

## AN ASSEMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATIONS EFFORTS IN CURBING KIDNAPPING IN ILORIN METROPOLIS

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### Abstract

*Nigeria accounts for more than half of all abductions in West Africa. Similarly, various forms of kidnapping have been reported in Kwara State and some communities within the Ilorin metropolis. It is against the foregoing that the study seeks to assess the efforts of community development associations in curbing kidnapping in Ilorin Metropolis. Thus, the following research questions were raised: what are causes of kidnapping in Ilorin Metropolis; what are the efforts adopted by community development associations in curbing kidnapping in Ilorin Metropolis and what are the challenges of community development associations efforts in curbing kidnapping in Ilorin Metropolis and adopted the Theory of Community Participation as a theoretical framework upon which the discussion of the study are based. Descriptive survey was employed to generate quantitative data using multi-stage sampling technique. Purposive sampling was used to select one community where kidnapping has occurred and respondents were randomly selected in each of the three local governments which make up Ilorin metropolis. The descriptive statistics of mean was used to determine the ranking of response among the variables of the study. Findings from the study shows efforts of the CDAs are cooperation with Nigeria police by timely reporting of kidnap cases, barricade and gating of streets, amongst others. This study concluded that in handling this security threats, the community development association efforts were significant in curbing kidnapping and therefore recommend increased participation of members in CDA, sustain aggressive collection of security dues, government monitoring of CDAs, among others.*

**Keywords:** Kidnapping, Community Development Associations, Security, Peace

### Introduction

Kidnapping is one of the great threat to security as appearing to be a new social problem in some part of the world. Kidnapping is an unlawful act of capturing, keeping, or removing someone by force or deception and demanding a ransom or otherwise. For an act to be considered as kidnapping, it must involve a forceful movement of a victim from one place to the other as well as capture and detention of that person be it a child or an adult (Umar, 2022).

The phenomenon is happening with different magnitude and practice in countries such as Mexico, United States of America, Iraq, Cameroon, Nigeria among others. In Mexico for instance, kidnapping is pervasive and it is associated with drug-related violence and corrupt institutions (Ene, 2018). Also, reported cases of kidnappings in the Latin American countries such as Mexico remained steadily high with about 1,300 cases per year previous to 2020 (Statista, 2024).

However, Africa is the continent with the second highest number of kidnapping cases. For example, South Africa recorded the highest number of kidnapping in Africa with a rate of 9.6 kidnappings per 100,000 people (Lancaster, 2022). Similarly, Armed Conflict Location

and Events Data Project (ACLED, 2024) report that Nigeria accounts for more than half of all abductions in West Africa, with 52% of the 4,074 abductions from organised political violence between 2019 and 2023. The country experienced a peak of abductions in 2023, accounting for 58% of the total in West Africa and the highest in the previous five years. Thus, kidnapping has continued to be a threat to life and properties of all calibers of people in the country.

The role of the community in curbing kidnapping through community development associations' efforts is significant. Communities work out strategies together and implement programs to prevent kidnapping. Njoku and Alozie (2024) reports that due to the rising wave of kidnapping in some communities in Imo State, the affected communities through their community development associations hire the services private security guards such as the local hunters and vigilante group to flush out the bandits engaging in kidnapping from their domain hiding in the forest. Also, according to Aregbesola (2023) members of a community are stakeholders in issues of security in their domain. These stakeholders have called for community-based approach and active involvement of traditional institution in tackling the menace of kidnapping in their communities. Furthermore, community development associations that can successfully cooperate with one another, handle problems, and work with their local law enforcement agency are exhibiting characteristics of sustainable and safe communities (Acha, et al., 2023). In general, community development associations are non-profit and voluntary. The structure of CDAs varies depending on numerous factors including the scope of their operations, the types of activities they engage in, and their source(s) of funding (Oshionebo, 2019). Whilst, their various efforts has continue to sustain the communities in providing additional supports to government initiatives in provision of adequate security and safe guarding of life and properties in the communities.

However, between 2019 and 2023, the North West region of Nigeria had the highest rate of abduction (28%), with Kaduna and Katsina being the most affected. The North Central region ranked second with a 4% lower abduction rate, accounting for 24% of the country's total (Angalapu, 2024). Similarly, Olesin (2024) reported that the police in Kwara state paraded 78 suspected kidnappers that were arrested between October 2023 to date and were already at different Correctional facilities in the state with pending cases. Also, Oyekola (2024) stated that a Chinese national was kidnaped in Kwara state capital, Ilorin by suspected kidnappers. Similarly, in Oko-Olowo two persons were killed, while six others sustained varying degrees of injuries, while in the other, a suspected kidnapper was reportedly killed in a failed kidnap in Ilorin, Kwara state capital (Akiyemi, 2023). Since it is obvious that kidnaping has become a threat to security in Ilorin metropolis, it becomes imperative for the communities such as Tanke, Oko-Olowo, amongst other were kidnapping cases has taken place to protect themselves through gating of streets, employment of private security guard such as vigilantes etc. to secure their communities from kidnapping. It is against the foregoing that this study seeks to assess the efforts of community development associations in curbing kidnapping in Ilorin Metropolis.

**The following research questions will guide this study;**

- i. what are the causes of kidnapping in Ilorin metropolis from 2019 to 2024;
- ii. what are the efforts adopted by Community Development Associations in curbing kidnapping in Ilorin Metropolis from 2019 to 2024; and

- iii. what are the challenges of Community Development Associations efforts in curbing kidnapping in Ilorin Metropolis from 2019 to 2024.

## **Literature Review**

### **Theoretical Framework**

Arnstein's Theory of Community Participation (1969) is adopted to assess the efforts of community development associations in curbing kidnapping in Ilorin Metropolis. Arnstein's theory of community participation that stems from the explicit recognition that there are diverse levels of participations from manipulation of the community members, consultation into real participation, which is the levels of participation and the control of the community members. Goldstein et al. (2016) states that Arnstein's theory depicted a ladder of participation in the community (Mohamed, 2018). Under this theory, people are expected to be responsible in every event that takes place in the community since it affects them. According to this theory, the community is a very versatile components and every individual has a role to play in making it better no matter how low the level of participation could be. The theory emphasizes on community members taking ownership of the events around them such as securing the community from kidnappers, and therefore, engage comprehensively in the decision-making processes particularly regarding the implementation of community development associations' efforts towards security issues such as kidnapping. However, the efforts by the community development associations through participation of their members in curbing kidnapping in Ilorin metropolis are cooperation with the Nigeria police, employment of private security guards such as vigilantes, hunters, etc., barricade and gating of streets and restricted time of movement.

### **Community**

Community is a complex and multifaceted concept that has long been a subject of academic discourse and human interest. At its core, a community can be understood as a group of individuals who share common characteristics, whether it be geographical, cultural, or ideological (Cobigo et al., 2016). These shared traits form the foundation upon which social interactions, resource sharing, and collective problem-solving are built, illustrating the intricate networks that define human social organization (Cross et al., 2003). This intricate web of social connections not only fosters a sense of belonging but also serves as a catalyst for innovation and resilience, enabling communities to adapt and thrive in the face of challenges and changes that may arise over time (Spitzer & Twikirize, 2023). This adaptability highlights the importance of community in developing strategies for resilience, as collective actions often emerge from the shared experiences and knowledge of individuals within the group, reinforcing their ability to confront adversity together (Norris et al, 2008).

Furthermore, the development of community resilience is not a static achievement; rather, it is a continuous process that involves engagement, shared responsibility, and the cultivation of social ties among members, all of which are crucial for fostering environments that support collective action in times of crisis (Magis, 2010). Such dynamics underscore how communities can mobilize their resources and strengths, ultimately shaping their capacity to respond effectively to external pressures and changes in their environment, thereby demonstrating the emergent nature of resilience as it relates to human-environment interactions (Fu & Zhang, 2024). This interconnectedness allows

communities to tap into a variety of resources and knowledge that are vital when addressing challenges such as natural disasters, economic fluctuations, or social upheaval, thereby illustrating how the resilience of a community is deeply rooted in both its social ties and its ability to leverage the diverse assets and capacities of its members (Norris et al, 2008). Therefore, the community serves as veritable platform for members of the society to connect and share ideas, transmit cultures and values to enhance social stability.

### **Community Development Associations**

Community development is an age long practice among different communities achieved through collective implementation of tasks and policies for the benefit of all members. Hale et al. (2023) states that a deliberate attempt to create resources that enable locals to enhance their quality of life is known as community development which could be in the form of human, financial, social, political, environmental, or cultural capital, among other types of community capital. According to Ramsey-Soroghay (2022), community development in the context of Nigeria, is a long-standing social activity even before the establishment of the colonial government. Individuals had previously banded together in various historical eras and used shared resources to develop their communities' such as homesteads, clear farmlands, roads, and even some public utility structures, such town halls, market stalls, and palaces of traditional rulers (Akinsorotan & Olujide, 2006). According to Buye (2021) community development is a comprehensive strategy based on the ideas of human rights, empowerment, inclusion, social justice, and group decision-making. However, for a community to meet up with its need in the current stage of globalisation, members will have to form an association to enhance effective collaboration. Hence community development becomes imperative to human security.

### **Kidnapping**

Kidnapping refers to criminal offence which involves abduction of a person against his freedom and subjugates him to the threat of murder or assassination and requesting for ransom before his release. It is a psychic trauma and prohibited behaviour that is being planned by unknown gunmen who carried out the act for financial ritual and some self-interest benefits. Ibrahim and Muktar (2017) define kidnapping as the act of forcibly relocation, detaining, and holding someone in custody. The authors explained that the process can also involves robbing and taking possession of someone in order to extract a ransom or resolve personal grudges. Yakubu (2022) contended that the acts of kidnapping is a crime detention, abduction, use of threats, terror, and servitude of persons While to Ene (2018), kidnapping is a method of abducting someone or a group of people with force because it is thought that they are the cause of an injustice experienced by another group. This definition explained cause of kidnapping oil expatriates in Niger/Delta Nigeria where the perpetrators believed that oil producing companies are sole responsible for their poverty, unemployment and economic depressions being experiencing in the host communities. To end, Ajah et al. (2017) considered kidnapping as "a low-cost, high-yield terror tactics". On the other hands, Udechukwu and Ofoke (2024) viewed kidnapping as motive of an angered man who wants valuable of the kidnapped victim who might be saved by family members. Most of the time, victims are freed after a ransom is paid. However, all forms of kidnapping has continue to serve as threat to the existing peace in the communities and deprive the victim(s) both their hard-earn incomes and psychological well-being.

### **The Efforts of Community Development Association in Curbing Kidnapping in Nigeria**

It is imperative to state that the importance of community participation in community policing cannot be underestimated. Scholarly (Arisukwu et al., 2020; Singh & Zondi, 2020) have attested to this fact that community participation is fundamental to community law enforcing because it provides a wealth of reliable intelligence that is necessary for both preventing and mitigating crime at community level.

Moreover, community policing is not new to Nigeria; both the northern and southern regions of the country have a number of community security arrangement as a result of the intra-tribal conflicts and general chaos of the 16th century; kingships and nobility also resided in fortified communities (Fabiya, 2004). The advent of colonial rule and western system of government seems to have invalidated such security arrangement and replaced with currently overwhelmed conventional security architectural arrangement (Igbokwe-Ibeto & Ogbuagu, 2021). Never the less, in many part of the country, the usage community policing either as a platform to strengthen intelligent gathering or/and to complement conventional security arraignment in Nigeria, is largely in existences and recognised by the government. Under this arrangement, the neighbourhood associations develop mechanisms to deal with the threats of crimes in the neighbourhood which include recruitment of private security personnel, control of access to streets and surveillance of streets by selected residents both during the day and at night (Oke et al., 2021).

Arisukwu et al. (2020) in their empirical study of community participation in crime prevention and control in rural Nigeria found out that the number of police officers in Nigeria country sides is insufficient to deal with the security challenges in Nigeria's local and rural communities. Thereby recommended for the use of local informants to in community policing. Bet the study of Arisukwu et al. (2020) did not investigate the effectiveness of this informal community policing arrangement. Also, Oke et al. (2021) posited that everyday community security is situated within the realm of vigilante security formation with the singular objective of protecting and securing the community. While x-raying through empirical studies on the perception of police and general public, the authors that community policing improved intelligent gathering capacity of the Nigeria Police force and every other security agencies fighting criminalities and insurgencies in Nigeria. To what extend this intelligent gathering capacity of community development association in Ilorin metropolis has mitigated kidnapping is yet to be known.

Zedner (2006) observed that high numbers of security companies seek to take advantage of the private security market opportunities to expand their turnover and maximize returns to their shareholders. To Crisis, Group (2022), community development association engages the services of Vigilante group, community security initiative as in the case of Kwara State (Oyekola, 2024), *Amotekun* in south west Nigeria (Ayodele et al., 2024) etc, in bide to keep respective communities, Local government and state safe from insecurity. In spite of this laudable security arrangement, there is dearth of knowledge on CDAs efforts in mitigating kidnapping activities in In Ilorin metropolis of Kwara State.

### **Methodology**

The study adopted a survey research design. Descriptive survey (questionnaire) was employed to generate quantitative data since it is the most suitable research procedure capable of eliciting responses from a large population (Rea & Parker, 2014). Multi-stage

sampling technique was adopted for this study. The first stage involved using purposive sampling technique in selecting one (1) community where kidnapping has occurred and 136 respondents were randomly selected in each of the three (3) local government which make up Ilorin metropolis. The descriptive statistics of mean was used to determine the ranking of response among the variables of the study.

## Results

### Research Question 1:

What are the causes of kidnapping in Ilorin metropolis?

| Statement/Item                                | SA    | A     | IDK   | D     | SD    | Mean<br>X | Ranking         |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----------|-----------------|
|                                               | Freq. | Freq. | Freq. | Freq. | Freq. |           |                 |
| Unemployment                                  | 160   | 236   | 8     | 4     | 0     | 4.35      | 3 <sup>rd</sup> |
| Poverty                                       | 120   | 268   | 8     | 8     | 4     | 4.21      | 5 <sup>th</sup> |
| Peer group<br>influence                       | 184   | 180   | 40    | 4     | 0     | 4.33      | 4 <sup>th</sup> |
| Greed                                         | 292   | 116   | 0     | 0     | 0     | 4.72      | 2 <sup>nd</sup> |
| Proliferation of<br>arms and light<br>weapons | 308   | 100   | 0     | 0     | 0     | 4.75      | 1 <sup>st</sup> |

X= mean (mean score of 3.0 and above were considered as causes while mean score below 3.0 are not causes)

The result shows all the variables to be the causes of kidnapping in Ilorin metropolis having a mean score above the benchmark. This is in line with finding of Muoemenam and Okafor (2022) that proliferation of small arms and light weapons encourages the kidnapping, assassins, armed robbers, pipeline vandals, insurgents, terrorists and bandits in Nigeria. Also, similar studies by Samuel (2021) confirm that the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) is a major national security challenge in Nigeria. The insecurity resulting from kidnapping, armed robbery, banditry and militancy have become worrisome in Nigeria. All this, are perpetrated with small arms and light weapons, which are easily concealed and used to unleash violence in the society. There is hardly any week that passes by, without a report of kidnapping or the other somewhere in Nigeria. Inyang and Abraham (2013) identified greed as one of causes of kidnapping in Nigeria. They averred that, greed has caused many persons to take part in heinous criminal acts. Kidnapping is perhaps one crime that promotes greed and despair on the human person. Additionally, a study by Ibrahim and Mukhtar (2017) confirm greed was a major reason why people choose kidnapping as their source of revenue as mentioned by some of the respondents. Furthermore, it was shown in the work of Okeke, et al, (2023) that unemployment is a major factor that influences kidnapping in Nigeria. It was also shown that corruption and weak institutional frameworks were among the factors influencing kidnapping in Nigeria. Likewise, findings in the work of Shofiu and Isiaka (2021) revealed that peer pressure influences in kidnapping in Nigeria especially the involvement youths. The finding of the study is also supported by the work of Abdullahi, et al., (2018) which revealed that most of those who committed crime such as kidnapping were as a result of the influence of bad friends, this means that youth could be prone to committing crime as a result of the influence of bad friends. Furthermore, the findings of

Ucha (2010) also confirm that poverty is another cause of kidnapping in Nigeria because poverty is a denial of choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It means lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society. The main intention of kidnappers is to obtain ransom (money). Many Nigerians who ventured into crime do it in other to cater for their family and also to feed, clothe and provide shelter for themselves.

**Research Question 2:** What are the efforts adopted by community development associations in curbing kidnapping in Ilorin metropolis?

| Statement/Item                                                          | SA    | A     | IDK   | D     | SD    | Mean<br>X | Ranking         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----------|-----------------|
|                                                                         | Freq. | Freq. | Freq. | Freq. | Freq. |           |                 |
| Cooperation with the Nigeria Police through intelligence sharing        | 320   | 84    | 0     | 4     | 0     | 4.76      | 1 <sup>st</sup> |
| Employment of private security guards such as vigilantes, hunters, etc. | 232   | 164   | 12    | 0     | 0     | 4.54      | 4 <sup>th</sup> |
| Barricade and gating of streets                                         | 244   | 164   | 0     | 0     | 0     | 4.60      | 2 <sup>nd</sup> |
| Restricted time of movement                                             | 240   | 168   | 0     | 0     | 0     | 4.59      | 3 <sup>rd</sup> |

X= mean (mean score of 3.0 and above were considered as efforts adopted while mean score below 3.0 are not the efforts adopted)

The result of the analysis shows the efforts adopted by community development associations in curbing kidnapping in Ilorin metropolis. As shown in the table, all the variables shows to be as an effective efforts adopted by community development associations in curbing kidnapping in Ilorin metropolis having a mean score above the benchmark. In line with this finding is the evidence from the work of Arisukwu et al. (2020) that the use of local informants is necessary for community policing in Nigeria due to insufficient intelligent capacity of the NPF. In this regard, one of the most prominent roles played by the CDA as observed in this study is creating the security consciousness of community member. This agrees with the study of Acha, et al., (2023) that community participation, collaboration between community police and law enforcement agency, and the formation of quasi-judicial security outfits in communities are community policing strategies for curbing kidnapping in Cross River State. Hence, the adoption of mounting barricade and gating of streets in the communities as security measures to end kidnapping in Ilorin metropolis is very effective in mitigating the menace of kidnapping.

**Research Question 3:** what are the challenges of community development associations efforts in curbing kidnapping in Ilorin metropolis?

| Statement/Item | SA | A | IDK | D | SD | Mean | Ranking |
|----------------|----|---|-----|---|----|------|---------|
|----------------|----|---|-----|---|----|------|---------|

|                                          |  | Freq. | Freq. | Freq. | Freq. | Freq. | X    |                 |
|------------------------------------------|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|-----------------|
| Response from security agents            |  | 300   | 92    | 8     | 0     | 8     | 4.65 | 2 <sup>nd</sup> |
| Effectiveness of private security guards |  | 8     | 32    | 24    | 308   | 36    | 2.19 | 5 <sup>th</sup> |
| Functional CDA                           |  | 268   | 140   | 0     | 0     | 0     | 4.66 | 1 <sup>st</sup> |
| Commitment of members                    |  | 108   | 112   | 92    | 88    | 8     | 3.54 | 3 <sup>rd</sup> |
| Leadership crisis                        |  | 132   | 104   | 20    | 148   | 4     | 3.52 | 4 <sup>th</sup> |

X= mean (mean score of 3.0 and above were considered as some of the challenges while mean score below 3.0 are not the challenges)

The result of the analysis of table 3 shows the challenges of community development associations in curbing kidnapping in Ilorin metropolis. As shown in the table, functional CDA, response from security agents, commitment of members of the CDA, leadership crisis are the challenges of community development associations in curbing kidnapping in Ilorin metropolis having a mean score above the benchmark. Meanwhile, effectiveness of private security guards are not challenges of community development associations in curbing kidnapping in Ilorin metropolis s having a mean score below the benchmark.

Supporting the findings of the study, the work of Busari-Akinbode and Olusegun (2020) revealed that CDAs identified inadequate funds and unwillingness of most members to support the CDA financially as the major challenges experienced by CDAs which has greatly affect provision of private security within the communities. Also, similar with the findings of Okosun (2017) which revealed that the challenges of development associations include; funding and logistics problems, and low level of participation. It is therefore safe to say that CDAs in Ilorin metropolis are unable to function effective due to inadequate co-operation of the members.

Also, while this study has demonstrated the readiness of CDA to partner with NPF in mitigating kidnapping, slow and inability of the NPF response to distress and intelligent reports CDA has become a great challenge to the role of CDA in fighting kidnapping in Ilorin metropolis. The finding is the different from the study of Friday (2019) that Nigerian Police, which is the major constituted security agency, has not lived up to expectations in terms of responding promptly to crime incidents such as kidnapping, theft. Therefore, their quick responses is necessary for CDA to fight against kidnapping. On leadership crisis, the study of Asor, et al., (2022) revealed that some of the reasons why community engagement in security initiatives has been limited at times is as a result of absence of leadership or vision which has left the community feeling that it has no real control over its own destiny. Likewise, in line with findings of the study, Busari-Akinbode and Olusegun (2020) study found out that factors hindering community development associations in providing security are lack of trust on the leaders (either elected or selected), mutual hatred and suspicious among various communities.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

This study concluded that in handling kidnapping in Ilorin metropolis, the efforts of community development association cannot be underestimated. The CDAs played significant roles by cooperating with the Nigeria police through provision of essential and

timely information, amongst other, barricade and gating of streets, restriction of time of movement within the community, and employment of private security guards such as vigilantes, hunters, etc. to enhance security of the community. In view of these numerous roles being played by CDAs, this study concluded that CDA in Ilorin metropolis is moderately effective in curbing kidnapping with some challenges such as functional CDA, low response from security agents, commitment of members and leadership crisis limiting their utmost effectiveness. The study hereby recommended that:

1. Participation of community members at their different CDAs should be documented and serve as required papers for members to get promoted at their different place of work or have access to government business funding so as to enable everyone sees the need to be a functional member of their various CDAs.
2. The community members should be consistently engage and sensitize by the Nigeria police on the need to promptly identified and provide accurate information(s) on member(s) or stranger(s) within the community with impeccable characters and fast ways to reach the police through its various communications channels when engaging in Police Community Relations Committee meetings and also provide required logistics supports such as repair of operational vehicle, service of communication gadgets, amongst others for the police so as to improve on their response time.
3. Government at the local level are to promulgate laws to enable members of communities pay security dues at the communities in other to enhance funding of the CDAs. While individuals who actively contribute to funding of communities efforts on security should be given a special recognition by the community and the government through community and state security awards.
4. Also, the leadership recruitment process of the CDAs executives should be overhauled with a democratic process which allows interested members of the communities to vote and be voted for through election conducted by government agencies in charge of community development associations. Monitoring, records of meetings and finances are to be scrutinized regularly by relevant government community development agency staff who are well trained in community development matters.
5. Finally, efforts of the community development associations should be consistently reviewed by its members and relevant government agencies through yearly report of activities, so as to be up to date with modern realities of security threats in the community and the changing dynamics of kidnapping thorough efforts such as identity cards for residents of the community and profiling of non-community members as designated security post.

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