



SIERRA LEONE URBAN RESEARCH CENTRE



MOBILISING RESOURCES TRAINING WORKSHOP

Understanding the global funding situation and basic fundraising techniques. A workshop organised by the Sierra Leone Urban Research Centre (SLURC)

Produced by Zeremariam Fre, November 2018

Collaborating institutions: The Bartlett Development Planning Unit (DPU), University College London (UCL) and the Institute of Geography and Development Studies (IGDS), Njala University (NU), Sierra Leone.



Acknowledgements

Presenters and collaborators:

Joseph Brima, Assistant FAO Representative, Programmes, and Sarah Kaikai, FAO senior staff /former DPU student.

Dr Joseph Macarthy, Executive Director (SLURC)/Lecturer, Institute of Geography and Development Studies (Njala University).

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The workshop participants: who came from across all sectors, including government departments, academia, NGOs, CBOs and from informal settlement communities.

Author's note: The report is an outcome of collective efforts, but any limitations or misrepresentations of facts are the responsibility of the author alone.

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Acronyms

CBO	Community-based organisation
DPU	Development Planning Unit
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GEF	Global Engagement Faculty
HOA	Horn of Africa
IGDS	Institute of Geography and Development Studies
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NU	Njala University
ODA	Overseas Development Aid
RM	Resource mobilisation
SLURC	Sierra Leone Urban Research Centre
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely
UCL	University College, London

1. Introduction and context

Sierra Leone has had its share of political conflicts over the last two decades, which led to the collapse of the central State institutions and major loss of life estimated to be 120,000 due to the civil war which came to a formal end in 2002.

Having settled the political turmoil, the people of Sierra Leone faced serious challenges with the Ebola virus epidemic between 2014 and 2016, which had a serious impact on people's lives and livelihoods. As someone who comes from the Horn of Africa and suffered from the consequences of political conflicts and instability, my impression of today's Sierra Leone as a post conflict country is indeed very promising, despite some obvious challenges.

As a first time visitor, I feel the country is at peace with itself and is investing in its institutions, infrastructure and economic development, and it has a strong civil society. There are clearly a number of challenges that Sierra Leone is facing, in particular addressing the ongoing crisis of youth unemployment and the war against poverty in the rural and growing urban context. Yet it is a country which is blessed with abundant natural and mineral resources.

It is within the above wider context that the Sierra Leone Urban Research Centre (SLURC), based in Freetown, was created through a partnership between the Development Planning Unit at University London (DPU/UCL) and Njala University (NU). It was initially funded by Comic Relief between 2015 and 2018 and, with support from the DPU and NU; it has been implementing a number of research and capacity-building activities.

In the face of on-going changes in donor financing mechanisms, a key challenge in ensuring the sustainability of SLURC and other partners lies in searching for additional or new funding opportunities. So preparing funding applications requires not only reshaping SLURC's organisational structure, but also continuously adapting activities and strategies to the fluctuating funding environment. It also requires cultivating new skills and knowledge to effectively mobilise resources on all sides. Such partnerships also imply unlearning and relearning how to work together, across institutions, reinventing mutual positions towards more effective solution-driven modes of engagement.

The participants of the workshop were drawn from a broad range of institutions including local grassroots NGOs/CBOs; government ministries, academic institutions, international NGOs and SLURC key staff (see Annex 2 for the attendance list). Overall, the level of attendance was very high (over 80%), but some participants were unable to attend all the sessions because of their daily responsibilities in their respective organisations.

2. Workshop aims objectives, expected outcomes and methodology

The training took place from Monday 22 to Thursday 25 October 2018 under the auspices of SLURC and had 40 participants.

2.1 Disaster risk approach

The training workshop was a means to serve a long-term strategy of enhancing the capacity of the partners in the crucial area of fundraising and not an end in itself.

In a broader strategic sense, such an exercise strengthens/demonstrates North-South (Africa and Europe partnerships) as well as South-South (Africa to Africa) cooperation, because, as the trainer (Zeremariam Fre), I have a foot in both camps and was able to share my three decades-long experience in fundraising.

Day 1 focused on reflections on the shifting paradigms in Overseas Development Aid (ODA), implications for development funding and important lessons.

Day 2 focused on basic techniques for proposal development and writing winning proposals. Themes for proposal writing were identified and working groups built around four themes.

Days 3 & 4 were dedicated to sharing specific experiences based on SLURC's experience with Comic Relief and FAO's experiences, but also providing ample time for guidance for the participants to develop their own concept notes in working groups (see annex 4) for more details on teaching materials and relevant sources, including websites).

The main components of the training workshop were to:

- Draw up a fundraising plan (for SLURC to facilitate funding once the Comic Relief funding comes to an end);
- Have a clear understanding of the funders' guidelines in terms of donor funding cycles, application formats, reporting requirements, etc.;
- Fully understand the donors' thematic areas of interest, political context for donor aid, and how to align proposals to specific donor themes;
- Clarify the rationale for the proposal (why are you doing it, what difference will the project make, why is your organisation best placed to do the job?);
- Develop a clear overall aim and SMART objectives and outputs of the project;
- Review the guidelines of a potential funder and develop a specific proposal for the next phase.

2.2 Expected outcomes

By the end of the training, the participants, who were drawn from Njala University, SLURC, as well as government ministries, NGOs, CBOs and civil society, were expected to:

- Have a better exposure to and understanding of the available global funding opportunities, of shifting donor interests, and of how the funding system works globally and within Africa;
- Gain specific skills on how to structure, prepare and write good funding proposals, as well as on how to follow up the funding application once the proposal is ready and has been submitted;
- Get hands-on experience in fundraising by working in groups to develop specific thematic proposals for funding.

2.3 Workshop organisation and methodology

The four-day training and proposal development sessions included formal sessions and structured, but participatory, working groups (See Annex 1 for workshop programme).

The topics included in the first two days were:

- Introducing/linking the Horn of Africa (HOA) to West Africa and reflections on development funding in the HOA;
- Clarifying workshop aims, objectives, methods, outcomes and future ambitions;
- Discussion on the shifting paradigms in Overseas Development Aid (ODA), implications for development funding and important lessons;
- Thematically based discussion groups and experience sharing participants' organisation's funding needs and priorities;
- Fundraising strategy and understanding the four key stages;
- Understanding the basics of fundraising and how to prepare good proposals;
- Qualities of a convincing proposal;
- Post proposal submission developments and follow-ups;
- Forming working groups, agreeing on thematic areas, looking at specific donor guidelines to develop a concept note;
- Concept note development, working groups, etc. and preparation for Day 3.

The third and fourth days were entirely dedicated to the sharing of lessons drawn from the Comic Relief project funding application process and to guiding the workshop participants to develop project concept notes based on a number of themes of their choice. During the third day, Dr. Joseph McCarthy provided an overview of SLURC's funding engagement with Comic Relief UK from the inception of the project to its final phase at the end of this year. His presentations included:

- The critical importance in understanding the 'theory of change' in fundraising and its significance in the SLURC/NU-Comic Relief partnership;
- A detailed discussion on how the tripartite partnership between DPU, SLURC/NU and Comic Relief evolved and some lessons learnt.

Opportunities and lessons from the Comic Relief engagement included:

- The Comic Relief three-year core funding allowed the physical and organisational set-up of SLURC with a sound governance strategy and a solid sustainability plan;
- Successfully mobilisation of resources outside the Comic Relief grant is critical to SLURC's continued existence;
- Maintaining a sound and prudent financial management and accounting system is key to winning donor confidence and support;
- Loads of opportunities in partnership building (the relationships built have benefited SLURC at both operational and management levels locally and internationally).
- Mr Joseph Brima, Assistant FAO Representative of Programmes in Sierra Leone, focused on resource mobilisation tools and strategies as outlined below:
- Resource Mobilisation (RM) Situation Analysis, looking at resource trends, the office's capacity to deliver, and a list of potential resource partners, identified in the Resource Partner Matrix;
- The Resource Target, in line with the strategic document's Results Matrix;
- The Resource Mobilisation Action Plan, outlining a list of activities, roles and a timeframe;
- Monitoring and Evaluation, detailing how RM efforts will be tracked, reviewed and adjusted.

Both presentations were highly appreciated by the workshop participants as they enriched the formal sessions presented by the facilitator during the first two days. During the last two days, workshop participants were divided into five working groups and were given clear guidelines on how to develop a two-page concept note following an adapted Comic Relief funding application form. The working groups were carefully organised with experienced individuals who represented bigger, well-resourced organisations with good fundraising

experience, such as Caritas and YMCA, with smaller emerging grassroots NGOs/CBOs, government ministry staff, academic staff from Njala University and others, who had less fundraising experience.

The following themes were chosen by the participants themselves:

Group 1:

- Slum upgrading
- Disaster risk reduction

Group 2:

- Rural women's empowerment
- Promoting gender equality
- Improving lives of poor rural women

Group 3:

- Youth capacity building
- Empowering youth against substance abuse
- Promoting access to justice for children at conflict with the law

Group 4:

- Livelihoods for people living with disabilities

Group 5:

- Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)

At the end of the fourth day, each group chairperson presented their project concept notes to a jury of five experienced assessors who provided critical feedback, enabling the participants to improve their concept notes which could be developed to full proposals consistent with donor themes and interests. Judging by the feedback received from the participants, such approaches proved to be very successful (see Table 1: in section 3 below). Certificates of attendance were awarded to all those who attended the workshop by the DPU and SLURC representatives.



3. Summary of workshop evaluation and suggested future follow-ups by the participants¹

Table 1: Summary of feedback from workshop participants

Main benefits and skills learnt	Recommendations
Participatory approach by the facilitator & exposure to various current funding trends, and an understanding of the value for money approach expected by funders	Increase the training duration to up to a week
Increased knowledge, essential techniques for resource mobilisation	Revisit & do a refresher of training Recommend training to colleagues in the same organisation
Improved wider knowledge of proposal writing & resource mobilisation issues	Find a location outside the city & make it residential
Improved understanding of 'behind the scenes' policies & donor expectations	Bring more presenters from other agencies within Sierra Leone to share their experiences
Interested in attending a follow-up, more advanced workshop on this same subject	Invite more organisations & CBOS

Eighty percent of the participants stated that the workshop had greatly improved their knowledge and understanding on resource mobilisation. Participants found the sessions very interactive and informative and many mentioned that the participatory approach adopted by the facilitators encouraged them to interact and engage with the facilitators and among themselves over the four-day workshop period. The participants also stated that they enjoyed this approach and the group work because some of the less experienced participants were able to learn from those with more experience.

The participants found the information presented on current trends useful and informative. Most of the participants stated that the workshop had increased their perceptions and understanding of current best practices for mobilising resources, proposal writing, and 'behind the scenes' policies and donor expectations. They mentioned that this has helped in improving their ability to carry out resource mobilisation activities in their respective organisations.

Most of the participants mentioned that they would strongly recommend the resource mobilisation workshop to their colleagues in the same organisation. Many mentioned that they would be interested in attending a follow-up, more advanced workshop on this same subject and/or a refresher workshop and the number of training days for such a workshop should be increased to up to a week (See Section 4).



1. (For more details see Annex 3 attached to the report)

4. Key recommendations

- Organise a follow-up or refresher workshop on mobilising resources and involve different presenters speaking about their experience and lessons learned. Participants to bring issues they faced with funding applications to the workshop to be discussed in order for all to learn from.
- Organise similar training programmes as part of the wider capacity building initiative. The UCL Global Engagement Facility (GEF) and others may be interested in providing further small grants to support such an initiative.
- Tailor future training activities to meet different interests and needs of particular groups (such as small CBOs, women, youth groups, local ministries, and others) who may have very little experience in fundraising or even understanding of shifting donor interests.
- Provide examples of different funders' application forms and criteria by interest/theme, such as girls and women, youth and environment.
- Include an element of participatory budgeting in future trainings.
- Zeremariam, in collaboration with the SLURC team, to look for innovative ways of linking SLURC with Dutch, Nordic and Japanese funders, where he has some connections.

5. Concluding remarks

The workshop not only achieved its overall aims and objectives but also created more opportunities for multi-stakeholder engagement within the Sierra Leone context. As the workshop evaluation clearly indicates, there is a greater need to organise such workshops over a longer period of time in ways which also draw from the national/local expertise available within Sierra Leone.

Future trainings could also be tailored to address the specific needs of the various stakeholders, for example youth, women's' groups, local authorities, and others who may have little exposure to hands-on fundraising skills.

Annex 1. Workshop programme

SLURC Training on Resource Mobilisation, Monday 22 to Thursday 25 October 2018

Venue: GGEM, 57 John Street, Freetown

Day 1 – Introductions and reflections on the shifting paradigms in Overseas Development Aid (ODA), implications for development funding and important lessons.

Session	Facilitation
AM Official welcome and introductions(who is who); Part one: Introducing the Horn of Africa(HOA) to West Africa and reflections on development funding in the HOA; Part two: Workshop aims, objectives, methods and outcomes;	SLURC and Zeremariam Fre
Break time	
PM Part three – Shifting paradigms in Overseas Development Aid(ODA), understanding donor mentality, donor diversity, expectations, challenges, opportunities and implications for development funding and important lessons; Part four: Thematically-based discussion groups and experience sharing on your organisation’s funding needs and priorities; Conclusion and essential reading.	Zeremariam Fre

- Introducing and sharing a list of essential reading materials with workshop participants.
- Collecting workshop participants’ profiles.

Day 2 – Introductions and reflections on the shifting paradigms in Overseas Development Aid (ODA), implications for development funding and important lessons.

Session	Facilitation
AM Recap of day one; Part one: Understanding proposal writing techniques; Part two: Proposal development, submissions and follow-up with potential donors;	Zeremariam Fre
Break time	
PM Part three: What happens once a proposal has been submitted and what are the expected outcomes? Discussion and conclusion.	

- Concept development guideline handouts for Day 3;
- Distribution of funders’ guidelines to participants;
- Formation of thematic groups for day 3 and allocating group facilitators.

Day 3 – Group work: on proposal writing (concept development) exercises according to selected donor criteria and requirements.

Session	Facilitation
AM Recap on Day 2 Reflections on Comic Relief funded activities and lessons followed by discussions. Group work	SLURC Executive Director (Dr Joseph Macarthy) and Zeremariam Fre
Break time	
PM Group work continues Discussion and conclusion.	

Day 4 – Evaluation of the concept notes from Day 3, vetting and selection of the best possible concept notes, workshop review session and future recommendations.

Session	Facilitation
AM Recap on day Three Sharing of FAO experience: on project implementation and importance of proper financial management. Presentation and evaluation of the concept notes prepared by the workshop participants.	Joseph Brima (FAO) and Zeremariam Fre
Break time	
PM Workshop evaluation by a panel; Key recommendations for future action; Certificate awarding Closing session	

- Distribution of workshop evaluation forms;
- Group photo;
- Individual testimonies on short video clips for publicity; awarding of certificates.

Annex 2. Attendance list

Name	Job title	Organisation	Sector
Abu Conteh	Research Officer, Consultant	SLURC	Research organisation
Alfred Sesay	Programme Coordinator	City of Rest Rehabilitation Centre	NGO
Andrea BarrigaCuao	Civil Peace Service Worker	Caritas	INGO
Andrea Klingel	Project Manager	SLURC	Research organisation
BraimaKoroma	Director of Research and Training	SLURC	Research organisation
Brima B. Samura	Fedurp member (Dwarzac)	Fedurp	CBO
Clifford Metzger	Hub Lead Queen Young Leaders Project	YMCA	NGO
David A Yambasu	Head of Co-ordination	YDM	NGO
Dr.JuannaMoiwo	Asst. Director of Research, designate	Njala	Academia
Fatmata E.R. Ansumana	Senior Social Services Officer – Policy	MSWCGA	Government department
Francis Amadu	Regional Coordinator East	YMCA	NGO
Francis Kandeh	Volunteer	ONS	Government department
Francis Reffel	Director	CODOHSAPA	CBO
Gibrilla Bangura	Fedurp member (Colbot)	Fedurp	CBO
Hawanatu K. Kamara	Senior Social Services officer – Research & Statistics Officer	MSWCGA	Government department
Idriss Gibson Mansaray	Program Manager Livelihoods	Caritas	INGO
IdrissaSongo	Executive Director	NETHIPS	NGO
Ishmail Mansaray	Intern	MoPED	Government department
Jessy Kpagoi	M&E Officer, Queen Young Leaders Project	YMCA	NGO
John D Conteh	Regional Coordinator, YMCA West	YMCA	NGO
Joseph Macarthy	Executive Director	SLURC	Research organisation
Maliha Fairouz	Programme Development& Qualities Manager	GOAL	INGO

Margarette Dauda	Project Officer – Disaster Risk Management	UNDP	INGO
Mohamed S. Conteh	Fedurp member (Hill Station)	Fedurp	CBO
Moses Kabia	Monitoring & Evaluation Officer in the Policy Development and Strategic Planning Dept.	MSWCGA	Government department
Musa FM Wullarie	Cockle Bay Community Youth Leader	Informal settlement representative	Community
Pheima M Sannoh	Programs assistant	Caritas	INGO
Rashid Smart	Senior Finance Administrator	SLURC	Research organisation
Richard Bockary	M&E Bockarie	CODOHSAPA	CBO
SallianSankoh	Field Representative, Right Sharing of World Resources Project	YMCA	NGO
Samuel ShekaSesay	Programme Coordinator	CODOHSAPA	CBO
Solomon Ernest	Regional Coordinator, YMCA South	YMCA	NGO
SudieSellu	Monday only	SLURC	Research organisation
Sulai Kamara	Monday only	SLURC	Research organisation
UmaroMenjorSesay		ONS	Government department
Mohamed P Ngegba	Community Outreach Officer	Njala	Academia
Yirah Conteh	Chairman	Fedurp	CBO
Brima Nyally	Intern	MoPED	Government department
Letticia R Lahai	Intern	MoPED	Government department
Christiana F Kange	Intern	MoPED	Government department

Annex 3. Teaching materials, related workshop related reference material and useful websites

Formal sessions and workshops

Session one:

Introductions and reflections on the shifting paradigms in Overseas Development Aid (ODA), implications for development funding and important lessons (by Zeremariam Fre).

Session two:

Basic techniques for proposal development and writing winning proposals (by Zeremariam Fre).

Session three:

Part 1: Overview of SLURC's funding engagement with Comic Relief by Dr. Joseph McCarty NU University and SLURC Director

Part 2: Group work: on proposal writing (concept development) exercises according to selected donor criteria and requirements.

Session four:

Part 1: Resource Mobilization and Managing Donor Funds by Joseph Brima (Assistant FAO Representative Programmes).

Part 2: Evaluation of the concept notes from day 3, vetting and selection of the best possible concept notes, workshop review session and future recommendations.

Reference materials

James Pamment Department of Strategic Communication: Towards a new conditionality? The convergence of international development, nation brands and soft power in the British National Security Strategy: In Journal of International Relations and Development: (2018) 21, 396–414. doi: 10.1057/s41268-016-0074-9; Published online 20 September 2016;

Simon Lightfoot et.al: Brexit and UK International Development Policy: In the Political Quarterly, Vol. 88, No. 3, July–September 2017;

Moyo, D. "Dead Aid". 2009: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009; DEEPT, K.K; MSW (2002 Resource Mobilization (Power points), Loyola College;

Baguma, D.S., Anandajayasekeram, P. and Puskur, R. (2009) Writing convincing research proposals and effective scientific reports: A learning module. International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI);

Echeverria, G.R. and Beintema, M.N. (2009) Mobilizing Financial Resources for Agricultural Research in Developing Countries, Trends and Mechanisms.

Useful websites

Theories of Change

<https://usaidlearninglab.org/lab-notes/what-thing-called-theory-change> and NGOs <https://oxfamblogs.org/fp2p/what-is-a-theory-of-change-and-does-it-actually-help/> and is starting to replace the log-frame.

Evaluation

https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/resources/guide/dfid_approach_to_value_for_money

OECD/DAC evaluation criteria

<http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

ABOUT UCL/DPU

The Development Planning Unit, University College London, is an international centre specialising in academic teaching, research, training and consultancy in the field of urban and regional development, with a focus on policy, planning management and design. It is concerned with understanding the multi-faceted and uneven process of contemporary urbanisation, and strengthening more socially just and innovative approaches to policy, planning management and design, especially in the contexts of Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East as well as countries in transition. The central purpose of the DPU is to strengthen the professional and institutional capacity of governments and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to deal with the wide range of development issues that are emerging at local, national and global levels. In London, the DPU runs postgraduate programmes of study, including a research degree (MPhil/PhD) programme, six one-year Masters Degree courses and specialist short courses in a range of fields addressing urban and rural development policy, planning, management and design. Overseas, the DPU Training and Advisory Service (TAS) provides training and advisory services to government departments, aid agencies, NGOs and academic institutions. These activities range from short missions to substantial programmes of staff development and institutional capacity building. The academic staff of the DPU are a multi-disciplinary and multi-national group with extensive and on-going research and professional experience in various fields of urban and international development throughout the world. DPU Associates are a body of professionals who work closely with the Unit both in London and overseas. Every year the student body embraces more than 45 different nationalities.

To find more about us and the courses we run, please visit our website: www.bartlett.ucl.ac.uk/dpu

ABOUT IGDS/NU

The Institute of Geography and Development Studies (IGDS) represents one of the four innovative academic structures of the School of Environmental Sciences at Njala University (NU). The Institute runs both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes as well as provides opportunities for professional development and research. Its main concern is about promoting sustainable forms of development in Sierra Leone. The IGDS has a remarkable experience in the delivery of world leading research and teaching in Geography and development (urban and rural) issues. Its staff have engaged with practitioners, organizations and UN agencies through consultancies and other community outreach activities. It was as a result of the initiative of the IGDS to establish an urban planning unit to further their work on issues affecting people living in informal settlements that the Sierra Leone Urban Research Centre (SLURC) was formed.

ABOUT SLURC

The Sierra Leone Urban Research Centre (SLURC), based in Freetown, is a globally connected research centre created through a partnership between the Bartlett Development Planning Unit (University College London) and the Institute of Geography and Development Studies (Njala University) with funding by Comic Relief. SLURC aims to strengthen the research and analysis capacities of urban stakeholders in Sierra Leone; make urban knowledge available and accessible to those who need it, prioritizing residents of informal settlements; and, deliver world-leading research in order to influence urban policy and practice. However, SLURC was established as a financially independent centre within Njala University with a view of further integration in future. It was also thought that the SLURC could become a model of good practices that other part of the university could adopt.

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