

# External stakeholders in the governance of slums in Ghana

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – *In the space of slums are many stakeholders; the extent to which their assistance contributes to slum administration is sparsely studied. The study aims to examine how external stakeholders contribute to slum administration within the Ghanaian context.*

**Design/methodology/approach** – *Using the stakeholder theory, the study used an exploratory qualitative design based on face-to-face, in-depth interviews among 21 respondents. Participants were purposively selected from stakeholder organisations and slum residents based on the stake in slums governance in Ghana.*

**Findings** – *The results indicate that stakeholders have contributed towards slums livelihoods in the general areas of housing, trading, skill development and capacity building. It shows that stakeholders' contributions tend to enhance slums' living conditions and affect local assemblies positively. The study finds that slum dwellers categorise stakeholders' contributions as short-term relief and long-term solutions. Additionally, it emerged that in the areas of policy design, implementation and policy feedback, external stakeholders have supported the government in that regard.*

**Research limitations/implications** – *The conclusion drawn from the study is limited to the four communities and the stakeholder organisations. However, communities with similar characteristics globally might benefit from the findings.*

**Practical implications** – *The study uncovers a context-specific role and assistance of external stakeholders in the domain of slums. This provides a guide to the government regarding key areas of stakeholder collaboration towards slum governance in the Ghanaian context. Theoretically, this study has contributed to new knowledge about stakeholders' contribution to the overall governance of slums.*

**Originality/value** – *The study expands the frontiers of knowledge in the field of slum administration by focusing on external stakeholders. This study departs from previous studies, which have examined, in broader perspectives, stakeholders' roles within the space of slums.*

**Keywords** *Slum dwellers, External stakeholders, Contribution, Governance, Policies, Administration*

**Paper type** *Research paper*

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## Introduction

Stakeholders' role in slum administration does not only provide the residents with a sustainable livelihood; it has a ripple effect on local governance administration as well. Inhabitants in the slums can contribute to the local assembly tax regime when their capacities are enhanced and livelihoods improved (Crush *et al.*, 2019). Research has evidenced that slums undertake varied socio-economic activities such as petty trading, vocations and entrepreneurship (Preko *et al.*, 2021). These activities tend to decrease unemployment rates among the slums and working-age individual job seekers that struggle to find work in the formal economy (Şahin *et al.*, 2014). Managing the slums in a manner that improves their capacity for a sustainable livelihood requires governance that ensures they have housing, access to roads, water, sanitation and electricity (Granada *et al.*, 2018; Haque *et al.*, 2020). Achieving such an endeavour requires harmonising both state and non-state structures, institutions and processes in the pursuit of slum

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administration (Sridhar *et al.*, 2020). Slum governance is contextualised in this study as a collaboration between the government and stakeholders to address slum-related challenges. The researchers assert that the government can effectively manage the slums through stakeholder engagement and collaboration. The United Nations Conference on Housing and Urban Development (2016) refers to both slums and informal settlements as highly populated dwellings with poor infrastructure and endemic poverty, which characterise their living circumstances. Addressing issues in the slums needs stakeholders' involvement, a practice praised as an effective way to achieve slum policy outcomes (Meredith and MacDonald, 2017; Muchadenyika, 2015). In that regards, the contribution of external stakeholders, such as the UN-Habitat, Amnesty International, Peoples Dialogue and the print and electronic Media, is critical to enhancing slum governance (Average, 2019; Mwangi, 2018). The external stakeholders stated above, including those beyond the scope of the study, are well-recognised and known in the field of slum administration. The purpose of this study is to examine the extent to which external stakeholders contribute to slum governance in Ghana.

Stakeholders' contributions to vulnerable communities and groups cannot be quantified in a single research study, including the current one. Studies have shown that stakeholders have filled service provision gaps in the areas of water, sanitation, education and health care (Cawood, 2021; Power and Wanner, 2017). Their contribution does not only enhance specific areas in the slums, but it has also allowed national governments to provide the basic needs of slums (Meredith and MacDonald, 2017; Mitchell, 2015). Whereas stakeholders' influence in the slums continues to attract significant research attention (Aliu *et al.*, 2021; Azevedo *et al.*, 2019; Hekmatnia, 2020), their activities are influenced by their philosophies and orientations. Although scholars, including Mando and Mutuku (2017) and Sulistyaningsih *et al.* (2022), examines stakeholders' influences in the space of slums, empirical evidence on how stakeholders' contributions align with the entire slum administration is missing. Simply put, there is a dearth of empirically based evidence regarding the usefulness of stakeholder engagement in accomplishing livelihood goals in the slums, leaving a gap in the body literature. Interestingly, there is a call by Kusters *et al.* (2018) to explore stakeholders' role in slum administration. This study makes a humble attempt to fill the above-mentioned gaps through the research questions below:

*RQ1.* How do external stakeholders contribute to slums?

*RQ2.* What are the views of slum dwellers on stakeholders' contributions?

*RQ3.* How do stakeholders' contributions align with slum governance?

In the following ways, the study is important: one, because inclusive governance matters, the outcome of the study will uncover context-specific contributions of stakeholders in slum administration in Ghana. Two, the research will indicate areas of government concentration towards the achievement of slum policy outcomes. Three, the study will reconcile the policy divide between institutions, external stakeholders and slum dwellers in pursuit of slum governance in Ghana. The research contributes to knowledge by providing a new understanding of stakeholders' inputs to slum management in a developing country. The remainder of the paper proceeds as follows: a theoretical overview of the research; methodology; presentation of findings; discussions; conclusions; and implications.

## Literature review

### *Stakeholders' contribution to slum administration*

Stakeholders-related activities and contributions in the space of slums are varied – this study does a bit of state of the art systematic review of some existing studies. Our review indicates that stakeholders play several roles in the field of slums geared towards uplifting the dwellers' sustainable livelihood. Mwaura *et al.* (2018) find that stakeholders' technical support led to a successful implementation of slum projects. The authors aver that some of

the stakeholders promote research to evaluate the outcome and monitoring of slums projects and programmes. In the area of health services, [Power and Wanner \(2017\)](#) assert that stakeholders, in collaboration with the local government, executed sanitation projects within some of the slum communities. Such intervention has tended to assist the government in combating some chronic related infections and sicknesses in the slums. [Alaraji \(2016\)](#) declares that stakeholders' contributions in the field of education have positively enhanced the self-confidence among some of the underprivileged children in the slums. Relatedly, in policy planning, [Fadli and Sarofah \(2021\)](#) note that stakeholders have helped in crafting slum management action plans using the concepts of participation, sustainable development, empowerment and teamwork. This means stakeholders' contributions towards slums are multifaceted and span across projects to health and education. Such contributions have significant and positive implications in uplifting their living conditions both in the short, medium and long terms. In particular, issues relating to advocacy, sanitation, health, technical support, empowerment and team building are among the key activities of stakeholders.

Furthermore, [Meredith and MacDonald \(2017\)](#) argue that while a top-down approach may fail to produce a slum policy outcome, stakeholders' involvement is critical to overcome any inherent challenges associated with top-down policy implementation. They explain that stakeholders ensure that slum-upgrading projects are both effective and successful due to their skills and experience. This aligns with [Aliu \*et al.\*'s \(2021\)](#) call for stakeholders' involvement in slum administration to safeguard societal deprivation inflicted on slums' access to basic services. This is consistent with [Azevedo \*et al.\*'s \(2019\)](#) suggestion to the effect that government and stakeholder must collaborate to address slum issues relating to education, security and infrastructure. This assertion consolidates the existing scholarships that proclaim a positive link between stakeholder participation in the implementation of projects within the slums ([Ibrahim \*et al.\*, 2017](#); [Mando and Mutuku, 2017](#)). Other strands of the existing studies show that stakeholders' role in the slums does not only orbit around policy execution but also widens the base of dialogues and conversations ([Kuhn, 2020](#)). Increasing studies on stakeholders and slums, such as those presented above, do not account for how stakeholders' contributions align with the overall slum governance.

The systematic review regarding stakeholders' contributions has largely skewed around corporate social responsibilities. It shows that varied topics relating to stakeholders' corporate activities across diverse issues have been examined through different methodologies. For example, while some of the scholarships investigate stakeholders' contributions to firms ([Al Mubarak, 2021](#); [Chavan \*et al.\*, 2022](#); [Gimenes and Piao, 2023](#); [Kane \*et al.\*, 2022](#); [Zeng, 2021](#)), others orbit around stakeholder initiatives and behavioural related issues ([Gaudencio \*et al.\*, 2021](#); [Power and Wanner, 2017](#); [Uduji \*et al.\*, 2021](#)). Other strands of the existing studies in our review also border on stakeholders' influence in slum projects and upgrading ([Mando and Mutuku, 2017](#); [Muchadenyika, 2015](#); [Sulistyaningsih \*et al.\*, 2022](#)). Thus, from the summary of the systematic review showcased in [Table 2](#), the need for this study to investigate external stakeholders in slum governance is evident. Clearly, as depicted in the literature matrix, majority of the studies have researched on varied topics, as well as methodological applications. The evidence shows a lack of study that thoroughly examines the contributions of external stakeholders in slums, the viewpoints of slum dwellers towards those contributions and their overall consequences for slum governance. This study seeks to nuance public understanding regarding how stakeholders' activities enhance slum living conditions, and advance slum administration in Ghana. [Table 1](#) presents the systematic literature review showing the gaps in literature.

### ***Stakeholder theory***

The study used the stakeholder theory developed by [Freeman \(1999\)](#) to explain how external stakeholders contribute to slum governance in Ghana. The theory holds that

**Table 1** Summary of literature review matrix

<i>Author/year</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Methodology</i>	<i>Findings</i>	<i>Implications</i>
<a href="#">Gimenes and Piao (2023)</a>	Drivers of support for corporate social responsibility: what matters most to Brazilian business leaders	Qualitative exploratory based on multiple case approach	Drivers of CSR in Brazilian linked to firm performance rather than ethical or external drivers	Studies are required to understand employee motivation in driving leaders to support CSR and how CSR practices affect policies and behaviour in companies
<a href="#">Uduji and Okolo-Obasi (2021)</a>	Does corporate social responsibility initiative restrain young people from irregular migration in sub-Saharan Africa? Evidence from Nigeria's oil-producing communities	Quantitative cross-sectional survey	GMoU model has made significant impact in dissuading young people from irregular migration drive	CSR intervention on young development initiatives focus on creation serve as the push factors that compel youth irregular migration in sub-Saharan Africa
<a href="#">Chavan et al. (2022)</a>	Collaborative corporate social responsibility praxis: case studies from India	Qualitative case study approach and draws document review	Collaborative CSR initiatives between a multinational firm and an NGO have been leveraged to combat manifold issues of education, employment and hunger during the pandemic	Collaborative CSR initiatives between a multinational firm and an NGO have been leveraged to combat manifold issues of education, employment and hunger during the pandemic
<a href="#">Kane et al. (2022)</a>	Corporate social responsibility in Vietnam: views from corporate and NGO executives	Quantitative data were collected through an online survey of respondents from 186 companies	CSR agenda and priorities amongst Vietnamese domestic companies are strongly influenced by long-standing norms	Analyse of CSR trends, issues and priorities amongst a larger and more varied set of NGOs and corporates (including small and medium enterprises or SMEs)
<a href="#">Power and Wanner (2017)</a>	Improving sanitation in the slums of Mumbai: an analysis of human rights-based approaches for NGOs	Mixed-method; document review and In-depth interview	Slum population with sufficient ownership and genuine participation in sanitation projects could overcome many difficulties, such as ongoing maintenance of vital sanitation facilities	Interview with slums about the degree of empowerment and effect of policies by NGO

(continued)

**Table 1**

Author/year	Topic	Methodology	Findings	Implications
Fadli and Sarofah (2021)	The Possibilities for an Urban Community Action Plan and Collaborative Work Support for Slum Improvement: A Case Study in Jakarta	Qualitative with in-depth interviews, online media content analysis	Community Action Plan programme was not successful due to the lack of a collaborative process from citizens, government and civil society	Explore alternative policies by the government to implementing community action plan
Meredith and MacDonald (2017)	Community-supported slum-upgrading: innovations from Kibera, Nairobi, Kenya	Qualitative-archival research and key informant interviews	Critical infrastructure in slums has improved over the course of the project and expectation to continued for improvement in the future have developed	Using an adaptive management approach and strongly promoting community involvement should be the aim of institutions delivering slum-upgrading projects
Azevedo et al. (2019)	Urban solid waste management in developing countries from the sustainable supply chain management perspective: A case study of Brazil's largest slum	Qualitative-in-depth longitudinal single case study	It is required to solve basic social issues in slums related to education, security, and infrastructure, with the integration and support of government, local community and industry	Quantitative methods is required to obtain additional insights and reliable data on sanitation waste management
Mando and Mutuku (2017)	The influence of stakeholders' participation in implementation of projects in informal settlements in Kenya	Descriptive survey research quantitative design among 80 respondents	Positive relationship between stakeholders' participation and implementation of projects in the informal settlements	Governments need to create and participate in information sharing platforms to discuss progression in their Communities
McGrath and Whitty (2017)	Defining the term stakeholder to remove confusion surrounding the use of this term from the general and project management arenas	Qualitative-conceptual and literature review	The definitions of stake and stakeholder are in terms of an interest and activity	Stakeholder concept will facilitate building social and physical systems and infrastructure, benefitting organisations, whether public, charitable or private
Muchadenyika (2015)	Slum upgrading and inclusive municipal governance in Harare, Zimbabwe: New perspectives for the urban poor	Qualitative-in-depth interviews and FGDS	Housing struggles for slums and the emerging City-community engagement in urban services provision (water, sanitation, tenure security and roads) and changing municipal attitudes towards the urban poor	Slum upgrading sustainability at city-wide level requires active City participation and institutionalisation as opposed to a project based approach

(continued)

**Table 1**

<i>Author/year</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Methodology</i>	<i>Findings</i>	<i>Implications</i>
<a href="#">Aliu et al. (2021)</a>	Living on the margins: Socio-spatial characterization of residential and water deprivations in Lagos informal settlements, Nigeria	Data was drawn from a survey of fifteen (15) slum communities using a structured survey questionnaire	Slum residents experienced critical environmental deprivation and water, sanitation and hygiene deprivation	The study suggest that urban stakeholders should be more focused on the highly deprived communities
<a href="#">Sulistyaningsih et al. (2022)</a>	Can combined marketing and planning-oriented of community-based social marketing (CBSM) project successfully transform the slum area to tourism village? A case study of the Jodipan colorful urban village, Malang, Indonesia	Mixed method; case study and a survey of 650 slum dwellers	Transformation of a slum area into a new tourist destination was achieved through social marketing intervention and place branding using social media	A need to explain the policy response, level of involvement, and support provided by the Malang city government toward the sustainability of Jodipan's colorful tourist destination
<a href="#">Al Mubarak (2021)</a>	Sustainable development through five senses of effective corporate social responsibility strategy	Documentary review based on literature review on topics such as CSR strategy, CSR activities	It shows a gap between what firms do and what are expected from them to deliver to society in terms of CSR activities	Stakeholders' needs and wants internally and externally; hence, a better satisfaction level can be achieved and sustainable development is likely to be better secured
<a href="#">Zeng (2021)</a>	Corporate social responsibility (CSR) in Canadian family firms	Document Analysis and Retrieval (SEDAR) online database	Compared with other listed firms, family listed firms have a higher level of CSR engagement	Need to examine the impact of other family-firm dimensions on CSR engagement
<a href="#">Gaudencio et al. (2021)</a>	The impact of CSR perceptions on workers' turnover intentions: Exploring the supervisor exchange process and the role of perceived external prestige	Qualitative structural equation modelling based on survey data obtained from 315 participants	Perceptions of CSR predict TI through the mediating role of LMX	Managers should implement CSR practices because these can contribute towards reducing TI

Source: Created by the author

organisations have various stakeholders that need to be involved in decision-making to ensure the achievement of objectives that enhance competition. The theory is split into three elements: descriptive, instrumental and normative, underlying the main tenets of the theory. The descriptive element explains the need to identify relevant stakeholders to manage their interests for the continuity and growth of the business (Werhane, 2019). The instrumental version acknowledges the effects of stakeholders on the achievement of goals (Jones *et al.*, 2018). The normative version, being the main anchor of the theory, illuminates the ethical justification for involving stakeholders in decision-making (Zakhem and Palmer, 2017). The researchers used the three elements of the theory based on the following assumptions: One, stakeholders' contributions to slums' administration enhance the lives of dwellers and affect the local economy. Slum residents can contribute to local economic revenue generation in the end when they have a sustainable livelihood. Two, supporting the slums enables the stakeholder organisations to achieve their goals while helping to address governance issues within the slums. Three, hearing perspectives from slum dwellers concerning stakeholders not only fulfil the normative version of the theory but also provides direction for slum administration in the future.

Despite its popularity in the business and corporate worlds, the theory has received some criticism. For example, issues involving a lack of sufficient rigour in its application to the managerial and organisational contexts (Wolfe and Putler, 2002) and issues relating to how incremental benefits exceed costs in stakeholder management (Jones *et al.*, 2018). Nonetheless, the theory is used to clarify the confusion surrounding project stakeholders (McGrath and Whitty, 2017) and stakeholders' participation in the implementation of projects within the informal communities (Mando and Mutuku, 2017). This study deployed the theory within the domain of slums, which depart from the business and corporate environments. The researchers clearly explained the external stakeholders in the domain of slums, focusing on governance issues. A systematic assessment of the literature indicates the theory is largely used in corporate and organisational contexts, with little application in the realm of slum governance. Furthermore, given the practical conceptualisation of stakeholders in the slum sphere in context, it aids in better explaining the problem. Future scholars in other domains are urged to apply the stakeholders' theory to other disciplines, whether related or unrelated.

## Methodology

### *Research design*

This study used the qualitative exploratory design focused on unearthing the views of stakeholders and slum residents in the Greater Accra Region of the Republic of Ghana. The Greater Accra is capital city of Ghana and the most urbanised region among the sixteen regions in Ghana. The population is 5,455,692, making it a major economic centre (Ghana Statistical Service, 2021). The city attracts a large number of people looking for greener pastures from other parts of the region, which accounts for the rise in the number of slums. The qualitative design was used to explore a deeper understanding of how stakeholders contribute to slum administration rather than quantify their perspectives and generalise findings. The exploratory strategy enabled the researchers to uncover the "why and how" relating to the issue investigated, as well as to provide explanations for respondents' perspectives on the subject matter (Hair *et al.*, 2013). The study used the following inclusion criteria: firstly, the purposive sampling method was used to select interviewees (assembly members) who currently represent communities' interests in governance. Secondly, the selected assembly members are special representatives who collaborate with the mentioned stakeholders on matters relating to slum dwellers. Thus, the outcome of the study does not represent the whole population of external stakeholders and slum residents in Ghana. Given that a relatively small number of external stakeholder groups

were initially identified (Agyabeng and Preko, 2021), the study partially relied on a snowball sampling, in which participants recommended other potential participants to researchers.

### Data collection

The study was conducted among seven stakeholder organisations (Amnesty International, Ghana; UN-Habitat; People’s Dialogue, Ghana; Print Media; Electronic Media; My Souls International; and Climate Change, Ghana); and four slum communities (Alogboshie, Christian Village, Agbogbloshei and Old Fadama). Firstly, the stakeholder group constituted of the key actors working to support the slums in ways that affect their livelihoods and, by extension, influence governance within the Ghanaian context. See Table 2 below on sample distribution for the study.

The selected slum communities represent the worst slums in Ghana, lacking access to potable water, adequate living space, terrible housing and insecure tenure (UN-Habitat, 2016a, 2016b). The participants for this study were representatives and coordinators from the stakeholder organisations, as well as opinion leaders within the slums who had experience with the issue investigated. The researchers were interested in gaining first-hand information about slum governance from the perspectives of external stakeholders and the slum inhabitants. In-depth interviews among 21 respondents were conducted. In all, 14 respondents participated, comprising five females and nine males from the slum dwellers category and one member from each of the seven stakeholder organisations. Although a small sample size, it was considered that the number of participants corresponded approximately to the saturation point and did not seriously hamper the validity of this study (Crouch and McKenzie, 2006). Ethical approval was obtained from the Ethics Committee for Humanities, University of Ghana, with the ethical clearance number ECH 114/20-21. Prior consent from respondents was sought before commencing the field exercise. Respondents were also assured of data confidentiality and anonymity, using pseudonyms in the data gathering process. An interview guide based on the key research questions was used for the line of questioning to understand the phenomenon the study sought to investigate. Each interview lasted approximately 30–40 min, conducted in English and digitally recorded. Interviews were conducted in respondents’ homes and workplaces, adhering strictly to the COVID-19 protocols for social distancing and face-to-face interactions.

### Data analysis

The field data went through an iterative process, where authors independently transcribed the recorded data verbatim. The transcripts were shared with the interviewees for confirmation of the contents. Suggestions raised by the interviewees were incorporated into the final transcriptions before the analysis to ensure the originality of the content. These measures were adopted to ensure originality of the content and reliability of findings. Content analysis was used to identify meanings and common occurring patterns narrations and respondents views. Firstly, the researchers prepared the data for analysis by identifying specific questions and then aggregated the answers of all the respondents

**Table 2** Number of respondents used for the study

	<i>Communities</i>			<i>External stakeholder organisations</i>
<i>Alogboshie</i>	<i>Christian Village</i>	<i>Agbogbloshei</i>	<i>Old Fadama</i>	
3	4	4	4	7

**Notes:** One each external stakeholder organisation (Amnesty International; Climate Change UN-Habitant; People’s Dialogue; Print Media; Electronic Media; My Souls International; Climate Change)

**Source:** Created by the author

underneath each question from the vast pages of transcribed interview files. This made it easier to identify patterns in each question. Secondly, we developed categories and a coding scheme that focused on three areas of issues: external stakeholders' contributions, dwellers' viewpoints and their influence on slum administration. Thirdly, the authors coded the text to correspond with or exemplify the designated categories. This measure enabled a reduction in or condensation of long interviews that did not appear practical at first into useful discussion items. Each researcher examined a whole interview transcript in light of the three research questions in this case. Finally, the researchers swapped transcripts to confirm their findings by arriving at the same themes. In line with Lazaraton (2017), qualitative analysis can be validated if two or more researchers reach the same conclusions after analysing the same data.

## Findings

As detailed in the methodology section, a number of measures were taken to ensure the rigour and effectiveness of the findings. The study focused on the contributions of external stakeholders to slum governance, the perspectives of slum dwellers on stakeholders' contributions and the link between stakeholders' contributions and slum governance. Overall, the analysis of the field data points to the realities on the ground; that external stakeholder organisations play significant contributions in the space of slums in Ghana. The findings of the study have been organised according to the three research questions presented below:

### *Contributions of external stakeholders' in slum administration*

In relation to the first research question, the study finds four dominant contributions of external stakeholders in the space of slums: housing projects, financial assistance, skills development and building the capacity of slum dwellers. For example, the authors discovered that the stakeholders had renovated and updated the existing structures rather than erecting brand-new ones as part of the housing project:

We have upgraded housing projects with alleys, pavement, and play grounds for children in areas like Darkuman, Ashaiman, and Ga-Mashie. In line with our mandate, we are determined to gradually extend the same principles to other cities with similar situations in Ghana (*Female, UN-Habitat*).

Explicating further, a respondent asserts that not only were they focused on the housing initiative, but the idea of ensuring a clean environment has also created livelihoods for the youth:

We do not want to see the communities reverting to how it was. Through a community development fund, we have bought tricycles for the youth who go out to collect waste and take it to the biogas centers. This enables them to make some income for themselves and their families (*Female, UN-Habitat*).

The financial initiative has been replicated by the mother organisation of the slums to empower slum dwellers who want to undertake small businesses but lack start-up funds. The analysis of the data reveals that such financial interventions was channelled through the leadership of the slums to the individuals:

We had discussions with the leadership and noticed most of them desired to do business but didn't have capital. So we sourced funds at a cheaper rate and distributed them through their leadership so that recovery would be easy. This has helped most of them start small businesses, and others have used them to publish their vocations (*Male, People's Dialogue*).

It was further observed that the financial empowerment also enabled most of the slum dwellers to enrol in some vocations, which tend to build their capacities. This makes it

possible for other organisations to rally firmly behind them in their resolve to demand what is due to them. For instance, an interviewee asserts that:

The government makes huge promises to the slums without recourse to their feasibility. Through the consent of the slum leadership, the media follow them up and keep the government in check against such promises to ensure they are delivered (*Male, Media: 2*).

Similarly, another respondent states that:

Over the years, we have been on the neck of the government to implement legislation that prohibits slums from force eviction and demolition. We will continue to fight for the slums to ensure their rights are respected in the same way that any other citizens are (*Male, Amnesty International*).

### Slum dwellers' perspectives about stakeholders' contributions

Slum dwellers' views on the external stakeholders' contribution in line with the second research question have been answered. The findings reveal two dominant themes: long-term effects and short-term relief underlying how respondents perceive stakeholders' support for the slum communities. It shows that while contributions from stakeholder organisation enhance the livelihoods of the said slum communities in general, they have both long-term and short-term positive implications. Firstly, the analysis shows that the stakeholders provide free tuition for the schoolchildren in some of the slums in the areas of English, Mathematics and ICT for their wards and the respondents assert that such interventions have long-term benefits:

Over the years, we have received much support from some organisations for schoolchildren in this community. They paid for the services of teachers to teach our little ones in the areas of ICT, English, and Mathematics (*Female, Agbogbloshei*).

Such an initiative, in the view of the interviewees, has the potential to positively change the fortunes of the children in the future:

We are grateful to stakeholders because it will ensure the future benefit of children [...] and it is also helping to reduce the incidence of street children and miscreants (*Male, Alogboshie*).

Similar long-term interventions to the view that some of the slum residents received from stakeholder organisations, skill development training to enhance their livelihoods in future:

Some of the people in this community, most of whom were female, have some training in skill development. Although people may not see the benefit of such training immediately [...] it is a career development that will help them in the future (*Male, Old Fadama*).

Without mincing words, a respondent confirmed that stakeholder organisations were helpful and cared more about the plight of the slums than the government. She also claims that while long-term contributions will be helpful in the near future, beneficiaries usually lack support or resources to implement their skills:

Usually, the problem is that acquiring the skills is easy, but their implementation is another thing entirely. Most of the trainees will be hoping to implement the skills they have acquired in the future, but due to a lack of support, they go back to the street to do what they have been doing (*Male, Christian Village*).

Secondly, views of the measures that offer beneficiaries instant relief and serve to cushion them typically pertain to those short-term benefits. Respondents alluded to some of such interventions as mitigating support they received from stakeholder organisations during the global pandemic and the COVID-19 lockdown:

Issues in the slums sometimes require immediate intervention. During the lockdown, most households in this community were handicapped and received foodstuffs and some consumables from stakeholders to fill in the survival gap (*Female, Agbogbloshei*).

A second interviewee confirmed the following:

People's Dialogue Ghana and other NGOs, including some churches, were very helpful to people in these communities. "They came to donate foodstuffs and other consumables, including assorted soft drinks and tin fish, to the needy during the health crisis lockdown" (*Male, Old Fadama*).

The elderly, children and those with disabilities were not exempt from the short-term support provided by key respondents' stakeholders:

In actuality, short-term stakeholder support really saved lives [...] particularly those of the elderly, children, and disabled who were unable to move about during the lockdown. People's dialogue brought them breakfast, lunch, and supper (*Male, Alogboshie*).

Nonetheless, in response to the brief stakeholder contributions, respondents verified that some of the slums previously lacked social amenities and conveniences but now has courtesies stakeholders. One of them said that:

Master, would you believe that this community for many years was without a toilet facility? I am ashamed to talk about this basic thing as an Assembly member [...] we had to depend on some organisations to construct a temporary toilet facility (*Male, Agbogbloshei*).

In the same vein, speaking on the short-term relief, another respondent blamed slums lack of social amenities on the government that:

It is sad that some families in this community have to rely on organisations for basic social amenities. The government has ignored the slums, and we are now at the mercy of non-governmental organisations for social amenities (*Male, Alogboshie*).

### **Link between stakeholders' contributions and slum governance**

In relation to the third objective, analysis of the data shows that stakeholder contributions have a link to slum governance. Overly four issues, such as data provision, policy implementation, slum projects and the influence of slum policies, emerged from the data analysis. These areas of stakeholder contributions, according to the analysis, can help the government to develop a broader policy agenda for the governance of slums in Ghana. Firstly, it demonstrates that any plan for managing slums must be based on reliable information and data. The authors understand that, for issues pertaining to slums, obtaining reliable data has been a difficult effort not only in Ghana but in other countries as well. A key respondent reveals that they have over the years been providing accurate data to the government to aid effective planning:

We provide data about the slums to the government for planning purposes. Currently, there is no data anywhere to help the government plan for slum development. With this data, government can even speak to the issue regarding the nature of slums in Ghana, its population and challenges facing them (*Male, People Dialogue Ghana*).

Secondly, in the same conversation, the analysis points out that those stakeholders not only provide data to aid slum policy planning but they also help with policy implementation. The study finds that some of the stakeholder organisations, such as the media, which have a national reach and cover a wider audience, have championed such causes. Speaking to the issue on the subject, a respondent avers that they usually uncover critical issues facing the slums and follow up with the relevant authorities to ensure they are resolved:

In line with our mandate, we try to uncover critical issues and challenges facing the slums to the appropriate authority. We do this by highlighting the issues to drive the attention of the public, follow it up to the concerned authority until it a policy is initiated to resolve them (*Male, Media-01*).

Thirdly, stakeholders also undertake projects so support government critical areas. Such initiatives tend to consolidate government existing plans for the slums and invariably help to

cushion policymakers to focus on other critical domains for effective slum governance. An interviewee states that:

Our programmes are structured to support government efforts for slum governance by deepening some of the existing projects. Sometimes we offer technical support, financial assistance, and capacity building to the urban development units within the ministries to help the government focus on other critical areas (*Female, UN-Habitat*).

Finally, it also shows that some of the stakeholder organisations influence slum policies in line with their mandate. This is because slums are considered a minority in society and are prone to policy neglect and moral abuse. According to the data, Amnesty International Ghana, for instance, protects the human right of the slum dwellers in areas bordering on force eviction, demolition and any form of human right abuse against the slums. The excerpts depict a respondent's voice:

Over the years, we have been on the government's neck to implement legislation that prohibits slums from forced eviction and demolition. We will continue to push the government to ensure a policy is implemented to protect the rights of slum dwellers in the same way as other citizens (*Male, Amnesty International*).

## Discussion of findings

Overall, the findings show that external stakeholders' contributions to slum governance are very significant and cannot be undervalued. Such contributions tend to enhance the livelihoods of the dwellers in both the short and long terms. In relation to the first research question, it reveals that specific contributions, including housing, finance, skill development and capacity building, have been provided by stakeholders. Such contributions enabled some of the slum communities to have enough open space for family gatherings, playgrounds for children and decent living environments for social gatherings – a rare case in slum settlements. Building slum dwellers' capacities has boosted their skills in various vocations necessary for livelihood enhancement in the areas of small businesses and youth empowerment through the tricycles used for waste collection. These strands of contributions provided by stakeholders have tended to ameliorate some of the challenges of the dwellers while helping the government focus its attention on other grey areas of slum administration. The findings of the study align with [Bardhan et al. \(2019\)](#) and [Mando and Mutuku \(2017\)](#) to the effect that stakeholders' roles in the implementation of projects within the informal communities can least be undervalued. It is public knowledge that the influx of slums is outpacing planning in developing countries such as Ghana. According to research ([Agyabeng et al., 2022](#)), governments' inability to prioritise slum governance with an integrated slum administration system and a dedicated policy document is to be blamed for the surge in slums. Such contributions from stakeholders help in filling the critical void created by the state in the affairs of slums ([Cawood, 2021](#); [Power and Wanner, 2017](#)). Importantly, stakeholders' inputs and contributions to slums in particular and the overall implications for the governance of slums in general create positive impressions about their generosity. This treasure makes the contributed slum stakeholders advantageous and stands tall above their compatriot non-slum-supported organisations. Clearly, the feat validates the descriptive and instrumental elements of the stakeholder theory ([Freeman, 1999](#)). This is because stakeholders' contributions to any endeavour not only help them achieve their objectives but also provide a competitive advantage.

The second research question about slum dwellers' views on stakeholders' contributions identified short-term relief and long-term development as dominant outcomes. Stakeholders' contributions, such as the provision of consumables, food, clean-up exercises and medical screening, from the perspective of the residents, constitute short-term relief. The study finds that such short-term relief measures are critical for cushioning residents during difficult times. Given that, most of the slum dwellers' households are worse off and are in dire need of such short-term contributions. Interviewees alluded to the fact that during the pandemic lockdown, most of the slum residents survived on such short-term assistance from stakeholder organisations. Respondents explained

that the short-term contributions they received from stakeholders are necessary to sustain them in the immediate and, at the same time, prepare them for the future. This finding is consistent with [Mwaura \(2018\)](#) that stakeholders' contributions to the slums helped to combat some infections and diseases in the slums. Consistently, [Aliu et al. \(2021\)](#) assert that stakeholders' involvement in slum administration tends to help slums escape from societal deprivation in accessing basic services. The long-term influence in the view of participants includes education of children in the slums; the development of skills relating to apprenticeship; the distilling of gutters; and the construction of drains. Respondents indicated that such long-term initiatives are future-driven and do not provide immediate answers to their problems. Although participants were grateful to stakeholders for such gestures, they desired a balance for both types of assistance because they have an influence on their livelihoods. According to the study, most slum dwellers are not supported in putting their newly acquired skills into practice, which makes their future uncertain or forces them to return to the streets. This finding validates [Pierce's \(2017\)](#) observation that institutional impediments explain long-term variance in slum service provision. Clearly, this explains why slum residents' preferences are biased towards short-term interventions that provide them immediate relief. Indeed, having the slum dwellers affirm stakeholders' contributions and their effect on their livelihoods aligns with existing research ([Al Mubarak, 2021](#)) that says stakeholders' needs and wants to determine their activities. The descriptive element ([Werhane, 2019](#)) and the instrumental version ([Jones et al., 2018](#)) validate the outcome of this finding.

Data relating to the third research question reveals the supply of slum data, policy implementation and feedback and the influence of slum policies and programmes. For example, it shows that People's dialogue provides critical data that details slum profiling to aid decision-making, planning and policy-driven interventions. Amnesty International facilitates the development of policies to prohibit slum residents from forced evictions and demolitions. In the same vein, UN-Habitat, according to the data, contributes towards technical and financial support, as well as offering best practices for slum housing projects. In the area of internalising government policies and providing feedback on implemented projects or programmes, the media has been highly versatile. Additionally, the media facilitates slum projects by following up with the relevant authorities within the local assembly architecture. These varied strands of stakeholders' contributions in the space of slums have tended to make the slums gain prominence in the sphere of governance. This result fulfils participation governance that promotes equity and inclusion ([Sridhar et al., 2020](#)). Research has shown that stakeholders are experts in constructing slum management action plans that align with participation, collaboration and empowerment ([Fadli and Sarofah, 2021](#)). Stakeholders have also provided a platform for the inhabitants to express their views on policies affecting their lives, as well as provide policy feedback to the government. This endeavour attracts a coalition of partners to help address some of the challenges confronting the slums. This discovery agrees with Freeman's (1984) stakeholder theory because public governance involves myriads and not only state institutions. Therefore, the inclusion of external stakeholders in governance fulfils the moral and ethical normative element, which is the anchor of the stakeholder theory.

## Conclusion

Overall, the study explores external stakeholders' contributions to slum communities through three research questions. Firstly, the findings revealed that stakeholders' contributions towards slums span areas such as housing, financial assistance, skill development and capacity building. Such contributions promote the living standards of the dwellers, as well as improve their lives for sustainable livelihoods. Secondly, it reveals that slums contextualise external stakeholders' contributions as both short-term and long-term for their livelihoods. It affirmed that, whereas the short-term provides immediate relief to the dwellers, the long-term prepares them for the future. Thirdly, the results indicate stakeholder contributions to slums also align with the overall governance of slums. These include the provision of slum data for planning, the implementation of policies and feedback, assistance in undertaking slum projects and the influence of slum programmes. The outcome of the study does not only fill the gap identified in the literature but also opens up new

frontiers of knowledge in the domain of slum and governance literature. The study has also unearthed the intricacies of stakeholders' achievements in slums that tend to increase public understanding. Theoretically, the study validated the stakeholders' theory in the following ways:

Firstly, external stakeholders' contributions to the slums enable them to fulfill the aims and objectives of the stakeholder organisations. Helping the slum residents will enable them to be self-sufficient and contribute towards revenue generation at the local assemblies. Secondly, as the instrumental element of the theory prescribes, this tends to provide a competitive advantage to the stakeholder organisations within the realm of government for future engagement. Thirdly, the normative element of the stakeholder theory confirmed the findings of the study by answering the research questions. This is because slum governance involves the engagement and collaboration of institutions and stakeholders. Stakeholders' contributions towards slums align with inclusive governance and fulfil both the ethical and moral requirements of the normative version of the theory. The findings shed light on a critical yet understudied research area within the phenomenon studied.

### **Implications of the study**

One, the findings show that external stakeholders have assisted the slums in the areas of housing upgrading, funds for petty trading, skill development and capacity building. These shards of assistance have a critical impact on slum dwellers' livelihoods as well as the local government administration. The study recommends that such initiatives be deepened, supported and structured to ensure slum communities become independent from state intervention. Managers of the various assemblies with jurisdiction over the slums should consciously collaborate with external stakeholders and other bodies such as private housing developers, financial institutions and vocational organisations. Two, it indicates that slum dwellers' challenges require both short-term relief and long-term solutions. This depicts the realities and happenings in the slum communities that require policy consideration. The researchers proposed a scientific examination of slum profiling to ascertain first-hand concerns about the slums and aid planning. For example, the local authorities should champion that enterprise by supporting academics, research institutions and the People's dialogue in that regard. This effort will allow immediate slum interventions to be separated from long-term plans so that appropriate interventions can be made for the required slum settlement. Thirdly, the study reveals that in the domains of policy design, implementation and feedback, the functions of external stakeholders have been exceptional. On account of the above, it is the recommendation of the study that formal and conscious relationships be created between the government and the stakeholders to help the cause of slum governance.

### **Limitations of the study**

The study has some limitations that provide fertile grounds for a future scholarship agenda. Firstly, this study was conducted in one region out of the 16 administrative regions of Ghana, among participants who represent the communities in governance. Secondly, the qualitative design adopted in this study was a limitation to fair representation regarding the number of participants for the interview. Thirdly, the sampled stakeholder organisations were selected based on the slum residents' recommendations, an indication that they did not represent the entire stakeholder organisations working in the space of the slums in Ghana. Fourthly, the study did not explore slum dwellers' views regarding their preference for stakeholder contributions, which would serve as a guide to others. These prospecting areas are available for future scholars to explore using a quantitative approach.

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