Impacts of land-based pollutants on water chemistry and benthic macroinvertebrates community in a coastal lagoon, Lagos, Nigeria

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Introduction

Makoko is a slum in Lagos. Originally established as a fishing village, the community eventually developed into a slum as a result of a population explosion. Nigerian government officials demolished dozens of homes in the area [1]. The destruction of this historic community occurred to redevelop what is now considered the premier waterfront his community. A district across the third Mainland Bridge on the Lagos mainland coast. One third of the community is on stilts along the lagoon and the rest is in the countryside [2]. The waterfront part of the community is mainly inhabited by Egun tribes who migrated from Badagary and the Republic of Benin, whose main occupation is fishing [3]. In July 2012, the Lagos state government ordered the removal of some of the poles behind power lines without notice. As a result, several pillars on the Iwaya-Mako coast were destroyed, leaving many families homeless. The people of Makoko have been under great pressure in recent years due to the rising value of their land [4]. Gentrification and real estate projects are threatening their right to live in the neighborhoods they have lived in for 60 years. This pressure turned into real displacement in 2017, forcing people to leave their settlements. In the same year, the Lagos High Court ruled that government-ordered evictions were unconstitutional [5].

Description

Code for Africa, a civil society technology and data journalism initiative active on the African continent, decided to work with local communities to create the first bottom-up map of Makoko. Supported by Humanitarian OpenStreetMap (HOTOSM) and the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting, the project had three goals [4]. Training local youth to fly drones and collect geospatial data using GPS and the Open Data Kit to create detailed maps of Makoko. Open to the public on OpenStreetMap and run map-driven data journalism campaigns about local living conditions [2]. Schools, pharmacies, markets, restaurants, water sources, churches, mosques, shops, etc. Makoko people could choose what to put on their map. Bottom-up, open-source, on-demand maps like Makoko add value because they are the result of a participatory process. Open source maps serve as a vehicle for communities to prove their existence and coordinate joint efforts to improve living conditions [5]. Armed with nothing but a bucket and a will to live, he explains, the excavator descends a wooden ladder deep into the lagoon. The depth they go means total immersion. Then they have to climb up with buckets of sand emptied into the bottom of the boat. The boat, with the wet sand piled high enough to sink, makes its way to shore, where the sand is dumped into a truck. They are loaded onto and transported to construction sites across the city [3].

Conclusion

This being my fourth visit, Makoko is exactly what I've always known. From a small 'pier', visitors and residents board dugout canoes and enter the maze of floating villages. Gray-black mud passing through the lagoon water. The tangle of boats gliding impatiently through a maze of waterways reminds Makoko traffic of the infamous streets of Lagos. Then there is the hustle and bustle of human activity. A woman who smokes fish and sells food and junk. Half-naked children rowing their own boats or playing on the porch of a wooden hut. White-robed parishioners sing and dance on boats in impromptu churches.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declares there is no conflict of interest in publishing this article.

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