

SLURC

SIERRA LEONE URBAN RESEARCH CENTRE NEWSLETTER

Sierra Leone Urban Research and Development News | Vol. 6 | November 2018



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Knowledge in Action for Urban Equality: Exploring City Learning Platform in Planning Equitable Urban Development in Freetown

Braima Koroma, SLURC

'Knowledge in Action for Urban Equality' (KNOW) is a 4-year research and capacity building programme (2017-2021) funded by Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) under the Global Challenge Research Fund (GCRF) that seeks to promote urban equality in selected cities in Latin America, Africa, and Asia. Led by Caren Levy of the Bartlett's Development Planning Unit, University College London it brings together a collaborative, interdisciplinary and international team of 13 partners in the UK, Africa, Asia, Latin America and Australia to develop innovative long-term programmes of knowledge co-production for urban equality among governments, communities, business and academia. It is a unique gathering of places, and people, as well as their knowledge, innovation and ingenuity.

In the next four years, the work of the KNOW consortium seeks to deliver transformative research for urban equality with a focus on redistributive and integrated actions to reduce extreme poverty, build resilience and develop prosperity. Furthermore it aims to build research capacity to address urban equality in different locations and at different levels of governance, and develop Urban Learning Hubs that will extend the KNOW experience beyond the duration of the project.

As part of the KNOW project, SLURC will build upon the previous experience of developing Community Action Area Plans (CAAPs) in two informal settlements of the city: Dwazarck and Cackle Bay. In



First city learning platform meeting. Image: KNOW team

each of these settlements, SLURC in collaboration with representatives of the Federation of the Rural and Urban Poor and residents will develop an Informal Settlement Profile to reveal diverse needs and aspirations, combining activities that involve capacity building, participatory research methods and conventional qualitative and quantitative methods. A third CAAP and settlement profile will be produced for the settlement of Portee-Rokupa. The necessary capacity building to undertake these activities will be facilitated by Architects Sans Frontiers UK (ASF-UK), giving continuity to previous collaborative work using the 'Change by Design' methodology.

Additionally, SLURC will work with the Freetown City Council, Ministry of Lands, Housing and the Environment, Young Men Christian Association (YMCA), Federation of the Urban and Rural Poor (FEDURP), Ministry of Planning and Economic Development (MoPED), Academics and other MDAs to co-develop a city learning platform (CiLP) and consolidate three Community Learning Platforms (CoLPs) that can support a long term agenda of research and action for urban equality. The CiLP is a central aspect of the KNOW Freetown city plan and will constitute the main space to facilitate coordination and knowledge sharing across different stakeholders involved in activities aimed to improve the quality of life of people living in precarious informal settlements in Freetown. The platform has the objective to contribute to advancing urban equality on different fronts and ensure dialogue between the local activities and a wider spectrum of actors at city level. The CiLP will therefore have a dual role: on the one hand it looks to gather stakeholders that can give advice and guide the

development of the KNOW project in Freetown, and on the other hand it will allow the project to expand its scope and disseminate its outputs through different networks and stakeholders. The CiLP looks to be a space to share learnings and to articulate the multiple efforts deployed in Freetown by various actors to develop democratic, participatory and co-produced processes of upgrading informal settlements. The ultimate goal of the CiLP will be to facilitate the co-production of the basis of an urban policy at the city level that recognise such democratic processes. It will recognise and articulate the work of the CoLP at the settlement level, linking the local needs and aspirations with city-wide processes. Then, the CiLP will provide a model of engagement that facilitates the three impact targets described at the city level: to create a democratic platform of deliberation, to enable action at the city level, and to promote the institutionalisation of participatory planning methodologies that foster pathways to urban equality and achieve results for specific excluded populations while improving outcome for the entire population of the city.

The learning platform is seen as a Legacy Vehicle that involves partners willing to be actively engaged, and to sustain policy uptake and impact during and beyond the life of the project. Meanwhile the CoLPs that are being consolidated in each of the three settlements that SLURC is working with during this project, will enable the knowledge co-production processes, ensuring that local community representatives are adequately informed, engaged and participate in the decisions affecting the implementation of research activities.



Dwarzark, Freetown. Image: Camila Cocina

Understanding the State of Urban Health through Research

Dr. Joseph Macarthy and Abu Conteh

As a way to increase evidence-based knowledge on urban health in Sierra Leone (one of its four thematic research areas), over the past year SLURC has been working to review the available evidence on urban health, and conduct field research exploring the relationships between living conditions in informal settlements and common health problems, and whether the socio-economic backgrounds of people living in informal settlements affect their access to healthcare services. These urban health studies have been led by SLURC in collaboration with Future Health Systems (FHS) and funded by DFID and the ESRC in the UK. Two research outputs have been completed as follows: - (i) a scoping study which provided initial thoughts on the state of knowledge in urban health regarding health risks and access to health provision for the urban poor in four main cities in Sierra Leone, and (ii) field research which drew on the first output to investigate the causal links between living conditions and health, and how the socio-economic and spatial locations of people determine access to health service provision.

Both studies have shown that poor living conditions, underpinned by poor environmental and household level sanitation, trigger health problems for people living in informal settlements. Inadequate provision of essential drugs and other supplies to public health facilities and the often greater trust in informal health service providers in Freetown than formal ones has caused a high demand for informal health markets known locally as “Pepe doctors” (eg. traditional healers, drug peddlers etc.). The key lesson drawn from the FHS funded urban health research work is that informal settlement populations are aware of the risks they face by living in environmentally poor conditions, but they lack the capacity to act to improve their conditions. Therefore, any action to improve the living conditions of informal settlers must be supported by both the central and municipal government authorities (eg. Ministries of Health, Lands and Water Resources, and Freetown City Council). While many informal settlement dwellers lack knowledge about the benefits of seeking care from formal



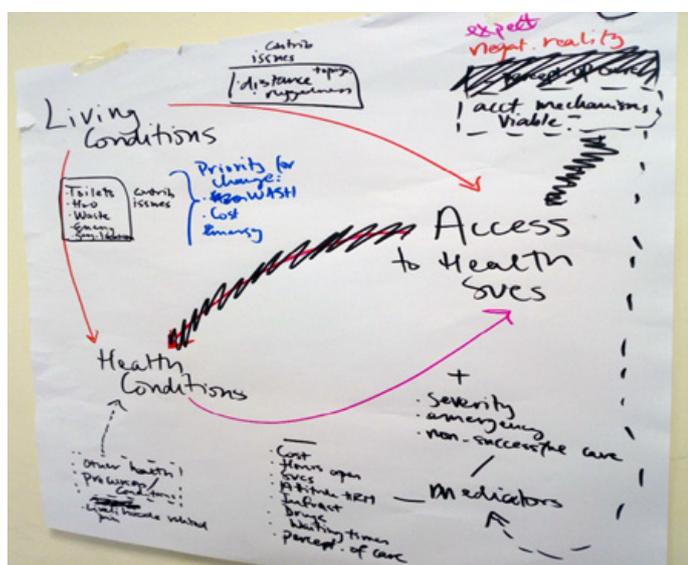
Research validation workshop. Image: Thomas Doughty

healthcare services, many others lack resources to do so. The result of this is an incessant demand for the informal health markets in Freetown, mainly because of ease of access, low cost of service and familiarity with providers.

The current ESRC research entitled “Shock tactics in the wake of Ebola” is undertaken in partnership with the Institute of Development Studies in the UK to understand the resilience of health systems in the post Ebola period. The three year ethnographic research is targeting CKG¹ and Moyiba to understand the following:

- how people in informal settlements understand or misunderstand health conditions they typically experience
- how outsiders understand the health conditions of informal settlement dwellers
- strategies that informal settlers think could be applied to address their health problems.

Two research communities were selected for comparison of their levels of resilience based on distinguishing features including economic wellbeing, impact or levels of Ebola shocks and environmental factors like topography (eg. hillside versus seaside). The first phase of data collection which started in October 2018 is nearing completion. The research is eliciting information from diverse categories of people including the disabled, widows, the elderly, and people of low or high economic backgrounds, to understand their unique perspectives of health and strategies for seeking healthcare when challenged by difficult health conditions. The current data collection will be followed by workshops bringing together health, community and policy stakeholders at the end of January 2019, led by the principal investigator Dr. Annie Wilkinson from IDS and co-investigator, SLURC’s Executive Director, Dr Joseph Macarthy.



Output from FHS workshop. Image: Daniela Rodriguez

¹ Crab town, Kolleh town and Grey bush communities are adjacent communities in the centre of Freetown, while Moyiba is located on the hills in the far east of the city



KNOW team and mayor meeting. Image: KNOW team

SLURC Contributes to the Mayor's Transform Freetown Working Groups

Dr. Joseph Macarthy and Thomas Doughty, SLURC

The Transform Freetown Framework is the new agenda for the city championed by the Mayor of Freetown, Yvonne Aki-Sawyer. SLURC is one of the lead stakeholders for the Environmental Management Initiative, one of 11 priority sectors covered by the framework, which relates to the review and harmonisation of environmental laws in the city. The overall target of this initiative is to “Ensure an effective multi-stakeholder co-ordination mechanism and strengthen environmental governance”.

SLURC is tying this in with its action-research work as part of the Knowledge in Action for Urban Equality (KNOW) consortium. A key part of the KNOW programme in Freetown is the creation of a City-Wide Learning Platform (CiLP) in planning equitable urban development in Freetown, which will become a key space for learning and sharing between a range of urban actors, to coordinate and develop proposals for upgrading the city's informal settlements. The CiLP will be central to SLURC's contribution to the Transform Freetown Framework.

In October, KNOW convened the first Local Impact Advisory Group meeting, including communities, City Council, Ministries and NGO representatives. It was agreed that the CiLP will be made up of all of these actors, and will form the sector working group for the Environmental Management Initiative.

Each initiative across the mayor's Framework will be driven by a working group, tasked with developing, implementing, monitoring and sustaining a 4 year plan for their respective sector. Each working group is driven by 3 guiding principles: decentralisation, coordination and performance management.

SLURC, KNOW and the CiLP's initial plan of action will begin with a review of existing legal and regulatory frameworks to identify what is currently covered, where there are gaps, and how national laws can be adapted to work at local level. The review will also encompass existing enforcement practices, identifying what does and does not work currently. SLURC will then lead a participatory process to develop new laws and regulations, as well as suggesting adaptations of existing ones where necessary. Through the CiLP, it will be possible to develop new partnerships and practices to ensure more effective enforcement going forward.

The Transform Freetown Framework is an exciting step for Freetown's development. It is ambitious, but its participatory, interdisciplinary and multi-stakeholder nature promises to contribute to a more liveable and productive city.

MOOC Update and Future Developments

Alexander Stone

SLURC, alongside Njala University and the Bartlett Development Planning Unit (DPU) of University College London (UCL) launched a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) at the start of October.

This free course, entitled 'Development and Planning in African Cities', attracted 1,599 participants from 120 countries, with the second largest group of participants coming from Sierra Leone.

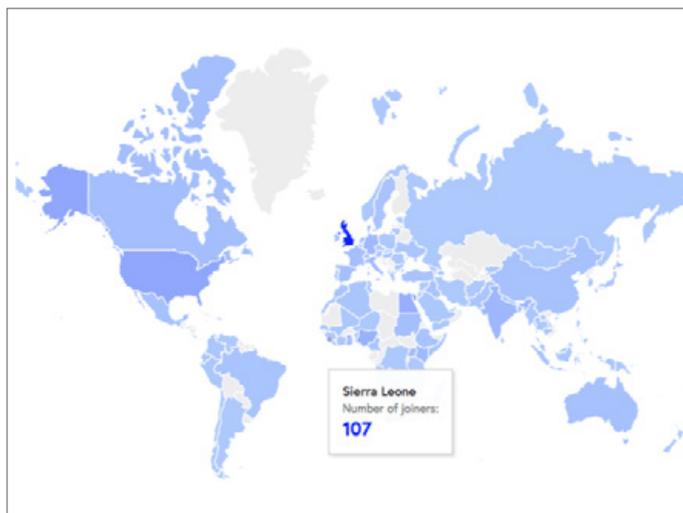
The aim of the course was to present various development issues commonly faced by cities in Sub Saharan Africa through examples from the city of Freetown in the form of videos, maps and articles. Typically, issues would be presented from a more general African viewpoint, with the focus then narrowed down to Freetown.

These issues were then explored through the lenses of spatial justice and social diversity, challenging myths and assumptions about urban development and demonstrating how different processes interact and shape the development of a city.

Contributors came from all over the world, as well as from across a range of industries and institutions in Sierra Leone – residents, Federation of the Urban and Rural

Poor (FEDURP-SL) members, NGO workers, civil society organisations, government ministries, academia and Freetown City Council, among others.

If you missed this edition of the course, or you know someone that would be interested in taking it, it will be available again for free in early 2019 – keep a close eye on the SLURC website and social media.



MOOC enrolments worldwide. Image: Future Learn



Dwarzark informal settlement, Freetown. Image: Alexander Stone

SLURC Celebrates the Achievement of Successful Participants of the ‘Development and Planning in African Cities’ Training Course in a Graduation Ceremony

Andrea Klingel, SLURC

On 28 September, SLURC celebrated the achievement of those that had successfully completed the training course ‘Development and Planning in African Cities’, in a graduation ceremony at the Njala University Hall, Henry Street. The training was delivered by SLURC in collaboration with Development Planning Unit (DPU) of University College London (UCL) and Institute of Geography and Development Studies (IGDS), Njala University.

All participants had to attend one week of training covering aspects such as urban planning in African cities through the analytical lenses of spatial justice and social diversity, governance, urban land including tenure systems and taxation of land, urban informality, infrastructure and urban risk and vulnerabilities and their impact on health. They also participated in a field trip and submitted an assignment to show their newly acquired knowledge and understanding of the issues concerned. Out of 28 training participants, 17 submitted and passed the assignment and therefore successfully graduated.

The ceremony was attended by Dr Joseph Sherman-Kamara, Deputy Vice Chancellor at Njala University and Prof. Osman Bah, Dean at the School of Environmental Sciences, Njala University who presented the participants with their certificates. It also included presentations of the two best assignments; ‘Waste Management in the Kroobay Community’ by Abubakar Bakley Sesay (YMCA) and ‘Flooding in the city of Freetown: a case study of Granville Brooke (Colbolt)’ by Victoria Nancy Blango (Lecturer at Njala University) followed by discussions about the urban issues concerned and a screening of the documentary ‘Falling Freetown’ by Reuters Foundation about the tragic landslide last year, again followed by questions and discussions.



Dr. Zeremariam Fre. Image: DPU

Mobilising Resources Workshop

Thomas Doughty, SLURC

Sierra Leone and the Horn of Africa are two very different regions, but both have endured significant political consequences and instability in recent decades, and continue to deal with the challenging longterm consequences. Dr. Zeremariam Fre, Teaching Fellow and course tutor at The Bartlett Development Planning Unit (DPU) at UCL, has vast experience in the Horn of Africa, fundraising and North-South and South-South collaboration. He visited Freetown in October to deliver a training workshop to SLURC and its partners on mobilising resources – which sought to enhance capacities for leveraging funding opportunities and ensure financial sustainability, in the face of ever-changing donor financing mechanisms.

Participants hailed from grassroot NGOs and CBOs; Line Ministries, academic institutions, international NGOs and key SLURC staff. Together they covered topics like the shifting paradigms in Overseas Development Aid (ODA) and implications for development funding; basic techniques for proposal development and writing winning proposals; and sharing specific experiences based on SLURC’s experience with Comic Relief. Mr. Joseph Brima, Assistant FAO Representative of Programmes in Sierra Leone, led a session on resource mobilisation strategies, drawing from FAO’s experiences.

Feedback about the workshop was positive, and participants helped to develop a set of recommendations based on the discussions which took place. There is demand for follow-up training workshops which go more into depth, perhaps covering an element of participatory budgeting drawn from the DPU’s considerable expertise. Tailored training workshops for specific groups (such as small CBOs, women, youth groups, local Ministries and others) who may have limited experience in fundraising or of shifting donor interests, was also suggested.

The workshop’s working groups were also a great opportunity for co-learning between the diverse range of participants, mixing well-resourced organisations and small emerging grassroots organisations.



Presentation and certificate giving. Credit: SLURC



Mobilising resources workshop attendees. Image: SLURC

SLURC External Evaluation

Thomas Doughty, SLURC

The Bartlett Development Planning Unit (DPU) has appointed an external evaluator, Jamie Hitchen, to conduct a review of SLURC's work to date, looked at against the SLURC's initial outcomes identified at project inception in 2014.

These included increasing the country's urban research capacity, improving quality and quantity of knowledge on informal settlements in Freetown and Sierra Leone, increasing stakeholder understanding of quality research and data, influencing policies towards informal settlements, and establishing an independent, sustainable urban research centre.

The evaluation has a primary emphasis on learning and will focus on reflecting on the types of learning generated by SLURC and its activities. In doing so it aims to identify who has learnt what and its impact; understand what were the most effective strategies to generate learning; and explore the ways in which learning contributed to SLURC achieving its overall goals and objectives. It seeks to build on knowledge gathered by SLURC to offer recommendations for the future.

As well as reviewing SLURC's extensive reports, policy briefs and case studies, Jamie spent a week in Freetown engaging with officials from government, SLURC staff members, civil society representatives, development partners, community groups and representatives, academic experts from Njala University and other relevant urban actors. He has also visited Dwarzark, an informal settlement in Freetown, where SLURC has been working in partnership with the community. These in-country interactions will be complemented by conversations with SLURC's international partners.

The evaluation findings will be valuable to SLURC as it evolves further going forwards.

SLURC Welcomes Tom to the Team

SLURC welcomed Tom Doughty to the team in November as its new Information and Communication Management Officer, as part of SLURC's new UCL Fellowship Programme.

Tom has moved to Freetown from London, where he was a consultant in architecture, planning and change management. This entailed leading user engagement and data analysis on large estates planning projects, for educational, non-profit, public and private sector institutions. He is excited to have the opportunity to apply his skills and experience to areas he is passionate about - reducing inequality and improving the lives of people in informal settlements.

His initial degree was in Architecture, and he also holds an MSc in Environment and Sustainable Development from The Bartlett Development Planning Unit (DPU) at UCL.

He is managing our communication channels, and will be working to include more representatives of the communities we work with in our communication outputs, as well as ensuring SLURC's activities and research are disseminated and accessible as widely as possible. He will also be helping to develop and manage the large quantities of data and information that SLURC has produced over its three years to date, to ensure it is all as useable and accessible as possible beyond individual projects, and beyond Freetown.

He has only been in Freetown for a few weeks so far, but has already been touched by the warmth, generosity and friendship of Freetonians who have made him feel at home in this city. E dae try learn small small Krio!

If you don't already do so, please follow us on Twitter [@SLURC_FT](#), like us at [facebook.com/SLURC](#) and check out our blog: [slurc.org/blog](#).

You can contact Tom by email at: tdoughty@slurc.org





Freetown kekes. Image: Thomas Doughty

UPCOMING EVENTS

Upcoming Events

JANUARY 2019

Urban KNOW Data Collection Training 21 - 25/01/2019

As part of the Knowledge in Action for Urban Equality (KNOW) project, SLURC will be training members of the Community Learning Platforms (CoLP) in data collection, offering a limited number of spaces to government ministries, Freetown City Council, NGOs and CBOs. This will enable the teams to conduct a participatory data collection process in order to create informal settlement profiles in Freetown.

Massive Open Online Course (MOOC)

Following the success of SLURC's Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) which was launched in October, we will be running another edition of the course in January to meet increasing demand. If you missed the first edition, or know anyone who might be interested, look out for further details which will be shared on the SLURC website and social media channels very soon.

Late JANUARY - Early FEBRUARY 2019

ESRC Workshop

The first phase of the data collection and interviews stage of the ESRC research project "Shock tactics in the wake of Ebola" is now complete. In early 2019 SLURC will convene a workshop bringing together community stakeholders from CKG and Moyiba informal settlements, as well as health and policy representatives, to collectively understand different perspectives and strategies around health and healthcare. The workshop will be led by the principal investigator Dr. Annie Wilkinson from the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), University of Sussex, and co-investigator Dr Joseph Macarthy, SLURC's Executive Director.

Dissemination of Research Outputs

All of the following outputs will be available to download in the next two months from slurc.org/publications

URBAN LIVELIHOODS

Final Report and Policy Briefing

The culmination of SLURC's three year Comic Relief funded project, seeking to understand the importance of livelihood systems in Freetown's informal settlements for the women and men who participate in, and benefit from them, as well as for the wider settlements and the city. It is based on research undertaken in Cockle Bay, Dwarzark Farm, Moyiba, and Portee-Rokupa as case study informal settlements in Freetown.

PARTICIPATORY PLANNING

Final Report

This report covers SLURC's Community Area Action Planning (CAAP) project. Workshops were conducted in from March to September 2018, using Architecture San Frontieres' (ASF)'s "Change By Design methodology". SLURC and ASF have worked with communities to determine the future that they want for themselves and their settlements - especially ensuring that future developments are planned. As well as a final report, the CAAP will feed into the KNOW project.

FUTURE HEALTH SYSTEMS

Scoping Study Report, Research Report, Policy Briefing and Issue Briefs

The findings of this study into living conditions and health impact in informal settlements: (see page 3) have now been reviewed by participants through a verification workshop, and are now being consolidated. SLURC will be disseminating these outputs in early January 2019 to policymakers, healthcare workers and community participants.



**COMIC
RELIEF**

