi, 2019).

This research contributes to urban planning literature in SSA by highlighting critical communication deficiencies in master planning and implementation processes. Scant studies have documented the weakness of planning systems to ensure effective communication in planning and implementation of physical plans in SSA. The communication failure has led to the marginalisation of key stakeholders, particularly the local community.

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

Despite the adaptation of the strategic planning approach in Tanzania since the 1990s, which was then cemented by the enactment of the Urban Planning Act No. 8 of 2007, the level of stakeholders' participation in master planning and implementation processes is less understood. There is limited knowledge of how the planning authorities, particularly the City Council of Dodoma (CCD), communicated with stakeholders, especially the local community during the preparation and implementation of the 2019 Dodoma master plan.

### **1.2 Aim of the Study**

Accordingly, this research paper analyses the communication channels and participation tools used, turnouts during the master planning process, and the level of understanding of the master plan by the local community. The findings were then discussed by narrating their implications and the way forward to improving communication and stakeholder participation



in master planning and implementation processes. The next section discusses conceptual and theoretical perspectives underpinning this study.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Theoretical and Conceptual Background

#### 2.1.1 Communication in Urban Planning

The planning systems are responsible for ensuring effective communication channels, given that if they are distorted, whether deliberately or otherwise, the whole process of stakeholder participation will lack common understanding and consensus building among stakeholders (Ariti et al., 2018; Lin, 2023; Oliveira & Hersperger, 2018). Without effective communication, work done in the planning office would be useless, like 'a play on opening night when no one came' (Forester, 1980).

However, communication channels are frequently practiced on a one-way flow of information—from officials to citizens with limited or no channel to provide feedback, no power for negotiation, information given at late hours, and people have little opportunity to influence the plan (Ariti et al., 2018; Kopáček, 2021; Lin, 2023; Mahjabeen et al., 2009).

The role of planners' knowledge can often be uninfluential if it does not practically take into consideration political communication such as lobbying, maintaining trust and listening, and addressing the concerns of the citizens (Forester, 1980). Technically oriented planning actions like 'You don't need to get involved'; 'You can depend on me'; 'I will consult when appropriate', these statements may lead to inefficient plan implementation (Forester, 1980).

Information sharing determines the power balance among stakeholders, especially the have-nots in the planning process (Arnstein, 1969; Oliveira & Hersperger, 2018). Access to information about political issues and the technical aspects of planning makes the citizens actively participate in the decision-making process (Arnstein, 1969). Informal channels enhance information dissemination to the public in participatory processes (Kopáček, 2021). Effective communication and collaboration resolve issues of concern in society, given that no single institution can find and implement solutions to the problems confronting society (Nnkya, 2007; Oliveira & Hersperger, 2018).

#### 2.1.2 Master Planning

The master plan has been discussed by various authors, including Nyiransabimana et al. (2019) and Gumel et al. (2020), as a comprehensive long-range document that guides urban growth and development up to 20 years. In its early days, the master plan was characterized by rigid land use zoning, which excluded the rights of marginalized groups (Fainstein, 2010). The rigidity of master planning was a result of technocratic misconceptions that planning and design are technical work that does not require inclusion of the local community needs, such as social and economic aspects (Mwathunga & Donaldson, 2018; Todes et al., 2010).

It has been reported that technocrats in the Global South value modernity, such as valuing



the orderly, aesthetic, and beautiful and fantasy cities, at the expense of the livelihoods of have-nots (Mwathunga & Donaldson, 2018; Watson, 2014b). Planning in the Global South has been dominated by command and control, demolitions, and evictions of the urban poor (Mwathunga & Donaldson, 2018; Watson, 2009b). Many countries in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) continue to prepare master plans as fashion regardless of the limited implementation.

Failure to consider the reality on the ground, especially the livelihood sources of the urban poor in developing countries has contributed to informal settlement development, traffic congestion, encroachment of ecological areas, cities developed in the form of haves and have-nots, slums development, and the like (Gumel et al., 2020).

In Tanzania, the master plan has been criticised for being ineffective, rigid, autocratic, robotic, and unfriendly to developers (Halla, 2007) which led to the Tanzanian government adopting a strategic urban planning approach in the 1990s. However, in 2007 the Ministry of Lands, Housing, and Human Settlements Development returned to the master plan as an official planning tool accompanied by a new law—the Urban Planning Act No. 8 of 2007 and its guidelines, which require planning systems to effectively engage stakeholders in preparation and implementation of general and detailed planning schemes (Kasala, 2015).

The law has been in operation for almost two decades; however, to what extent the law has addressed the previous challenges of ineffective communication and stakeholder engagement is little known. This study seeks to understand whether stakeholders' participation practices conducted by the City Council of Dodoma (CCD) as per the Urban Planning Act No. 8 of 2007 valued communication, given that information is a source of power.

### **2.1.3 Community Participation**

Stakeholders' participation evolved in the 1960s-1970s in the United States of America and European cities as a result of civic movements to fight for their rights infringed by technocrats during the modernist era—the time when autocratic planning dominated the planning process (Fainstein, 2010; Mwathunga & Donaldson, 2018; Watson, 2009a). Community participation /citizen participation has been widely expressed by many scholars; for instance, (Ostad-Ali-Askari et al., 2021; Willems et al., 2017) refer to the engagement of the community in the decision - making of development projects, which is likely to have costs or benefits to their way of living.

According to Silverman et al. (2020), effective community participation considers important elements such as collective idea generation, planning, decision-making, implementation, and evaluation. However, community participation is constrained by poor communication, lack of awareness, lack of education, lack of transparency, power imbalance, lack of trust, resource deficits, and diverse interests among stakeholders, and lack of confidence to influence changes (Echendu, 2023; Willems et al., 2017).

Democratizing public debate requires special abilities from planners, such as diplomatic listening skills, acknowledging, negotiating, mediating, probing, inventing, reconciling, and



facilitating (Forester, 1994). The role of planners is to make sure the planning process is as inclusive as possible despite the complexity (Forester, 1999). Effective community participation is determined by the quality of communication, which has to do with early information provision when the plans/projects are at the initial stage and open for inputs from diverse stakeholders (Ariti et al., 2018; Echendu, 2023; Kopáček, 2021).

#### **2.1.4 The Communicative and Collaborative Planning Theory (CCPT)**

The CCPT theory is centered on open communication and discussion that focus on attaining a shared understanding and agreement (Lin, 2023). The theory assumes that communication in the planning process cannot be inhibited by power, self-interest, or ignorance (Lin, 2023; Tewdwr-Jones & Allmendinger, 1998). The CCPT underpins negotiations and collaboration of diverse stakeholders in the planning process (Adjei Mensah et al., 2017; Lin, 2023).

The effective collaborative planning values diverse information from diverse sources, particularly from the citizens (Kantola, 2021). Two-way shared decision-making, well-informed, consulted, and empowered to take initiatives and engage in decision-making that affects their livelihoods is the key focus of the CCPT theory (Adjei Mensah et al., 2017).

The theory, however, is argued on how to ensure the local community members engaged in decision-making due to the power imbalance of technocrats to disseminate information (Hong, 2020). Often, a piece of information that flows from the planning systems to the local community is characterized by either a lack of feedback or being given lately which leads to a limited chance for citizens to participate and influence the decisions of the development plans (Kopáček, 2021; Lin, 2023; Mahjabeen et al., 2009).

Therefore, this theory fits because the study assesses whether open communication, community inclusions, planners attitudes, participation mechanisms, and education to the local community were taken on board by the CCD and task force officials in the planning and implementation of the 2019 Dodoma master plan. The next section discusses the methods and tools used to execute this study.

### **3. Methodology**

This study used a mixed research approach whereby qualitative and quantitative data were gathered from key informants and household interviews. The responses from the two data sets gave a complete picture of how communication and stakeholder participation were generally carried out. The resolution was in line with Creswell (2009), that deploying a mixed research method provides a more complete understanding of research issues than applying only one.

The study used the City Council of Dodoma (CCD) as a case study whereby an in-depth evaluation was conducted, especially, on how the local community was informed during the preparation and implementation of the 2019 Dodoma master plan. The selection of the CCD considered a couple of parameters, including a recently prepared master plan (five years ago), ineffective implementation of the previous master plans (the presence of informal



settlements in the city), among the few cities with early (1976) master plans, the presence of a special organ (CDA), and the population increase due to the shift of the government activities from Dar es Salaam (Business City) to Dodoma (Government City).

On the other hand, the selection of Madukani and Msalato as subcases considered a couple of criteria. First, Madukani ward is located at the Central Business District (CBD) with high population density (20,175 persons per square Kilometres), high land value, and area proposed for redevelopment plan—construction of high-rise buildings. Basically, the implementation of the redevelopment plan requires diverse stakeholders' participation, such as landholders, government, and public and private institutions. Furthermore, the domination of horizontal development, in contrast to the high-rise buildings as per the 2019 Dodoma master zoning regulations, catalysed the attention to select this ward. Moreover, using this subcase (ward) was regarded as information-rich case because implementation of the redevelopment plan is a cross-cutting task that requires extensive stakeholders' participation.

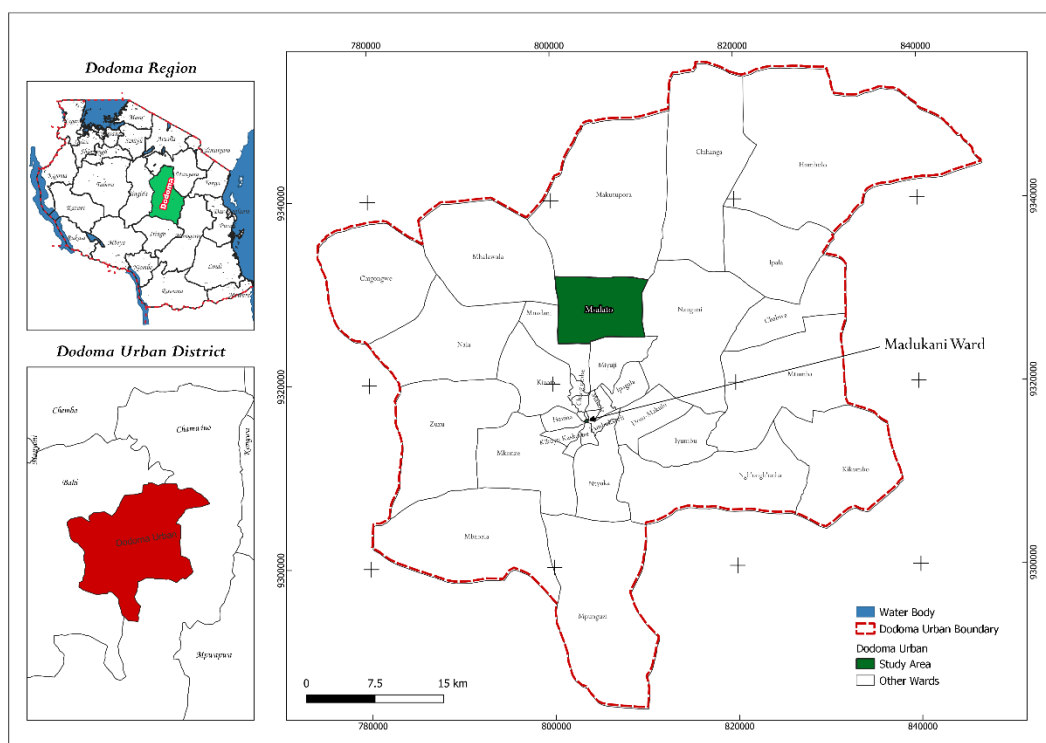
Second, selection of the Msalato ward considered a couple of criteria, such as the presence of conflicting land use (Special Economic Zone) proposed without mutual understanding with. Landholders, located at the peri-urban area (12 km) from the city centre, and the ward is informally developed. Others include the ward being located along the Dodoma-Arusha road corridor that forms the Great-North road characterised by high land value compared to other road corridors in the City Council of Dodoma (Nyakamwe, 2021), the presence of national strategic projects such as Msalato International Airport which led to the displacement of landholders, loss of livelihood (land), and social services such as schools and health centres.

Therefore, the use of the two subcases (Madukani and Msalato) was crucial to compare participation of the households, local leaders, and the general public in the preparation of the 2019 Dodoma master plan. The two wards had different land use zoning, different levels of development, and different scenarios of how the master plan affects their livelihoods. The findings of the two subcases gave a good testimony of the local community participation in the preparation of the 2019 Dodoma master.

The City Council of the Dodoma (CCD) is among the seven districts of Dodoma region—the national capital city of Tanzania, having a population of 765,179 (Census, 2022). The city is located at a Latitude of 5° 48' to 6° 28' and a Longitude of 35° 32' to 36 8'. The city has an area of 2,615 square Kilometres (**Figure 1**).







**Figure1:** Location map of the study area

Source: Own Construct Based on the National Bureau of Statistics Shapefiles, 2022

The study deployed both probability and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling involved household interviews conducted at the Madukani and Msalato wards. Sample size was estimated using Yamane's (1967) formula:  $n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$  with error term of 10%. Statistical estimation considered information gathered from the Tanzania Census of 2012<sup>1</sup>. The number of households was used to estimate the probability sample size because household heads are the ones expected to take part in the decision-making process through public hearings. According to the census, the numbers of households at Madukani and Msalato wards were 563 and 1,493 respectively. Therefore, statistical estimation shows that a total number of eighty-five (85) and ninety-four (94) households were supposed to be interviewed at Madukani and Msalato wards, respectively. However, a total of 94 and 127 households were interviewed at Madukani and Msalato, which is greater than the estimated sample size to minimise the bias of information.

Non-probability sampling involved a couple of officials based on their roles and professionalism. This was in line with Guetterman (2015) and Patton (1990), that purposive sampling is done by selecting officials based on their roles and expertise. Officials selected were from the following institutions namely, the Regional Town Planning Office (RTPO), the President Office, Regional Administrative and Local Government (PO-RALG), the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Human Settlement Development (MLHHSD), the private sector, and

<sup>1</sup> The 2012 Census was used because; the new Census results 2022 were not officially released by the government when this study was designed and the data collection exercise was executed.

agencies, Ward councilors, Ward Executive Officers (WEOs), Mtaa chairpersons, Mtaa Executive Officers (MEOs), Mtaa councilors members, and Extension Officers.

Therefore, a total of 262 respondents were interviewed in the following distribution: Madukani households (94), Msalato households (127), Officials (24), Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with fifteen (15) participants, and Councilors (2). A total of 8 and 7 FGD participants were involved at Madukani and Msalato respectively. The FGD members include Ward Executive Officers (WEO), Mtaa Executive Officers (MEO), Extension Officers, Mtaa councilor's members, Ward police officer, and Mtaa Chairpersons.

The selection of the FGD and officials was based on practical experience and constraints. For instance, the criteria for selecting the FGDs members were either being the elected leaders or officials working at the ward level. These participants (15) were available when I conducted the interviews at the ward level, while only one participant was sick at Madukani ward, who couldn't attend the interview. Likewise, the twenty-four (24) officials interviewed were based on their roles, power, and influence towards master planning and implementation. Again, the availability and cooperation—being ready to respond to the interview questions were crucial factors to reach this figure. For instance, one of the practical constraints during officials' interview was the lack of cooperation from four (4) officials at the CCD who did not respond to interview questions despite going to their offices for more than three months. However, the lack of cooperation of the few officials did not affect the validity of the data because the majority of key officials cooperated.

Interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and Document reviews were chiefly deployed as data collection methods. The officials' interview was guided by semi-structured questionnaires, while the household interview deployed structured questionnaires (closed questions). The study deployed also secondary data (document review) such as published articles, policies and regulations, reports, and guidelines to enrich the findings collected from the households and key informants.

On the one hand, validity of this study was first ensured by gathering both qualitative and quantitative data. The data collected from the lower level—households in the form of numeric were compared (triangulated) to textual data collected from experts in the public, private sector, and high-level (Ministries). On the other hand, reliability of data was guaranteed by deploying a couple data collection methods such as interview, FGD, and document review. Further, reliability was ensured through independently sampling, data collection, and analysis from the two subcases and key informants, which were then compared (triangulated) to see the holistic picture of stakeholders' participation. The high rate of similarities of information from a couple of respondents meant a high rate of validity (genuineness) and reliability (robustness of the methods used).

Tools used for data collection are such as a Kobo Toolbox, tape recorder, and telephone. Kobo Toolbox fast-tracked and simplified the data collection exercise as there was no paperwork involved during the household interview. The principal and assistant researchers were able to use Android smartphones to collect data though the link prepared and shared by principal researcher. The principal researcher was even able to remotely track the data



The tape recorder was a crucial tool that recorded audios during in-depth interviews with key informants. This tool helped the researcher to get everything said by the respondents, which later was transcribed to get its meaning and implications for this study. Mobile phones were also a very useful tool to call officials to arrange for meetings and interviews and also to seek clarifications of some issues during data cleaning and analysis.

Qualitative data were analysed using content analysis (general important message). Data were coded and organised manually using a thematic approach. The themes (variables) such as information dissemination, attendance in public hearings, and level of understanding were categorised separately in the matrix table after being transcribed from the recorded audios. The information was analysed based on convergence and divergence arguments of the different interviewees.

Besides, quantitative data were analysed by using descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentages with the help of SPSS<sup>2</sup> and Microsoft Excel. SPSS and Microsoft Excel complemented each other in the analysis process. For instance, SPSS was greatly used to analyse descriptive data such as frequency, percentage, and cross-tabulate a couple of variables, while Microsoft Excel was greatly used to enhance the quality of graphics of figures and tables produced by SPSS. The frequency, percentage, and figures were all used to enhance the presentation of the findings.

Qualitative (textual) data and quantitative (numeric) data complemented each other to substantiate the claim. Furthermore, the discussion part linked the findings with other scholars who wrote related studies. The data was presented as text, tables, and figures as discussed in the results section.

## **4. Results and Discussion**

### **4.1 Communication channels and participation tools used**

According to the City Mayor and the CCD Town Planning Officer, the main communication channels used were invitation letters, advertisements, Radio, and Television. However, the responses from household interviews show that 97 percent and 100 percent of households in the Madukani and Msalato wards respectively, were not informed about the 2019 Dodoma master plan. 3 percent of the interviewed households at Madukani ward got information through radio.

The lack of information to the majority of local communities was supported by the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) members at Madukani and Msalato wards, who were also not informed about the 2019 Dodoma master plan. The feedback from the FGD members was shocking because they were either representatives of the local community or officials serving at the grassroots level. The expectation that they would have information was not the case; the FGD

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<sup>2</sup> Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS)



members at Madukani and Msalato and the key informant further said:

“I have been here for more than fifteen years, but I never received any information about the master plan public hearing.” (Madukani Mtaa Chairperson, April 2023)

“It is the first time we hear about the Dodoma master plan, maybe we will learn from you.” (FDG members at Msalato ward, April 2023)

“I think the means of information dissemination were not effective because the turnouts during the public hearing were very low.” (Technical staff member of the master plan task force, June 2023)

While the majority of landowners and the general community were not informed in both wards, ward councilors of Madukani and Msalato wards had information about the 2019 Dodoma master plan got it through an invitation letter. This implies that the CCD officials gave more priority to councilors perhaps because they were the council decision-makers leaving the majority of the local community and the general public uninformed.

Besides, participation tools used were public hearings, consultative meetings, and household surveys. According to the CCD Town Planning Officer, public hearings were conducted in all (41) wards. The consultative meetings involved a few selected stakeholders in the city with power, stakes, and influence on the master plan. The household survey was administered to a few wards for the sake of collecting socioeconomic data such as housing, traffic count, and access to social services.

However, three (3) household members out of four (4) who attended public hearings at Madukani said that they were listeners /observers, and one (1) asked questions. They added that only one public hearing was summoned, and landowners did not have enough time for dialogue. The participation tools were argued by some key informants that they were not enough to make the local community understand and influence the plan. Asserting the claims, some key informants commented:

“The effectiveness of public hearings and consultative meetings depends on frequency, especially the number of the meetings summoned. One meeting conducted in the wards was not enough to reach a wider part of the community members” (The Registrar of Town Planning Registration Board (TPRB), April 2023).

“Only displaying readymade hardcopy land use maps in the general meetings was not informative enough to make stakeholders, especially laypersons, understand, comment accordingly, and influences their interests.” (Technical staff of Master Plan taskforce, June 2023)

Comments from different stakeholders vindicate that there were communication failures during the preparation of the 2019 Dodoma master plan. Ineffective dispatching of information to the majority of the local community was against the *Urban Planning Act No. 8 of 2007, Section 11 (2)* and the Sustainable Development Goal No. 11, which emphasises the engagement of stakeholders to attain inclusive and sustainable cities. Therefore, the practices



of the CCD and task force officials of limiting information constrained the local community to take part in the planning and implementation processes. This incident shows that the communication channels deployed by the CCD officials were ineffective to reach a large part of the local community members.

#### 4.2 Turnouts during the master planning process

The 2019 Dodoma master plan proceeding depicts a poor attendance of the local community during the public hearings at the Madukani and Msalato wards. Less than 10 percent of the households attended the public hearings in both wards. This situation certainly affected the community to directly influence the 2019 Dodoma master plan. These attendances mark very low turnouts and prove the weakness of information dissemination to the local community by the CCD officials (**Figure 2**).

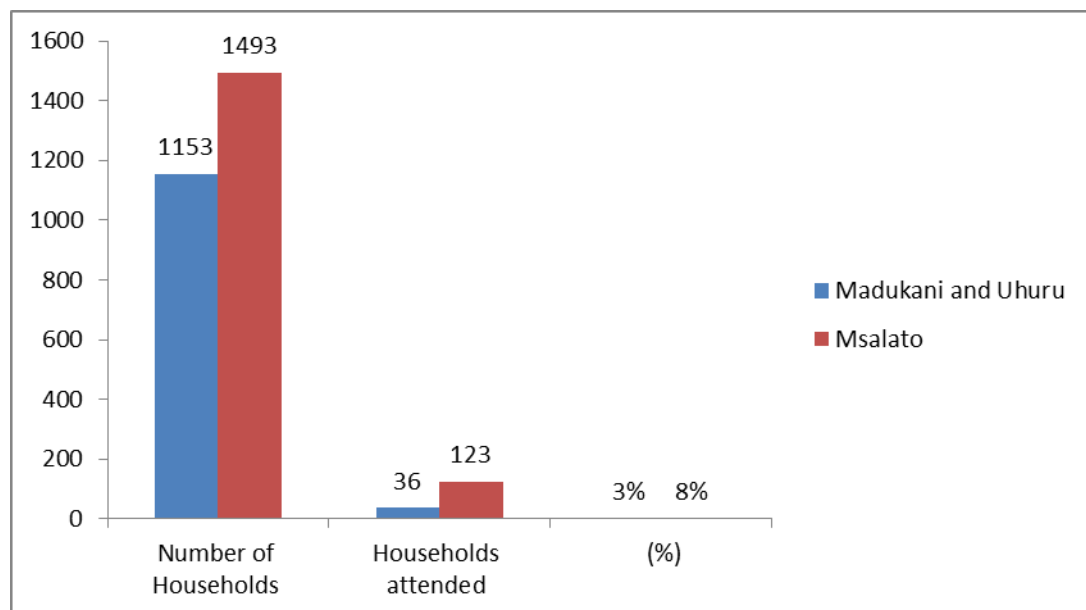


Figure 2: Turnouts of public hearings at Madukani and Msalato wards in 2019  
Source: The Master Plan Proceeding of 2019

Low turnouts depicted in the master plan proceeding was supported the feedback from the household interviews whereby 96 percent and all (100 percent) landowners interviewed at Madukani and Msalato did not attend public hearings (**Figure 3**). It was mentioned during household interviews that among the major reasons for not attending the public hearing were a lack of information (**Table 1**). Shockingly, all Mtaa and ward leaders except councilors at the Madukani and Msalato wards did not attend the public hearings. Asserting the foregoing, the FGD members said that:

"We never attended a public hearing at our ward; it is the first time we have heard from you about the Dodoma master planning" (the FGD members at Madukani and Msalato, April 2023).

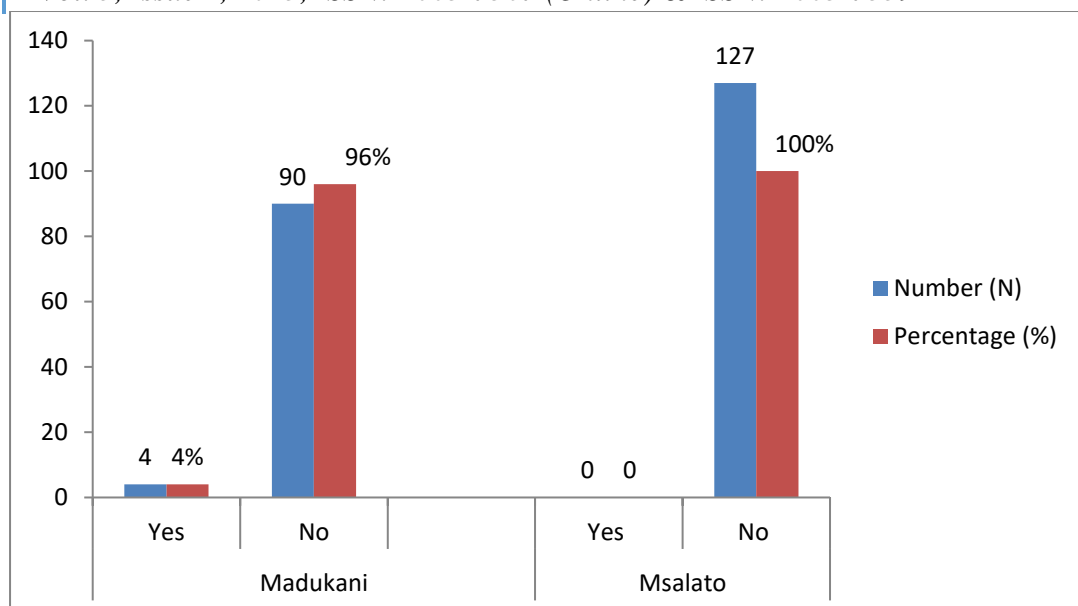


Figure 3: Households responses of attendance in public hearings in 2019  
Source: Fieldwork survey, 2023

Table 1: Reasons for not attending public hearing

Ward	Reasons	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
Madukani	I had no information	87	92.5
	I had another commitment	2	2.1
	Always planners are doing for us	3	3.2
	Not interested to attend	1	1.1
	No public hearing conducted	1	1.1
<b>Total</b>		<b>94</b>	<b>100</b>
Msalato	I had no information	126	99.2
	No public hearing conducted	1	0.8
<b>Total</b>		<b>127</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Own construct based on field survey in Dodoma, May 2023

The lack of information among community members was also supported by all (24) key informants interviewed. The officials noted that ineffective sensitization and information dissemination by the CCD officials was the main source of poor attendance (**Table 2**). The responses testify to an information breakdown between the CCD (source) and destination (the local community).

Table 2: Key informants views on poor attendance in public hearings

Reason	Frequency (N=24)	Percentage (%)
Ineffective sensitization and information dissemination	24	100
Poor timing of public hearings	13	54
Life hardships	10	42
Lack of interests	3	13
Inadequate number of meetings conducted	2	8
Roles not clearly stated	2	8
Political issue	1	4

Source: Fieldwork survey May 2023

### 4.3 The level of understanding of the master plan by the local community members

80 percent and 58 percent of landowners interviewed at Madukani and Msalato had more than 20 years in the city. However, their level of understanding of the master plan was extremely very low (**Table 2**). Again, 93 percent and 100 percent did not know when the master plan was prepared, the contents, and its significance to the city's growth and development.

Table 3: Time stayed in the city and the understanding of the master plan

Time stayed in the city	Understanding (Madukani)		Understanding (Msalato)	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
1-5	-	3	-	10
6-10	-	3	-	15
10-15	-	3	-	20
16-20	-	2	-	8
20+	7	76	-	74
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>127</b>
<b>Percentage (%)</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Fieldwork survey, 2023

It was anticipated that being in the city for a long time would have increased their level of understanding, given that the 2019 Dodoma master plan was preceded by three master plans of 1976, 1988, and 2010. The low understanding depicts the limited education campaigns by the CCD to the local community on the importance of a master plan to the city's development. The few with little understanding got it through individual initiatives like consulting experts and some colleagues who knew it. **Figure 4** depicts the lack of education campaigns as the main reason for the low understanding among the households at Madukani and Msalato wards, while **Table 3** testifies to the lack of education provision to the households by the CCD as it was measured by using a Likert scale.

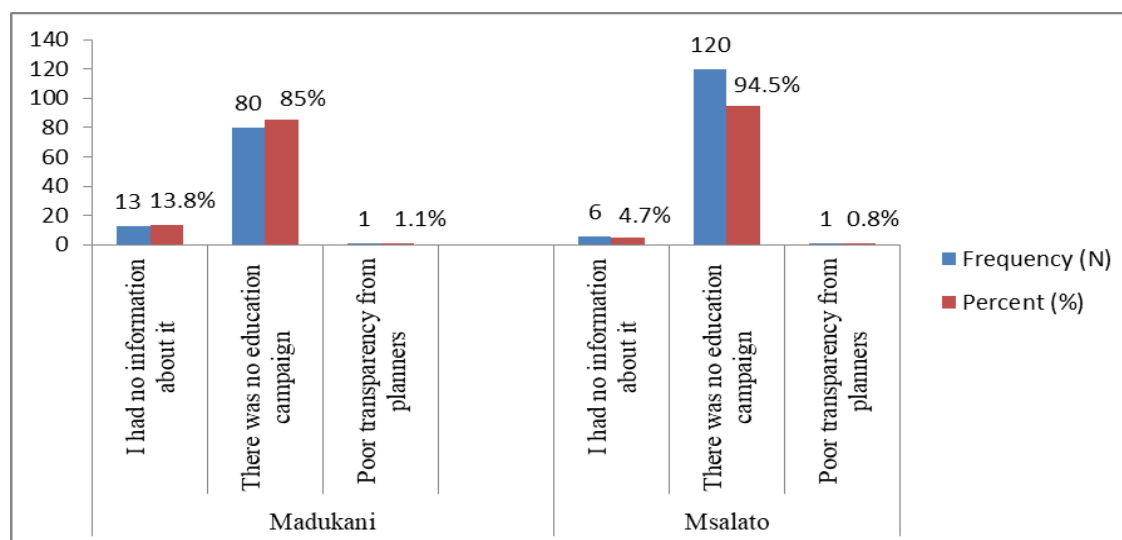


Figure 4: The households' views on low understanding

Source: Fieldwork survey, 2023

Table 4: Responses of landowners about education provision by the CCD

Ward	Response	Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
Madukani	Strongly disagree	89	94.7
	Disagree	3	3.2
	Neutral /undecided	2	2.1
	Agree	-	-
	Strongly agree	-	-
<b>Total</b>		<b>94</b>	<b>100</b>
Msalato	Strongly disagree	111	87.4
	Disagree	14	11.0
	Neutral /undecided	2	1.6
	Agree	-	-
	Strongly agree	-	-
<b>Total</b>		<b>127</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Fieldwork survey, 2023

Irrespective of the low understanding of the local community, the CCD Town Planning Officer claimed that education was provided during public hearings. This practice perhaps was not enough to give a chance for the local community to understand, argue, and contribute, as the majority was not knowledgeable about the master plan. Unfortunately, it was noted that the public hearings were done once, which is against the UPA No. 8 of 2007, which requires conducting two public hearing meetings—one meeting at an early stage and the second one after the plan has been scrutinised by the Director of the Urban Planning of the MLHHS. Lack of education was also proved by statements from the Msalato ward councilor and some key informants who observed that:

“Definitely, the normal landowner cannot prepare the master plan, but technocrats were supposed to make sure normal citizens understand what was proposed and their prospects rather than ignoring them.” (Msalato Ward Councilor, April 2023)

"The Dodoma master plan 2019 lacks local knowledge given the fact that participation did not cover diverse stakeholders and couldn't grasp in-depth insights from the local community" (Senior Town Planning Officer-MLHHS, April 2023)

Generally, the responses show that the 2019 Dodoma master plan was little known by the local community members and grassroots leaders. This implies that the education provided was ineffective and inadequate for the local community members to understand the master planning concept and proposals designated in the 2019 Dodoma master plan and how they would be realised. This is due to little effort invested by the CCD officials to make sure the local communities understand the plan. The next section discusses the findings by linking with other empirical studies.

#### 4.4 Discussion

Effective communication ensures power balance among diverse stakeholders in the planning process (Kopáček, 2021; Lin, 2023). However, communication in Global South particularly the SSA countries lack deliberative democracy associated with lack of matured Civil Society Organisation (CSOs) to ensure the colonial footed planning system is controlled (Lin, 2023). The study by Ariti et al. (2018) reports a serious communication breakdown between the





farmers and government institutions on preparation of master plan in Ethiopia. The lack of effective communication has led to ineffective implementation of the master plan (ibid).

The findings concur with the situation during the preparation of the 2019 Dodoma master plan, whereby the majority of the local community members were not informed about the master planning process. The information dissemination mechanisms used by the CCD such as invitation letters, advertisements, television, and radio could be regarded as ineffective because they left the majority of the local community members uninformed.

It is further argued that consistent communication coupled with feedback and informal means of communication and discussion are crucial to ensure public participation in land use planning (Kopáček, 2021). However, the doings of the CCD officials disagreed with the study by Forester (1980, 1982) that without quality communication, technical information would never be trusted nor cooperated with the citizens. The practices by the CCD officials contravened with the Communicative and Collaborative Planning Theory, which underpins open communication and discussion that focus on shared understanding as an important means of reaching consensus building (Lin, 2023).

Communication with the city inhabitants is integral as they know better their problems, needs, and environment, which simplifies the organisation of land uses in terms of local conditions and proper time for development (Kopáček, 2019). Ineffective communication contributes to a lack of practical knowledge inclusion from diverse stakeholders, lack of plan ownership, and violations of the plan (Adjei Mensah et al., 2017; Namangaya & Mushi, 2019). Uninformed citizens are more likely to engage in environmentally detrimental activities that would impede overall sustainable development visions (Echendu, 2023).

Besides, stakeholders can participate through different techniques and methods such as public hearings, workshops, public exhibitions with mechanisms of feedback and discussion, deliberative forums, formal participatory channels, petitions, Focus Group Discussion, and protests (Echendu, 2023; Lin, 2023). Public hearing is regarded as a traditional method that limits effective stakeholders' participation, as planners tend to withhold incorporating public comments and interests in the decision-making process (Chado & Johar, 2016; Nwachi, 2021).

The ineffectiveness of the public hearing as a chief participation method of the local community could be said to be a case in Dodoma. The responses from the local community and the key informants' revealed that public hearing was not enough to ensure an extensive participation of the local community members, whose majority depend on the informal sector as a source of their livelihood. The master plan agenda was not effectively communicated at the grassroots level which led to the majority of the local community uninformed. This incident is in line with the study by Kaamah et al. (2023) whereby about 98% of the homeowners at Abuakwa in Ghana did not attend the public hearing during the preparation of the land use plan.

Low turnouts in Dodoma could also be linked to the Urban Planning Act No. 8 of 2007, as it doesn't stipulate a minimum number (quorum) of attendees required for the public hearing to



be eligible. The practices support the findings that without introducing measures to control the low turnouts, the power holders normally claim that all stakeholders were considered in the planning process even though it was not the case (Bolt & Jong, 2021; Silverman et al., 2020). The low turnouts in Dodoma are in line with the experience of the SSA countries, as their legal frameworks do not measure the quality or quantity of public participation (Roux et al., 2017).

It was further noted that despite the limitation of public hearings, the CCD did not deploy Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) such as social media, websites, and text messages via mobile phones that would have complemented the face-to-face participation. The planning systems are argued to deploy inclusive, collaborative, and empowering digital tools such as the internet and social media to ensure effective communication in the planning process to address the one-way communication and top-down planning style (Lin, 2023; UN-Habitat, 2022).

Social media has been used in China by citizens, Civil society, professionals, and journalists to establish large-scale social networks in planning process (Lin, 2023). The application of ICT would have allowed participants to participate remotely. This scenario of not using ICT certainly limited important stakeholders to participate, especially the elite, who are often not attending public hearings as it was noted during key informants interview with the Msalato ward councilor. Informal means of communication, especially the use of digital tools ensure effective information dissemination to the key stakeholders rather than relying only on formal ones (Kopáček, 2021). Participation methods that are biased or too demanding technically may lower motivation of stakeholders to participate (Kantola, 2021).

Furthermore, the low understanding of the local community could only be addressed through dedicated educational campaigns (Echendu, 2023; Zaleczna, 2018). Lack of education and awareness are among the limiting factors of the stakeholders, particularly the local community to participate in land use planning (Echendu, 2023). Public participation in planning can be revitalised by better public education on the importance and impacts of the land use plans to city development (Echendu, 2023; UN-Habitat, 2022).

The responses show that the 2019 Dodoma master plan was little known by the local community members and grassroots leaders. This implies that the education provided was ineffective and inadequate for the local community members to understand the plan. This is due to little effort invested by the CCD officials to ensure the local communities understand the plan. Low understanding of the master plan by the majority of the local community in Dodoma supports the studies by Echendu (2023), Abubakar & Doan (2017), Adjei Mensah et al.(2017); Mahjabeen et al. (2009) whereby limited knowledge of the local community contributed to technocrats influencing the final decision of the master plans of River State and Abuja cities, Nigeria; Kumasi city, Ghana; and Sydney Metropolitan city, Australia. Once again, low understanding of the local community in Dodoma opposed the Communicative and Collaborative Planning Theory which pledges for planners to act as knowledge facilitators, organisers, mediators, negotiators, and critical friend (Lin, 2023)



## 5. Conclusion and Recommendation

This study explored communication channels and stakeholders' participation practices in master planning and implementation processes in Tanzania using the City Council of Dodoma (CCD) as the case study. The study specifically analysed the communication channels, participation tools used, turnouts in public hearings, and the level of understanding of the master plan by the local community. The study used a mixed-method approach and case study strategy.

Generally, the findings demonstrate that the preparation of the 2019 Dodoma master plan was flawed due to the severe communication breakdown. Poor communication led to the majority—97 percent and 100 percent of the interviewed households at Madukani and Msalato being uninformed about the 2019 Dodoma master plan. The lack of information led to extremely low turnouts in public hearings, as 96 percent and 100 percent of the interviewed households at Madukani and Msalato wards did not attend the public hearings. Unfortunately, the participation tool used was merely limited to public hearings—a traditional method only—which was not inclusive to the majority of local community members.

There was also low understanding of the master plan by the local community due to a lack of public education and awareness campaigns. Generally, the practices of the CCD officials counter-argue the Communicative and Collaborative Planning Theory which emphasises open communication, planners acting as critical friends, organisers, mediator, and facilitator during the stakeholders' participation process (Lin, 2023).

Therefore, this research paper recommends policymakers and practitioners to design formal and informal communication channels. The communication channels should be widely accessible to diverse stakeholders particularly the local community members, rather than depending only on invitation letters, advertisements, radio, and television as the main means of information dissemination. The communication means used by the CCD were ineffective to disseminate information to the majority of the local community. Informal means of communication ensure effectively dissemination of information to the key stakeholders (Kopáček, 2021). For instance, the use of grassroots leaders in the participation process is highly recommended because they know better their people and problems (Lin, 2023). Moreover, the study by Kaamah et al.(2023) revealed the use of local leaders such as local chiefs and elders to be effective means of information dissemination at Kraba No. 1 settlement in Ejisu Municipality in Ghana.

Equally, this study argues the CCD to use diverse participation methods to ensure citizens effectively participate. The diverse participation methods such as public meetings, debates, study walks, surveys, interviews, contacts with community representatives (the local leaders), and digital tools/ web apps could be used to participate stakeholders (Kantola, 2021; Zaleczna, 2018). It is anticipated that the use of diverse participation methods will



certainly increase the level of turnouts in public hearings, understanding, and the ability of the local community to influence the master plan.

However, it is argued that the communication tools should be customised based on the context. For instance, crowdsourcing platforms and planning support systems are crucial in supporting citizen participation and communication; however, more research is required on the operationalisation of the digital tools, particularly how they empower citizens and other key actors (Kantola, 2021; Lin, 2023).

Nevertheless, the study was limited to only two (2) out of forty-one (41) wards, which perhaps were not enough. However, the biases were counterbalanced by interviews with diverse key informants from different institutions. The triangulation of information assured the researchers that information gathered from the households in two wards were valid because it aligned with the key informants from the ministries, the local leaders, councilors, FGDs, CCD, and public and private institutions. Furthermore, comparative studies are recommended to assess the effectiveness of communication channels and stakeholder participation practices in the preparation and implementation of master plans in the cities of SSA.

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