

## Public Participation as a Social Inclusion Tool in the Urban Planning Process: A Case Study of Abuja, Nigeria

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**Abstract :** The urban planning system of cities varies by country, but in general, it is an instrument for establishing long-term sustainable frameworks and plans for social, institutional and economic development. There is limited knowledge, development, and implementation of effective and sustainable urban planning structures and plans that encourage social inclusion in most communities. This has led to social, economic and environmental deficiencies resulting in community isolation and segregation in class, ethnicity, and race. Encouraging public participation in the urban planning process is one of the instruments that cities can utilise to achieve better social inclusion outcomes. This paper explores how public participation can be used as a social inclusion tool in the urban planning process to achieve better outcomes in Abuja urban planning system. The purpose of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of this approach. Also, a conceptual model was developed which evaluates the relationship between public participation and social inclusion outcomes in the urban planning process. It was seen that every community has its peculiar way of life and challenges, and an understanding of these social societal needs is paramount in the urban planning process. Therefore, the involvement of the public in identifying their needs, selecting priorities and identifying strategies offer better chances for developing solutions that are sustainable, feasible and implementable.

**Keywords :** public participation, social inclusion, urban planning, urban planning process

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