

Chapter 2

Recreational Centres as Urban Commons: Potential and Barriers to Regeneration in Zambia



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Abstract The wellbeing of people centres on the value of their families and jobs; hence, they exert effort on issues directly impacting these two sections. However, this focus has led to the decline of social cohesion. Thus, cities must incorporate space outside work and home if they are to promote healthy societal life. Commercial and public space fails to foster togetherness due to market logic forces and the illegality of citizens to maintain neglected spaces. Therefore, this calls for inclusive participation of citizens in managing shared goods and services or urban commons. Despite the diversity of commons, only parks and greenery are used to describe those of a recreational nature. This chapter advocates for the use of recreational centres as urban commons in communities that experience deterioration, due to their potential to bring about regeneration. Using degenerated recreational centres in Zambia, this research adopts a qualitative approach to investigate the potential and determine the barriers constraining the regeneration of these facilities. The chapter found that although recreational centres are valuable, their management is hampered by a lack of institutional support and poor policy enforcement. Management of recreational centres as urban commons must thus be policy-driven for successful community regeneration.

Keywords Urban commons · Third place · Recreational centres · Regeneration · Zambia

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Introduction

In conceptualising urban spaces and assets as urban commons, most scholars refer to ‘urban green commons’ such as lakes, parks and gardens (Ostrom 2015; Foster and Iaione 2020; Feinberg et al. 2021). McGuirk (2015) and Ostrom (2015) however suggested up-scaling commoning beyond ‘gardening’ and using it to address societal challenges like housing, poverty and energy use. Urban infrastructure such as broadband, roads and housing are therefore, being submitted as urban commons (Foster and Iaione 2020; Vazquez 2022). Additionally, urban commons have the potential to regenerate communities that have experienced deterioration of the social, economic and physical environments. Commoning practices develop resilience of the community by offering access to services and activities focused on public space and abandoned or misused buildings (Carlone et al. 2022). This chapter thus advocates for the use of recreation centres as urban commons in communities that have experienced deterioration of the social, economic and physical environments.

Oldenburg and Brissett (1982) stated that people invest time and energy in issues that enhance their home and work life due to the value placed on these two sections. They posited that people are reluctant to participate in those activities that do not promote these two parts of life, which results in the decline of the sense of community. Bingham-Hall (2016) thus suggests the need for incorporating a range of public spaces or ‘third places’ outside of home and work. It is believed that this will develop social cohesion and a robust societal life which is vital for a healthy community (Feinberg et al. 2021). However, commercial and public spaces fail to foster this togetherness due to market logic forces that exclude and segregate those unable to afford their use (Bingham-Hall 2016). The concept of urban commons has thus evolved due to the importance of this third place in people’s lives and the need to revitalise communities.

According to Dellenbaugh et al. (2015:10), *the urban commons are about collectively appropriating and regulating the shared concerns of the everyday*. Boydell and Searle (2014:324) added that such management includes *equitable use, access and sustainability* aspects. Nemeth (2009) further defines a commons as a place for social interaction and developing personalities through unstructured connections. Therefore, these publicly accessible places or commons are critical for lively and sustainable communities. Peter and Meyer (2022) also recommend that commoning is critical to the agenda of developing smart cities. Smart cities are defined as the use of technology and innovative approaches to the provision of community services and urban development (Zheng et al. 2019; Lee et al. 2022). The European Commission (n.d.) adds that a smart city goes beyond the use of technology for developing better urban spaces to include smarter transport, water, energy and waste disposal and safer and inclusive public spaces. Thus, urban commons fit well into the creation of smart cities, as they encourage citizen participation and restructure governance of local resources, in an effort to improve the quality of life for the communities (Batagan 2011; Mundada and Mukkamala 2020; Peter and Meyer 2022). Kohn (2004), however, cautioned against the use of ‘commons’ as the term could have

elitist and discriminatory connotations. This is because in referring to commons derived from the term community, one must belong to the said community by association or residence in order to enjoy joint use, access or management. Borch and Kornberger (2015) also added, based on their definition of commons as a resource to be shared by a group of people, that the group must be clearly clarified.

Nevertheless, the alternative term ‘public’, often meaning open, accessible or owned by the state, also has its limitations, as not every public place is accessible such as military institutions. Harvey (2011) adds that even some seemingly open-access commons are controlled and privately managed. Vazquez (2022) further states that very few commons can function independently and uses the term ‘hybrids’. This signifies the relationship established by the commons with the state or market in obtaining financial assistance and legal protection. Thus, McGinnis (2001:3) describes commons *as not just public spaces that accommodate a variety of social activities and where people gather but also provide a sense of identity, belonging, connectedness, fun, tradition, stories and a source of memories.*

Mazzuco (2016) observed a striking amount of underused and misused public spaces, which has further contributed to the diminishing sense of community and public life. Similar observations were made by Camerin (2021) about former military sites, which were large tracts of land. Without proper strategies for their management, these public spaces or urban commons become dilapidated and neglected. Nevertheless, it has been agreed by researchers that they have the potential to trigger community resilience to manage economic, social and environmental crises through capacity building, provision of affordable space and the opportunity for civic participation and self-governance. Profit-driven regeneration of these spaces often contends with resistance by communities presented by many protests and thus calls for policy-driven regeneration and the development of regulations for shared-care of urban commons (Dellenbaugh et al. 2015). However, crucial legal gaps have been identified in managing cities, specifically urban commons. Boydell and Searle (2014:338) explored the diversity of rights, obligations and restrictions that can apply to urban commons and concluded that urban spaces comprise *a range of potential uses with a corresponding range of perceived use rights.* These, if not well managed, can be a source of struggle and conflict regarding ownership and control of resources. For example, in Bologna (Italy), it was illegal for citizens to improve or maintain public spaces and abandoned buildings that directly impacted their lives (Cities of Service 2018). This was mitigated by developing the Regulation on Public Collaboration between Citizens and the City for the care and regeneration of urban commons. The regulation allows citizens and private organisations to sign collaborative pacts with the city to improve public space, green areas and abandoned buildings.

Similarly, Park et al. (2020) also stated that cities are tightly controlled by regulations and policies, which stifle creativity and people’s actions. In their research in Seoul, South Korea, poor tenants, homeless people and street vendors who were excluded from the urban process by gentrification and displacement squatted on idle railroad land owned by the Korea Rail Network Authority (KRNA) as a protest. This triggered the emergence of urban commons as havens in that the displaced people

were able to find solace and a communal solution to their predicament of homelessness. Hence, there is a need for systemic restructuring of commoning practices to produce a revitalised urban society, with urban commons considered a vital resource for urban development.

Kohn (2004) and Borch and Kornberger (2015) also pointed out that public spaces are not devalued or exhausted by their use, and the more people access and utilise them, the more their value increases. Hence, Efroymson et al. (2009) called for their preservation, especially those very popular in the community. For instance, the old Berlin Airport in Tempelhof, which closed in 2008, was reopened in 2010 as a recreation facility named the Tempelhof Field. Residents voted to use it as it was, rejecting any form of construction. The place currently comprises community gardens, dog parks, picnic areas and sports facilities, while the two landing strips are used by cyclists, skaters, joggers and walkers, and attract over three million visitors every year (Vazquez 2022). Thus, as Orum and Neal (2010) conclude, the more foot count there is to a facility, the more profound and intense the sense of community. And the opposite consequently is that the less traffic to these spaces, the less the sense of community becomes.

Like Mazzuco's (2016) observation about underused and misused public spaces, the World Bank (2016) suggested that every city has underutilised areas often due to urban development patterns. These underused areas can be individual buildings or whole communities with social, economic and physical attributes, leading to what scholars term urban decay (Hyra and Rugh 2016; Hwang and Woo 2020). Indicators include boarded-up buildings, derelict properties, closed businesses and high crime and unemployment rates (Udeh and Okeke 2018). This urban decay is caused by deindustrialisation, wars and reduction in economic activities and is known to cause environmental degradation from pollution, the decline of values of neighbouring properties, and being havens for crime (Wilson 2012; Elrahman 2016). These dilapidated spaces, also known as brownfields, need to be regenerated to make them useable. The regeneration process aims to restore the community's attractiveness through innovative efforts. Once regenerated, the community can enjoy a cleaner environment and overall improvement in residents' quality of life near and around the facilities.

For successful regeneration to occur, the community must be allowed to participate at every stage of the process to enable empowerment, skills transfer and self-governance. This building of competencies in the community allows them to control the process and, subsequently, their lives. Regeneration processes inundated with bureaucratic practices do not result in environmentally sensitive, economically viable and socially acceptable communities, so coresponsibility or a blend of top-down and bottom-up approaches is being advocated (Bartke and Schwarze 2015; Vazquez 2022). Vazquez (2022) believes these foster the communal spirit and are more egalitarian. The 'Making Space in Dalston' Project is a success story of this top-down/bottom-up approach to regenerating a community. In the early 1990s, Dalston (UK) had plunged into one of the worst economic, social and environmental crises due to deindustrialisation and the oil crisis (Vazquez 2022). Having been gentrified within the 2004 London Plan as an area of preferential regeneration,

the project began as a top-down process. However, without previous consultations with the community, the developers designed excessive building heights and densities and reduced the percentage of affordable housing from 50 to 13%. This infuriated the residents of Dalston and thus resulted in the adoption of the more transparent bottom-up approach. Consultants J & L Gibbons and Muf Architecture/Art created a methodology to embrace the two approaches based on three fundamental principles: 1—Valuing what was there; 2—nurturing the possible and 3—defining what was missing. The project went beyond considering only listed buildings but included abandoned facilities, murals and signs as assets. The project was fragmented into 76 micro-interventions and phased into flexible stages resulting in the completion of the project in 12 months, a feat inconceivable in urbanism processes. Another achievement of the project is the yearly plan of events that take place in Gillett Square (one of its facilities), which include: African street markets, skating competitions, artistic performances, children’s festivals, jazz concerts, musical parades and carnivals, electronic music workshops, charity events, courses and workshops, summer schools, photography festivals and the celebration of independence days of countries like Jamaica or Senegal (Vazquez 2022:175). The project proved how public space regeneration could be achieved through small but precise interventions, using limited resources and by the goodwill and voluntarism of both residents and professionals.

This chapter, therefore, advocates for the use of recreation centres as urban commons in communities that have experienced social, economic and physical deterioration due to their potential to bring about regeneration. It explores the opportunities presented by recreation centres for communities to be mobilised, empowered and enriched through their participation and the barriers that could hinder the regeneration of the dilapidated public facilities.

Rationale of the Study

Urban commons are a global phenomenon; thus, their management is a world-wide concern. Iaione (2015) identifies two factors that determine urban spaces and services’ crises. One factor is the deficit and decline of public spaces, and the second is citizens’ gradual loss of interest in public spaces. These two factors can be observed in most of the Copperbelt Province of Zambia’s recreation centres. Due to the impact of privatisation of the mining industry in the country, leading to the gap in the management of recreation centres that belonged to the mines, most of them lie in ruins with no proper strategy, resources or management. Regenerating them would lead to positive effects of recreation, thereby improving the community’s health and general quality of life. Therefore, there is need to embrace diverse modern methods to operate urban spaces in general and more specifically the recreation centres. Examples of grassroots projects that support collective participation in and ownership of urban space exist under the banner of urban commons (Bingham-Hall 2016). Thus, public spaces can become a resource for urban development when transformed into urban commons

(Mazzuco 2016). Therefore, this chapter aims to investigate considering recreation centres as a resource for regeneration by embracing them as urban commons.

A Brief History of Zambian Recreation Centres and the Subsequent Degeneration

The Zambian story is not complete without mentioning the mining of copper, an activity that has been critical to the country's existence. Although mining exploration began long before the arrival of European prospectors in the early 1900s, the first official mine was established in 1927 in a town called Luanshya (ICMM 2014). For several years after that, many mines were opened in various towns of the Copperbelt Province, which borders the Democratic Republic of Congo (see Fig. 2.1).

Although the mines were in private hands, they provided many public services and goods to meet the community's social needs (Mutale 2004). After independence from colonial rule in 1964, the Zambian Government began restructuring the economy by nationalising various foreign-owned firms, including the mines. This resulted in establishing the parastatal, the Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines (ZCCM), which regarded the different mines as divisions, and continued with the provision of social services and goods for the mine employees and their communities. Services included subsidised housing, education, health, waste management and recreation services (Fraser and Lungu 2006). Regarding recreation services, a host of centres were constructed in all mining townships and suburbs to provide various sporting activities and recreation amenities to benefit the whole community. However, the nationalisation process was poorly timed as copper prices on the international market slumped, resulting in the country borrowing heavily to maintain the operations of the mines and social responsibilities (Fraser and Lungu 2006). In the early 1990s, the country undertook a Structural Adjustment Program which included the reprivatization of the mining sector, leading to the sale of assets as mining packages. The Development Agreements signed by investors allowed them to decide which assets to take on, leaving the community services and most social assets like schools, health facilities and recreation centres to be adopted by government, sold to individuals or given off as trusts (Rothchild and Sons Ltd 1998). The government did not emphasise ownership and management of the social services, and thus, it was not an obligation. This movement from ZCCM to private ownership created a vacuum in the management of most recreation centres, and thus, most are now in a deplorable state.

In agreement with Iaione (2015) factors of crises, it is evident that the recreation centres in the Copperbelt Province have suffered from decline as well as the loss of interest by the citizenry of the communities where they are located. The current state does not support the provision of social and recreation services, and thus, there is a need to identify ways to revamp them.



Fig. 2.1 Copperbelt Province of Zambia. *Source* https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Zambia_Copperbelt_Province_Districts.svg. Date accessed, 12 July 2022

Methodology

This chapter investigates the possibility of using recreation centres as urban commons to regenerate communities battling social, economic and physical degeneration. To achieve this, the following questions are addressed:

- What characteristics of the recreation centres make them suitable options for consideration as urban commons?
- What benefits can be derived from using the recreation centres as urban commons?
- What challenges need to be addressed to ensure sustainable regeneration?

In addressing the above questions, the chapter adopted a qualitative approach and thus included qualitative data collection and analysis techniques. Data was collected using interviews and focus group discussions. A quintain of four recreation centres in

Table 2.1 Recreation centres forming the study quintain

Focus Group Discussion Number	Recreation Centre	Town	Date held	No of attendants
FGD1	Nkana Main Recreation Centre	Kitwe	28/10/2021	4
FGD2	Chamboli Football Ground	Kitwe	08/12/2021	11
FGD3	Bufuke Clubhouse	Mufulira	20/01/2022	5
FGD4	Mufulira Main Recreation Centre	Mufulira	04/02/2022	4

Source Authors, 2022

two towns, Kitwe and Mufulira, was developed so that results and conclusions can be compared and contrasted for robustness and comprehensive inferences (Ridder 2017; Yin 2018). Kitwe was considered because it was central to the country's urbanisation process and hosts a variety of recreation centres in many townships, while Mufulira was selected because it had a high number of sports councils and membership representing various clubs (Horizon 1963; Mutale 2004). The Nkana Main Recreation Centre and the Chamboli Football Ground in Kitwe, and the Mufulira Main Recreation Centre and Bufuke Club in Mufulira were selected as case studies to form the quintain.

Four Focus Group Discussions were held at each of the four recreation centres. Attendants were from various walks of life, including churches, schools, non-governmental organisations dealing with sports and the recreation centre managers. Details are presented in Table 2.1.

Interviews were conducted with people managing the recreation centres under review and other key stakeholders. Other stakeholders included in the study were government representatives under the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Arts, a former ZCCM employee who had been responsible for social services, and those managing recreation centres constructed outside the mining industry. This was done to gain insights into the sports and recreation sector and lessons on its functions and operation structures. Details about the interviewees and information required are presented in Table 2.2.

Results and Discussion

This chapter discusses urban commons using Kitwe and Mufulira recreation centres constructed and managed by the mining companies and the parastatal ZCCM. As mentioned earlier, the gap caused by the privatisation process has resulted in their deplorable state, as seen in the pictures below. The Nkana Main and Mufulira Main Recreation Centres have got some sections in a better status because some sports disciplines have sponsorship from the Mopani Copper Mines Plc. (MCM), an investor

Table 2.2 Details of interviews conducted

Interviewee	Designation and information required	Town	Date held
A	Former ZCCM Social Services Employee—operations of the mines regarding the provision of social services	Kitwe	07/10/2019
B	Lecturer at the Copperbelt University—has researched the impact of privatisation	Kitwe	17/02/2020
C	Club Manager for Nkana Main Recreation Centre—current management and operations	Kitwe	08/09/2020
D	Club Manager for Diggers Rugby Club—current management and operations	Kitwe	08/09/2020
E	Manager for Bufuke Club—current management and operations	Mufulira	23/12/2020
F	Mopani Primary School Headteacher for Swimming Pool—current management and operations	Mufulira	23/12/2020
G	Club Manager for Squash Club—current management and operations	Mufulira	23/12/2020
H and I	Club Manager and Grounds Manager for Leopards Cage Rugby Club—current management and operations	Mufulira	23/12/2020
J	Provincial Youth Development Coordinator at the Ministry of Youth Sport and Arts—government plans and programs for sports and recreation in the Copperbelt Province	Ndola	07/04/2021
K	Provincial Sports Coordinator at the Ministry of Youth Sport and Arts—government plans and programs for sports and recreation in the Copperbelt Province	Ndola	19/04/2021
L	Chief Executive Officer at the Olympic Youth Development Centre (OYDC)—current recreational services being offered; management strategies; plans and innovative ideas	Lusaka	03/05/2021
M and N	Manager and Accountant for Zamsure Sports Complex—current recreational services being offered; management strategies; plans and innovative ideas	Lusaka	04/05/2021
O	Club Manager for Bank of Zambia Sports Recreation Centre—current recreational services being offered; management strategies; plans and innovative ideas	Lusaka	04/05/2021
P	Supervisor/Caretaker for Fallsway Arena (Former BP Sports Complex)—current recreational services being offered; management strategies; plans and innovative ideas	Lusaka	07/05/2021
Q	Assistant Director, Department of Housing and Social Services, Kitwe City Council—municipality's community development operations, plans and challenges regarding sport and recreation	Kitwe	22/09/2021
R	Community Development Officer, Department of Housing and Social Services, Mufulira Municipal Council—municipality's community development operations, plans and challenges regarding sport and recreation	Mufulira	13/01/2022

Source Authors, 2022



Fig. 2.2 a–d Nkana Main Recreation Centre (Kitwe) showing the main clubhouse, bowling clubhouse, bowling pitch and diggers rugby club pitch

which acquired part of the mines in Kitwe and Mufulira. The rugby clubs and the swimming pool in Mufulira get grants from MCM to pay employees and for everyday operations. However, the rest of the facilities do not receive any funding and are thus dilapidated. Figures 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5 show the four facilities that form the quintain.

Suitable Characteristics of Recreation Centres

Several characteristics of the recreation centres make them suitable options for consideration as urban commons. A few are noted in the following section.

Management structures

The four recreation centres had various management structures in place.

- The Nkana Main Recreation Club (Kitwe) is divided into four sections, each with its management and operating systems. The first section, called Nkana Mine Recreation Centre, is managed by former mine employees who had registered a company and operate a third (1/3) of the main recreation centre building. They manage the beer garden, three bar areas and three halls currently rented out to



Fig. 2.3 a–d Chamboli Football Grounds (locally known as Mogadishu) (Kitwe) showing the clubhouse, change rooms, football pitch and volleyball courts

churches. They have a Board in place that oversees the centre’s functions and makes the necessary decisions for its continued existence. The second section, also a third of the main recreation centre building, is owned by Nkana Business Ventures, which support the Nkana Football Club. Due to the poor state of their building section, no activities occur. The Antioch Bible Church uses the third and last section of the main recreation centre building. They took on the indoor and outdoor basketball courts and converted them to support the functions of the church. The fourth section of the recreation centre is the Diggers Rugby Club which the Mopani Copper Mines Plc. supports. It is managed by an Executive Committee who make decisions regarding the club’s operations.

- Chamboli Football Ground (Kitwe) does not have a formal management structure. No one has complete ownership of the facility, so volunteers of various community groups organise activities when the opportunity arises. A Police Post was established to deter further vandalism as a decision by the community.
- Mufulira Main Recreation Centre (Mufulira) has various management structures that manage the separate services or sports disciplines. The Cricket Club currently has no official owners and is not operational. It is derelict and closed up with no activities taking place. MCM is currently managing the swimming pool through the Mopani Primary School. It gets funding from MCM for big capital projects such as refurbishing the pool pump house and salaries for the full-time employees.



Fig. 2.4 a–d Mufulira Main Recreation Centre (Mufulira) showing the cricket clubhouse, squash clubhouse, swimming pool and Leopard's Cage Rugby Club Pitch



Fig. 2.5 a–d Bufuke Club (Mufulira) showing the club house front and back, football pitch and camp house

The Squash Club is managed by a group of volunteers who have formed a board. The board is responsible for financing and general management of the club. The Leopard’s Cage Rugby Club is managed by MCM, who finances the club’s operations.

- Bufuke Club is managed by a committee of volunteers from the Butondo Community who have formed a board. They are caretakers of the facility and are safeguarding the place from vandalism.

Scholars refer to combined or collective management as a characteristic of urban commons (Shah and Garg 2017; Feinberg et al. 2021). Stakeholders as interest groups or individuals hold varying rights to these spaces, managing accessibility, use and daily operations. The recreation centres under review had stakeholders coming together in various decision-making roles and capacities to ensure the facilities have a structure (as shown in Fig. 2.6). Even Chamboli Football Ground which did not necessarily have a designated management structure had the community coming together to make decisions for and on behalf of the facility. The various organisations sometimes come together to decide what happens, for instance, in the case of the establishment of the Police Post. Thus, the recreation centres all qualify and meet the criteria to be considered urban commons due to the suitable common management structures in place.

Public space

This characteristic denotes being open and accessible to community people (Shah and Garg 2017; Vazquez 2022). All four recreation centres are accessible to the community with services such as restaurants and bars. However, services such as using the rugby pitches and squash courts are the preserve of players of the resident teams at the clubs because they pay membership or subscription fees which grant them exclusive use. The Chamboli Football Ground is the only recreation centre that allows any football team to use the premises free of charge, even though it has a resident football team. This is because the resident football team, Zanama Football

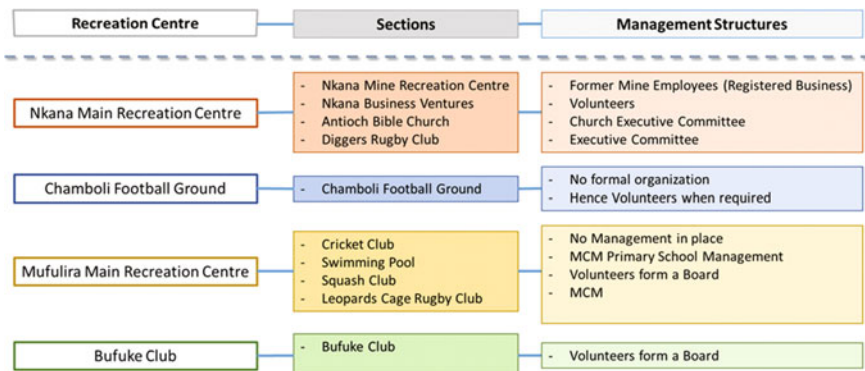


Fig. 2.6 Management structures that exist at the four recreation centres. Source Authors, 2022

Club, is currently not performing well in the national league, so the football ground is open and available to anyone wishing to use it. The Nkana Main Recreation Centre section, owned by former mine employees, has tried to encourage patrons to become members so that they can pay subscription fees. However, because of the poor state of the facility, people are not interested in being paid up members and thus use the facility for refreshments.

Underused and misused public space

A key feature of grassroots projects and the urban commons is that they are established in underused and misused public spaces. All four recreation centres are currently being underused and misused. The Nkana Main Recreation Centre in Kitwe was once the headquarters of various sports activities organised by the mines, and so many of them had offices in the main recreation centre building, including the bowling, cricket and rugby clubs. However, comparing it to the current use, the halls that had been previously used for darts, bingo, ballroom dancing, snooker and weightlifting, to mention a few, are currently either closed up or rented out to churches. Even the basketball courts are being misused as they operate only as the Antioch Bible Church. Various local groups are using the Chamboli Football Ground pitch, but the clubhouse and change rooms are not being used because they have been severely vandalised. Further, even though the football pitch is used regularly, people use it as a shortcut, so the grass is completely destroyed. A similar situation exists in Mufulira, where the Mufulira Main Recreation Centre has only the squash club courts and rugby club pitch and bars being used, while the rest of the facilities are not operational. At the time of the study, the swimming pool did not have water and had not been used for over a year as it had been under renovation. At Bufuke Club, the football pitch is operational as it is the home of the Butondo Western Tigers Football Club, as well as the indoor and outdoor bars. However, the club camp house and halls are rented out to churches.

Provide the opportunity for recreation

McGinnis (2001) and Feinberg et al. (2021) describe urban commons as spaces that provide fun and recreation opportunities. Even in their current dilapidated state, the four recreation centres are providing recreation services to the surrounding communities. Apart from the various sports disciplines available such as football, rugby, pool and squash, the facilities offer refreshments to patrons. This makes the recreation centres places that can still attract community members seeking these services.

The characteristics of the four recreation centres that make them suitable for consideration as urban commons are summarised and shown in Fig. 2.7.

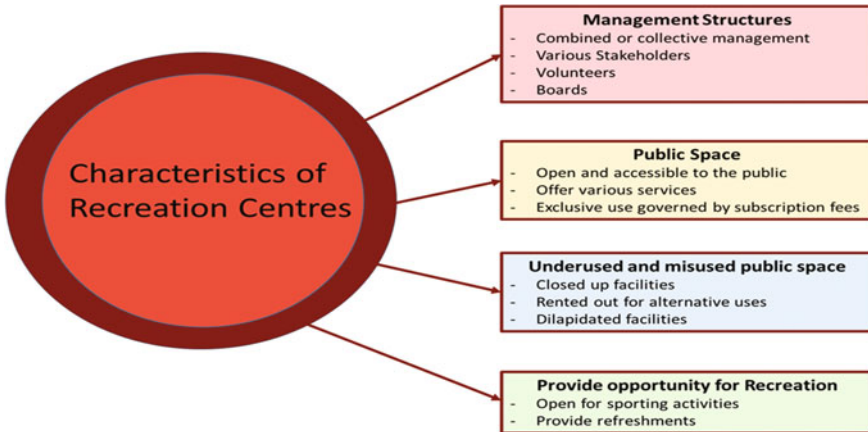


Fig. 2.7 Characteristics of recreation centres that make them suitable for consideration as urban commons. *Source* Authors, 2022

Benefits of Using Recreation Centres as Urban Commons

Feinberg et al. (2021) suggest that urban commons benefit individuals and the community. The people interviewed and those who attended the focus group discussions were asked whether the recreation centres benefited the community, and they all agreed to this.

Potential to increase value by use

Interviewee O bemoaned that the sport and recreation industry is struggling because too few people are using recreation facilities and said that there is need for deliberate steps to be taken to increase the number of people accessing the facilities. One of the post-privatisation recreation centres visited, Fallsway Arena in Lusaka, is running a football academy sponsored by the Super Sport United Football Club based on South Africa. The caretaker revealed that it seemed too simple to be successful when the program began. However, he confessed that now people pay the \$100 monthly subscription consistently, while some even pay 3, 6 and even 12 months in advance.

Similarly, the Olympic Youth Development Centre (OYDC) in Lusaka, another post-privatisation facility visited, records overwhelming participation in the services provided. Established as a centre to prepare national sports teams for the Olympic Games, it offers over 20 sporting disciplines and hence receives close to 800 youths per week, participating in organised sports leagues. This supports the observation by Kohn (2004) and Efroymsen et al. (2009) who stated that the more public spaces are used, the more valuable they become to society.

Local economic development

It was pointed out in FGD4 that having an active facility would encourage vendors of snacks and refreshments, and these sales would help families in the community

gain some finances. Another attendant suggested that the recreation centres could host fundraising ventures for outside organisations such as the church. Activities such as fetes, galas and festivals at these facilities could encourage the community to use them more often. The Mfulira Main Recreation Centre, Leopard's Cage Rugby Club currently runs a team regalia shop as a source of extra income. Other shops can also be opened, promoting activity and increasing traffic to these facilities. This is in line with the extra activities added to improve the operations at the Tempelhof Field and Dalston Project mentioned earlier.

Skills and health enhancement

One interesting activity found at the Mfulira Main Recreation Centre, Leopard's Cage Rugby Club is the running of a tailoring school and shop. This was established to ensure all the Leopardesses (the female rugby team) have a skill even as they play rugby. The skill is believed to help the team get more economic support apart from the allowances they receive. The tailoring school is also open to the general community so more young people can get economically empowered.

Interviewee J pointed out that *'our towns are turning into concrete forests because we are disregarding recreation facilities... the number of people doing exercises is improving, but there is no space in communities'*. This implies that people realised the need to exercise, but this is discouraging without the space to do so. Thus, having these recreation centres functioning well should result in a healthier community.

Sense of pride and identity

Morrison (2016) describes pride as the belief in one's contribution towards a phenomenon or event, even abstractly. This is exemplified in fans of sports teams and celebrities or the patriotic feelings of birth and association. The recreation centres contribute to community pride and identity due to the famous sportsmen and women who have roots there. Bufuke Club, for example, has produced footballers such as Beston Chambeshi and Felix Katongo, who have represented the country by playing in the Zambia National Football Team. Community members thus feel pride when they relate with the recreation centre, knowing that it has contributed to the identity of national team players.

Additionally, an attendant of FGD2 expressed strong sentiment about the Chamboli Football Ground and those wishing to claim ownership of the recreation facility. It was revealed that an unscrupulous local political leader sold the facility to an upcoming church, which resulted in heated protests from the community. *'This ground is personal and sentimental to the community, so no one can come and claim it. We are willing to fight for this ground, and anyone who tries to use underhanded methods can die'*. This shows that community members hold very strong feelings about these public spaces and thus are willing to do whatever it takes to protect and value them.

The benefits of recreation centres as urban commons are summarised in Fig. 2.8.

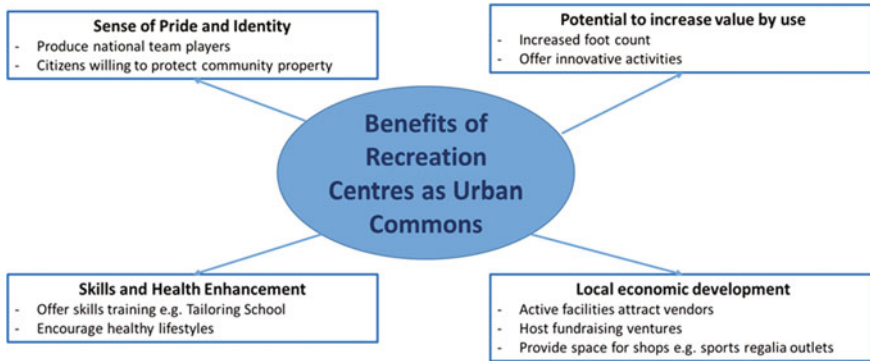


Fig. 2.8 Benefits of recreation centres as urban commons. *Source* Authors, 2022

Challenges Hindering Sustainable Regeneration

Although the recreation centres have great potential to benefit the communities where they are located, a number of challenges may hinder their sustainable regeneration. The critical challenges identified are presented below.

Mindset of community

The mindset of the community was unanimously agreed as the key impediment to sustainable regeneration. Interviewee B stated that ‘*communities were spoilt because the mines took care of everything...some people cannot even cut their grass unless the Government comes in*’. Interviewee I added that ‘*our attitude is bad as locals. We don’t have community and responsibility pride. We leave taps open and don’t flush toilets all because there is a worker who will come to clean up after us*’. To enjoy the benefits identified in Fig. 2.8, the community must take responsibility and manage the facilities as they should. One of the attendants of FGD3 said, ‘*where ignorance is bliss, tis folly to be wise*’ about the challenges he encountered as a community leader trying to get people involved in activities that would benefit them. He further added that it was challenging attempting to change the mindset of people as most thought of benefiting themselves only. However, the community played a crucial role in maintaining the character and essence of Tempelhof Field and Dalston. Thus, the community is vital for any regeneration to be achievable because if the community cannot be entrusted with this task, it would be a futile undertaking.

Poor support by local businesses

Interviewee I pointed out that ‘*the financial muscle of the community is deficient. People are struggling to put food on their tables, so they can’t contribute resources*’. This implies that the community needs to obtain outside resources to provide and maintain social services and goods. However, as mentioned earlier, the Development Agreements signed by the investors who purchased the mines, gave them the liberty to choose which assets to buy. Thus, they do not have the impetus to support

local social services. Interviewees A and B affirmed that no law or policy exists to compel investors to look into social infrastructure. *'Even from a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) point of view, they are at liberty to agree or not. If you compel, it ceases to be CSR as CSR is a voluntary action for the public good'*, as pointed out by Interviewee B. This leaves the communities in a vulnerable situation, as they can only access what services are offered by the new investors regardless of their needs.

Additionally, the mines were the biggest employer on the Copperbelt Province, directly and indirectly through contractors and suppliers of various goods and services. Mutale (2004) explains that in the early 1970s, about 32% of employees in Kitwe were employed by Nkana Division under the ZCCM. However, the new mine owners employ less than a quarter of the previous number, causing many local businesses to close down because they relied on the income from mine employees. Many townships are still experiencing the impact of the reduced income as few businesses are operational, and those that are functional are barely surviving.

Politics and Political interference

Politics can be said to be two sides of the same coin as they have been known to bring people together and be a source of conflict in many communities. It was revealed during the focus group discussions that campaigns towards general elections often resulted in large crowds gathering to hear what was being promised by the aspiring candidates. However, these gatherings would also result in conflicts among those supporting opposing political parties. These conflicts can potentially prevent communities from working together to achieve a common goal. Therefore, it is essential to ensure that those from opposing political parties can set aside their differences to benefit the whole community. For instance, an attendant at FGD4 said, *'we had conflicts at the recreation club where one member came from a political party and the other from an opposing party. We told them to keep politics outside the club because it is for the community and not a specific party'*. Such interventions would then ensure the community can progress and work together to achieve desired outcomes.

It was further divulged that some political leaders cause conflicts in the community by frustrating those wishing to serve. An attendant at FGD2 pointed out that *'the politicians have contributed to reducing the trust in the community. When someone comes to help, they think they are there to de-campaign them, so they will intimidate and frustrate the person so much that they will leave the community'*. Thus, the relationship with local politicians will have to be handled dexterously to curb political interference and to ensure that they support any efforts by the community and those from outside wishing to help.

The critical challenges that may hinder sustainable regeneration of the recreation centres are shown in Fig. 2.9.



Fig. 2.9 Challenges hindering the sustainable regeneration of recreation centres. *Source* Authors, 2022

Zambian Recreation Centres as Urban Commons and Future Smart Cities

Urban decay has been described as an unavoidable stage in the life cycle of cities and so degeneration will at some point occur (Fink 2019). This decline is evident in the current state of some of the third places in Zambia. The closed-up businesses, boarded-up buildings and vandalism experienced at the recreation centres, are an indication that there is need for intervention by key stakeholders of the communities where they are located. In order to enjoy the benefits that these facilities provide, despite having the right characteristics, the challenges that have been identified need to be managed. This will lead to successful and sustainable regeneration. Adopting small but precise interventions and the sufficient use of resources, combined with citizen empowerment and self-governance, smart cities will become a reality. This will be as a result of the ripple effect of smarter technologies, safer environments, and the improved socio-economic status of the facilities, spilling over into the communities where they are located. The link between the recreation centres as urban commons and smart cities is presented using the problem and solution tree shown in Fig. 2.10. The problem and solution tree is used because of its ability to identify problems and their causes and effects, as well as presenting the opportunity to convert these into the ideal state or the solution being proposed (Snowdon et al. 2008; Madu et al. 2018; ACGC 2021).

Recommendations

In order to adopt recreation centres as urban commons and for sustainable regeneration to occur, the following are recommended.

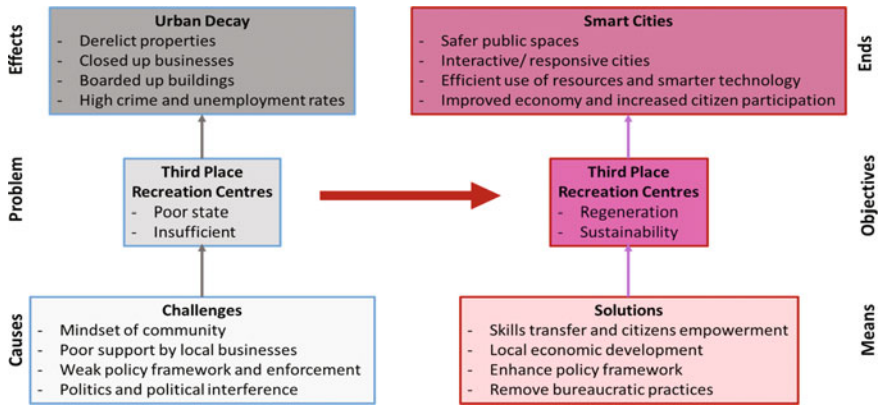


Fig. 2.10 Link between recreation centres as urban commons or third places and smart cities. *Source* Authors, 2022

Mindset change

A critical observation of one attendant of FGD4 was the need for the solution to begin from within. He said, ‘we have gone out to ask for sponsorship and have been asked how much we raised ourselves. So we need to have our effort’. This shows that the community must champion any chance of regeneration, and they must lead the process. A similar sentiment was made in FGD2 where an attendant said, ‘if someone needs to help us as a community, we need to show that we are doing something ourselves, and then the person comes to top up’. Interviewee A added, ‘there was a need for a cultural shift from a laissez-faire attitude to one that can bring results’. Thus, people need to have more responsibility and ownership pride in their community and its assets, and the desire to protect them. Interviewee B added that ‘morality levels must be raised to trust people to do things for others’. There is a need, therefore, to continue engaging the community on the importance of their participation in community affairs if the regeneration of derelict environments is to succeed.

The mindset change can also be brought about by sensitisation by local leaders. Interviewee A suggested that ‘Ward Councilors can bring about a positive change instead of surrounding themselves with cadres chanting slogans’. An attendant of FGD1 also added that ‘implementation is supposed to come from leaders’. Therefore, local leaders from various backgrounds and organisations play a critical role in ensuring that the community is adequately sensitised about the value of managing public and community places.

Create hybrid commons

Interviewee J suggested that ‘the sports and recreation industry was part of the lifeline for development and thus needed to be taken with the seriousness it deserves. All key stakeholders, including Central Government and all Local Authorities, need to find

new solutions to the current state of recreation so that it can enhance the lives of our people'. Thus, the suggestion of hybrid commons, as proposed by Vazquez (2022), is a welcome one. Collaboration of the government, private sector and community could lead to successful regeneration projects, as seen from the Dalston Project. Camerin (2021) also added that developing regulations and policies that legalise commoning are the tools needed as innovative solutions to using empty and underused spaces.

Remove political bureaucracy

As observed from the Bologna story, removing political bureaucracy opens up opportunities for communities to take control of projects that impact them. One of the attendants of FGD3 pointed out that *'the recent pronouncement by the President of Zambia, denouncing cadreism will prevent bullying by those in power'*. This will encourage those who desire to serve and improve their societies, knowing that local political leaders will not harass them. An attendant of FGD1 added the importance of trust in leaders, if people are to be willing to participate in community activities. He said, *'when there is no trust in leaders because the leaders they put trust in did not do what they expected to do or speak for the community, the people will not do anything'*. Thus, with trust in leaders, especially those from political spheres, the community can also be expected to play their part.

Conclusion

Undoubtedly, people need space outside work and home to unwind, relax and interact with others in their community. Without this third place, societies are experiencing a diminishing sense of community. Profit-based third places are segregative, allowing only a select few to access, use and manage them. The alternative of these is public spaces that are often underused and misused, contributing to the shrinking community life. Thus, the argument for urban commons cannot be over-emphasised. Urban commons provide space for the promotion of public health, recreation, community building and various local meetings. Benfield (2017) also suggested making better use of existing spaces to curb sprawling. This can be done by reinventing old and dilapidated facilities that may be present within communities. Hence, there is a need, to consider urban commons as more than just green spaces such as parks and water bodies, but as essential tools to respond to societal problems such as poverty, dereliction and homelessness. Studies have shown the ability of various infrastructures as urban commons to bring about the regeneration of communities, and so this chapter considered degenerated recreation centres on the Copperbelt Province of Zambia. Embarking on deliberate regeneration strategies at the recreation centres could result in interactive and responsive facilities with smarter technologies, sufficient use of resources and sustainability practices, which are the objectives of smart cities. Smart cities cannot be achieved without the transformative approach that includes urban commons and the restructured governance of local resources. Although the recreation centres considered in this chapter meet the requirements of urban commons,

the mindset of the people in the communities, political interference, a weak policy framework and poor support from local businesses, were identified as challenges that need to be addressed if regeneration is to occur. With the increased use of these recreation centres and consequently their value, communities can simultaneously increase in prosperity, in terms of economic and social characteristics. This chapter, therefore, suggests increased sensitisation and engagement of all relevant key stakeholders and the removal of bureaucratic processes to create healthier and more sustainable and smart cities.

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