(RE)SHAPING BUILDINGS TO COPE WITH CLIMATE IMPACTS IN COASTAL SETTLEMENTS

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Climate risks are a big deal in coastal areas. Low-income informal urban communities in coastal areas experience climate related phenomena such as flooding, sea level rise, ocean surge, windstorm. This paper deals with climate impacts and adaptation strategies in a coastal community within Lagos, Nigeria. A mix of quantitative, qualitative and ethnographic methods were adopted for field work. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 14 purposively selected residents. A survey to elicit information from a wider number of residents followed the interviews. Responses from 257 residents were collected and analyzed. To disseminate some of the findings from earlier methods and harvest feedback/additional information, town hall meeting was held in the community. The meeting helped to gain better understanding of information earlier collected. Perception of the residents on climate-related issues and impacts of flooding, sea level rise and windstorm came to the fore. Measures utilized to prevent and cope with flooding, sea level rise and windstorms on households, the buildings and physical environment are presented. These are largely structural (how houses are shaped and reshaped) and non-structural. This case illuminate complexities at the intersections between informal urbanization, urban poverty and climate change; but also inspire possible means of addressing the challenges.
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Muyiwa Adegun is a Lecturer in the Department of Architecture, School of Environmental Technology, Federal University of Technology, Akure, Nigeria. He completed his PhD at the School of Architecture and Planning, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa (Wits) and his thesis focused on “Informal Settlement Intervention and Green Infrastructure: exploring just sustainability in Johannesburg”. The work was supported with funding from Carnegie Corporation’s Next Generation of African Scholars Programme. He has been a Visiting Scholar at Canada Centre for Architecture (CCA), Montreal; Postdoctoral Fellow at the Global Change Institute, WITS and Guest Researcher at Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala, Sweden. His area of research is environmental sustainability in housing and low-income urban settlements within sub-Saharan Africa.