



The Rivers state government in Nigeria announced intentions to evict 49 waterfront communities in Port Harcourt, threatening to displace 480,000 people already living in inadequate conditions. Despite court injunctions, demolitions began and 19,000 people lost their homes and businesses in August 2009. Thousands more have been forcibly evicted since with no plans for resettlement or compensation.

The Collaborative Media Advocacy Platform (CMAP) created the Human City Project to build the strategic and technical capacity of Port Harcourt's excluded communities to participate meaningfully in their own development and the shaping of their city.

It received funding via the Cities Alliance Innovation Programme Know Your City! call.

**The project:**

The Human City Project is a community-driven media, architecture, urban planning and human rights movement that empowers youth in Port Harcourt's slums to make their voices heard, advocate for their rights, and engage with the local authorities for inclusive urban planning.



**The approach:**

-  Media training to transform youth into journalists, radio presenters, editors, performers and photographers.
-  Strategic litigation and campaigning to increase government accountability.
-  Participatory mapping to produce detailed maps as basis for inclusive urban planning.
-  Collaborative planning and construction of local facilities and pilot projects.
-  Partnership and dialogue with local and multilateral stakeholders to promote a citywide, shared urban vision for the future.

**Transformative change:**

-  Excluded communities have built the strategic and technical capacity to make their voices heard and advocate for their rights. They are no longer invisible.
-  Forced evictions in the city's informal settlements have decreased, improving dwellers' sense of security.
-  Participatory mapping and planning have increased community capacity to plan and demand improvements, and provision of public services and goods that are more responsive to their needs.

“ .....  
*Mapping and any kind of inquiry is an intervention, disturbs the status quo, and raises expectations. If you are telling a story about participatory mapping, you really need to promote empowerment. People need to feel the relationship between what they are sharing and the change in their lives. It is difficult, but there needs to be some impact. Mapping has to lead to tangible change.*  
 ..... ”

**Michael Uwemedimo,**  
Co-founder and Director of CMAP

**Cities Alliance is the global partnership supporting cities to deliver sustainable development.**