

Report on the Regions in Recovery e-Festival 2022



Report on the Regions in Recovery Second Edition 2022 Global e-Festival

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This year would mark my tenth anniversary of been a member of RSA and I am glad that it began with the opportunity of winning a bursary to participate and present my work in the annual global e-festival. This occasion has further exposed me to a wide range of professional and academic opportunities that would for a long time impact positively on me. This is not just for the high number of parallel sessions in the event, but for the quality and extent of the papers presented and the widely expressed experiences of the presenters and panellists too.

To start with, the session on 'Governance and the Covid-19 Pandemic in the African Urban Space' presented case studies that show that west African countries share a lot in terms of the challenges of governance, housing, environmental degradation and the experiences in the recent case of Covid-19 as illustrated by the works of Benedict Arko and Biamark Mensah. That, the urgency of the problems require that academics (and administrators too) should particularly pay increasing attention to lasting solutions by disseminating information and research findings. Then, the Professional Development 'Write Here, Write Now Online Writing Session' was an eye-opener as the presenters

really boosted my morale on writing generally. Questions/issues relating to journal writing, assessment and mentorship were widely discussed with personal experiences. This approach has helped in discouraging the myth that 'you have to be twice as good to be given half a chance'.

One of the most prolific sessions was that on Circular Cities - 'SS06: Circular Cities and Regions' chaired by Dr Karel van den Berghe, Delft University of Technology, as it was full of innovative ways of regional studies that I still found quite amazing and useful even to areas facing adequate data availability and other challenges. The presentation by Tanya Tsui, a PhD candidate at Delft University of Technology on 'Mapping Waste to Food Potential: Facility Allocation of Waste-to-Resource Facilities in the Food Industry in Canada' and the questions and discussions that followed the graphical presentation of the different spatial analysis and modeling were inspiring and full of suggestions on future trends and applications of the increasingly versatile tools for spatial science. This has motivated me to explore more areas to apply these skills in the myriad of local and regional phenomena concerning urban and regional development in Nigeria.

The presentations on 'Urban lives: security, livelihoods' which include 'Potentials of Corporate Social Responsibility for Poverty Eradication in Nigeria' and 'Understanding Development Interventions and Livelihood Challenges in Low-Income Neighbourhoods of Developing Countries' which I presented expressed the need for adequate data (spatial and temporal) acquisition for research and policy analyses. This observation has led to the conclusion that efficient research data acquisition is the root of informed decision-making at all levels. That, good research and journal paper writing and publication, all need data. Novel data collection and analysis are necessary and indispensable components of academic work that can stand the test of time. This is another issue I found common with works from sub-Saharan Africa especially where funding of research is still a contending issue with the patrons of higher institutions of learning and similar outreaches whose resource persons are continuously constrained by the meagre finances that often limit the content and substance of research endeavours.

However, the Chair of the session Daniela Carl, while acknowledging the difficulties faced by this group, suggested avenues, particularly within the RSA, that also recognize these shortcomings and modalities put in place to encourage scholarly publications in high impact journals. But, my one take-home message, from the two-week long global event, is that in this scenario, the 'left-behind

areas' here suffer more from shortage of data as against that of data handling, and 'a high quality academic research work together with field work that usually underlies it needs efficient and unwavering funding in order to produce cutting edge and impactful results. This can save time and resources through a clear understanding of the fundamentals of achieving goals at local and national levels, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) even at the eleventh hour.

Aliyu Kawu is an Urban & Regional Planner with focus on Sustainable Urban Development and Management. He is currently working on the assessment of efforts of community groups in augmenting infrastructure, facilities and services in low-income residential neighbourhoods for improved living and livelihood activities.