

SLURC

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SLURC Has Appointed a New Project Manager

SLURC Hosts a UCL and Njala University Training Course 'Development and Planning in African Cities'

Alexander Stone, SLURC

Between 11th and 16th of June 2018, the Sierra Leone Urban Research Centre hosted a course titled 'Development and Planning in African Cities'. This was a collaboration between the Development Planning Unit of University College London and Njala University. The course included:

- An introduction to urban planning in African cities using analytical lenses, including spatial justice and social diversity, and challenging existing myths around the topic
- Governance and urban planning at different scales, including the influence of 'bottom-up' organisation on planning
- Urban land including urban land markets, the diversity of tenure systems, and taxation of land
- Urban informality across different sectors, and understanding the limitations of formal/informal dichotomy
- Urban risk and vulnerability, its impact on health, and the effects of a changing climate
- Infrastructure and its influence on the well-being of residents



The course also involved a field trip for participants to experience first-hand how these and other issues manifest in Freetown. There was a high level of interest in the course, with over 8 applications for each space available. We were very impressed with all the participants, who came from a range of professional and educational backgrounds, showing incredible passion and desire to contribute towards the future development of Freetown. Assignments formed part of the course and the best ones will be selected for the SLURC resource centre.

All lecture slides, expert contributions from the course and extra readings are available to view online at www.slurc.org and can be downloaded for free.



Co-Learning for Action: from Risk Mitigation to Transformative Action to Disrupt Urban Risk Traps in Freetown

Rita Lambert, DPU & Braima Koroma, SLURC

In September 2017, a Learning-Alliance was established by the practice module of the Master's Degree Programme in Environment and Sustainable Development (ESD) of The Bartlett Development Planning Unit (DPU), University College London (UCL). It was led by Adriana Allen and Rita Lambert in collaboration with Julia Wesely, the Sierra Leone Urban Research Centre (SLURC), the Federation of the Urban and Rural Poor (FEDURP) and Pull Slum Pan Pipul (PSPP) partners.

The objective of the Learning-Alliance is to conduct action-research, build capacity and co-produce knowledge between ESD students, local interns, partners from different organisations and various communities in Freetown's informal settlements. The research aims to increase the understanding of how and why risk accumulation cycles or 'urban risk traps' affect local dwellers and how they can be disrupted in a structural way.

Over four months participants in the ESD MSc practice module developed six policy briefs which, combined, offer a comprehensive, citywide analysis of how different hazards converge on the reproduction of risk accumulation

In October, SLURC will be launching a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) which will cover similar topics to the above course. It is free and open to anyone that would like to join. You can register for the course, find the course trailer and get more information on the Future Learn platform which hosts the course: <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/african-cities>

If you would like to be made aware of other future courses and kept updated on the development of our upcoming MOOC, please follow us on social media (@SLURC_FT or Facebook under Sierra Leone Urban Research Centre), visit our website www.slurc.org, email info@slurc.org or visit the SLURC office at 63 Upper Brook Street, Freetown.

cycles. These policy briefs can be accessed online at www.slurc.org/newsletters-and-policy-briefs.html

Following this first diagnosis, ESD students were organised into teams according to case study areas and prepared to undertake participatory action research during a 2-week fieldtrip to Freetown at the end of April 2018. The students developed conceptual and methodological frameworks to gather and analyse data in six communities: Portee-Rokupa; Susan's Bay; Cockle Bay; Moyiba; Dwarzarck; and Crab Town - Kolleh Town - Gray Bush.

Six local interns joined the teams: Rita Jimmy-Kay; Samuel Sheka Sesay; Abdulai Karama; Abubakar Bakley Sesay; Henry David Bayoh; and Richard Bockarie. These interns were selected through a competitive process and chosen due to their knowledge and local experience. They consequently became important team members through supporting the grounding of approaches and by stimulating and facilitating debates.

During the fieldtrip, a number of guest speakers from government, academia, NGO's and CBO's enriched

the understanding of the historical, social, economic and political processes that drive urban development in Freetown. These lectures went hand-in-hand with the gathering of primary field data as well as developing strategies to disrupt risk traps with input from local dwellers. The intense effort was undertaken by the ESD participants and interns, together with community facilitators from the six case study areas, SLURC staff as well as DPU tutors Adriana Allen; Donald Brown; Pascale Hoffman; Rita Lambert; Diana Salazar; and Haim Yacobi. All engaged with the six local communities to inform the development of local community action plans.

The final output were videos that provide insights into the production of urban risk traps and the potential for transformative action in the areas studied. The videos can be accessed at www.slurc.org/slurc-and-ucl-video-outputs.html

The Learning-Alliance is currently preparing for a second year of action research and working towards strengthening and expanding the alliances between government, NGO's, and CBO's in hope to disrupt risk accumulation cycles in Freetown.



Community Action Area Planning is Progressing

Charles Wright

SLURC's Community Action Area Planning (CAAP) projects in Dwarzarck and Cockle Bay are continuing to progress using Architects Sans Frontieres (ASF)-UK's Change by Design participatory planning method. The aim of the CAAP's is to become an integral component of Freetown City Council's larger scale 'Action Area Plans' outlined in the Freetown Structural Plan 2013. While these are official documents understood and utilized by urban professionals, the aspiration of each plan, is to develop something which works for the community's self-

development and planning needs but also allows them to think critically about their spatial priorities.

The process has revealed a complex and diverse set of issues facing the urban poor of these two communities. So far, we have learned that some of the most acute problems experienced by the two communities are: a lack of access to services and amenities; absence of drainage and mobility infrastructure; safety of public spaces and water resources; resilience from natural disasters; and a

lack of land administration and developable space. The partnership between the Federation of the Urban Poor (FEDURP), the Centre Of Dialogue On Human Settlements And Poverty Alleviation (CODOHSAPA), ASF-UK and SLURC has successfully coordinated three workshop scales: the Home scale, the Community scale, and the City scale. Each scale has presented a different set of issues and community narrated responses which will need strong alliances between the Freetown City Council, Government

Ministries, NGO's, CBO's, and communities themselves to overcome these issues once the Community Action Area Plan is completed. The project is now in its final phase which involves creating a portfolio of options that can then be used to raise community awareness of the difficulties of informal settlements upgrading and improvement. This portfolio of options phase is also intended to establish the ideal settlement upgrades decided by residents from these two communities.

Exploring the Urban Health Risk Traps in Freetown

Abu Conteh & Lauren Heinrich

There is an urgent need to explore the environmental and spatial risk traps that interact with health problems in informal settlements across Freetown. Health problems are often the result of poor living conditions, in particular those in informal settlements. As evidenced in a recent scoping study conducted by SLURC, there is, however, a dearth of information exploring links between living conditions and health problems in Freetown's informal settlements. This knowledge gap is being addressed by SLURC together with its partners, the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health (USA) and the Institute of Development Studies (IDS UK) who aim to explore how the environment of Freetown's informal settlements affects the health of its residents. Support is being provided by The Future Health Systems (FHS) research consortium.

The research, among other things, seeks to understand whether living conditions in informal settlements relate to health problems, and how socio-economic and behavioural factors affect access to health care. During two days of rigorous preparatory work that involved FHS partners Daniela Rodriguez from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg



A community tank without water at Portee



A hanging toilet at Rokupr Wharf, Freetown

School of Public Health, Annie Wilkinson from the Institute of Development Studies, Joseph Macarthy from SLURC and other researchers, a research design was agreed, and research questions and objectives framed accordingly.

Ethical approval was granted by the Scientific and Ethics Review Committee in the Ministry of Health and Sanitation to proceed with the research. Phase one of data collection which focussed on gathering a variety of stakeholder perspectives in four Freetown informal settlements: Portee/Rokupr; Dwarzark; Cockle Bay; and Moyiba in the far east, central and west of Freetown has now been completed. It included focus group discussions and individual interviews with informal settlement dwellers, community leaders, health workers and traditional healers. The analysis of the data is ongoing and informed phase two of the data collection which focused on gaining perspectives of policy makers in Freetown. SLURC representatives also attended an FHS annual general meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to share preliminary results from the study and learn from the other participating international colleagues.



Community residents study the Cockle Bay community map

SLURC Holds Training Workshop on Community Land Administration

Joseph M Macarthy, SLURC

Freetown has experienced a rapid increase in its urban population due to population growth and migration. This has led to concentrated urban density, congestion, and overcrowding. However, securing access to land for housing and human settlements in the city is one of the most contentious issues, especially for the urban poor. The failure of the Government to control land use has led to undesired and irrational developments with many informal settlements having encroached into environmentally high-risk areas, placing vulnerable households in the way of natural hazards such as flooding, landslides, and fires.

Over the years, land administration in Freetown has been based largely on conventional approaches which rarely consider the tenure situation of informal settlements (especially slums), affecting most of the urban poor. This is despite the increased number of incidents of disasters reported in such places. In an attempt to build capacity to integrate the urban poor into land administration in Freetown, the Sierra Leone Urban Research Centre (SLURC) organised a five-day training workshop from 20th to 24th February 2018. The workshop was facilitated by the Development Action Group (DAG) in South Africa.

The aim of the course was to strengthen the capacity of SLURC and its partners, which include local/national government and civil society stakeholders and community leaders, to implement a programme of pro-poor land rights in two informal settlements in Freetown. This further aimed to significantly enhance the security

of tenure for households against eviction, unlocking community and household agency to incrementally formalize the settlement and to improve service delivery. The course focused specifically on the processes and procedures of designing and implementing community land administration – based upon a continuum of land rights. The principles of the course included affordability, being pro-poor, inclusiveness, and participation. The thirty-eight participants of the course represented a range of stakeholders, local community leaders from eight informal settlements in Freetown; government officials from the Ministry of Lands, Housing, and the Environment; the Freetown City Council, local NGOs; academics; and professional associates.

Some of the key issues discussed in the training ranged from knowing your neighbourhood; to tenure security; land rights; the Sierra Leone National Land policy; Community Land Administration (tools and best practice toolkit); and the Community Action Plan. The course used a mix of participatory action learning methodologies including one day of field work as well as formal lectures to ground the theory and praxis, drawing from DAG and international best practice examples. Participants were encouraged to learn through action, including testing tools and methodologies in Cockle Bay which is one of the SLURC partner informal settlements.

It was highlighted in the workshop that the pro-poor land rights approach emphasises the need for city authorities

to recognise a continuum of land rights based on new and innovative pro-poor forms of land recordation. This offers the prospect for new forms of tenure thereby making land tenure systems work for poor and marginalised people which is crucial given the deficits of conventional approaches in improving security of tenure of land especially for people living in informal settlements and the fact that they are rarely able to afford land with secure tenure and in safe places. Unfortunately, the needs of these people have usually not been addressed through existing conventional land administration practices thereby increasing their exposure to further disaster incidents. The

workshop provided community leaders with the required knowledge and skills that can be transferred to other residents to allow them initiate and participate effectively in land recordation and administration. This aspect of the training was intended to strengthen community capacity in both technical-related knowledge and individual and collective empowerment. A critical component of the success of the capacity building process was the overall empowerment of a community which is highly grounded in community mobilization as well as the quality of community leadership – and the external environment including legal, social, and political environment.



SLURC Film Night with Discussion – ‘Falling Freetown’

Andrea Klingel, SLURC

On Friday 13th July, partners from various NGOs, ministries and slum communities congregated at the SLURC office to watch a documentary ‘Falling Freetown’ by Thomas Reuter Foundation. This film is looking at the various issues that led to last year’s tragic landslide in Freetown costing many lives. Following the thought provoking film, a lively discussion of the issues concerned ensued such as how the lack of urban planning, deforestation and rapid migration have contributed to the event and how to deal with vulnerabilities of people living in informal settlements, how to increase the resilience of urban areas and the responsibilities of all to minimise the risk of such disasters. Government officials reassured that many of the issues raised are being considered by policy makers.

An example is the issue of inflated rents in formal parts of Freetown and how this prevents slum dwellers to leave informal settlements and move to more formal parts of Freetown.

A representative from the Ministry of Lands, Housing and the Environment confirmed that they are working on capping rent in Freetown according to the area and value of houses. We want to thank Thomas Reuter Foundation for allowing us to screen the documentary and all participants for their valuable contributions to the discussion. SLURC is offering to hold more screenings within organisations or communities, please contact us at info@slurc.org if you would like to organise such a screening.

Launch of ReMapRisk Freetown Online Platform

Andrea Klingel, SLURC

SLURC officially launched its exciting new online platform called ‘ReMapRisk’ Freetown on 31st July which was attended by a range of stakeholders including NGOs, government officials, the Federation of the Urban Poor (FEDURP) and members of the communities that have been part of this project.

ReMapRisk Freetown is the result of a participatory project SLURC conducted which was aimed at disrupting urban risk traps that affect the most disadvantaged groups across Freetown’s informal settlements. This free tool allows users to interrogate and visualise specific inquiries on the hazard profile, vulnerabilities and capacities to act with city dwellers and various support organisations. It also brings to the fore the voices and experiences of those directly affected by risk traps and their perspectives on the type of actions required.

The project used a community-led mapping methodology supporting grounded urban action that is developed in the context of Urban African Risk Knowledge (Urban ARK). It was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESCR) and the research was led by Professor Adriana Allen from the Development Planning Unit (DPU) at University College London (UCL), working in collaboration with SLURC.

Attendees at the launch welcomed the online platform to map risk and vulnerabilities and commented on its usefulness and need for such a tool for Freetown. There was a positive buzz in the room with general interest in future collaboration and mentions of a forum or consortium to take the online platform forward. If you are interested to get involved or have any questions, please contact Braima Koroma bmkoroma@njala.edu.sl or info@slurc.org

For more information on ReMapRisk and the Urban ARK project, please visit www.urbanark.org A link to the ReMapRisk tool can found on www.slurc.org and the video demo can be viewed on YouTube by searching for ‘ReMapRisk: Participatory mapping to discuss urban risk traps’.



SLURC Has Appointed a New Project Manager

Andrea Klingel has been appointed as the new Project Manager for SLURC and started her role in June. She is a policy and programme management professional from London with extensive experience in various project and programme management roles. Andrea worked many years in different environments in the private, third and public sector managing complex projects at senior level and she has a track record of manoeuvring complex stakeholder relationships. Her strong organisational skills and leadership and people management abilities will provide her with a firm grounding for the new role which includes bringing the Comic Relief project of setting up a sustainable urban research centre in Freetown to conclusion and supporting the two Co-Directors in continuing to deliver leading research in order to influence urban policy and planning as well as building capacity of urban stakeholders.

Andrea is very excited to work in Sierra Leone and she is committed to fighting inequality, promote social justice and the ultimate purpose of SLURC, the betterment of people living in slums. She recently managed the logistics of the international election observation mission to Somaliland with a 60-member team from 27 countries. Her flexibility, openness and curiosity about different cultures allowed her to settle in quickly and embrace the Sierra Leone culture. She is keen to introduce aspects of Human Resources, Programme planning and identifying new and building on existing funding streams for SLURC Her contact details are aklingel@slurc.org





UPCOMING EVENTS

Mobilising Resources Workshop

SLURC will hold a five-day Resources Mobilisation workshop in October 2018. The workshop seeks to provide SLURC and other stakeholders with a comprehensive overview of popular, effective and successful approaches for mobilising resources to enable their institutions to implement projects and programmes. The hands-on learning activities will ensure that participants are able to instantly apply their skills to acquire and manage necessary resources effectively to bring about transformative change in society.

Massive Open Online Course (MOOC)

SLURC will launch a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on 8th October 2018 which will be free and open to all. It will include online training with videos, interviews and also provide a discussion platform. The online course will cover topics such as urban planning, urban informalities including risks and vulnerabilities associated with informal settlements, urban land, tenure systems and infrastructure. You can register for the course, find the course trailer and get more information on the Future Learn platform which hosts the course:

<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/african-cities>

Graduation

Participants that successfully took part in the training course 'Development and Planning in African Cities' will receive their certificates in a small graduation at the end of August/beginning of September. All participants had to attend one week of training jointly delivered by SLURC and University College London, and submit an assignment to show their newly acquired knowledge and understanding of the issues concerned. Their achievement will be recognised in a small ceremony at the SLURC office once all assignments have been marked.

