

SLURC



**FRAMING THE RESEARCH AGENDA AND CAPACITY BUILDING
NEEDS FOR EQUITABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN FREETOWN**



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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACC	African Centre for Cities
ACF	Action Contre la Faime/Action Against Hunger
AAPS	African Association of Planning Schools
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CSG	Community Steering Group
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CODOHSAPA	Centre of Dialogue on Human Settlement and Poverty Alleviation
DPU	Development Planning Unit
EU	European Union
FCC	Freetown City Council
FEDURP	Federation of the Urban and Rural Poor
IGD&S	Institute of Geography and Development Studies
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organisations
IP	International Partner
MLCP&E	Ministry of Lands, Country Planning and the Environment
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NU	Njala University
PSPP	Pull Slum Pan Pipul
SLURC	Sierra Leone Urban Research Centre
SPSS	Statistical Packages for Social Scientist
SDI	Shacks/Slum Dwellers International
UNDP	United Nations Development Project
UPP	Urban Planning Project
YDM	Youth Development Movement
YMCA	Young Men Christian Association

Note on Language

This report uses the term ‘informal settlements’ to refer both to ‘unplanned settlements’, and to what are frequently termed ‘slums’ or ‘slum settlements’. This is firstly to encompass the diversity of conditions and challenges facing urban inhabitants in Freetown, as they manifest differently in different social and spatial contexts throughout the city, not all of which can be characterised as ‘slums’. As Lombard explains, Informal settlements are characterised by “irregular land tenure...a manifestation of poor housing standards, lack of basic services & a symptom of dysfunctional urban societies where inequalities are both tolerated & allowed to fester” (2014: 3). Secondly the authors hope to avoid reproducing social stigmas that can accompany the terms ‘slum’ and ‘slum dweller’, and in doing so reframe the characterisation of poor urban settlements away from living conditions and privations, towards the relationship between ‘informal’, frequently marginalised urban communities and more ‘formal’ urban actors and processes.

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Executive Summary

In Freetown, Sierra Leone, urban informal settlements reflect on-going processes of marginalisation and exclusion. The dynamics of social and spatial marginalisation are complex, and poorly understood. In part this lack of understanding stems from inadequate knowledge about structures and processes that lead to the proliferation of urban informal settlements, as well as from significant knowledge gaps regarding the social, economic, and environmental factors that lead to the marginalisation of the urban poor.

Building on SLURC's 2014 report, "An Assessment of Existing Information on Freetown Slums", this report critically reviews existing data and evidence on Freetown's informal settlements, in order to identify knowledge and capacity gaps, as well as opportunities and priorities for future research and engagement. Additionally, this report identifies capacity-building opportunities, and describes potentials for urban research in Sierra Leone.

In Freetown, urban informal settlements are characterised by insecurity of tenure, inadequate housing, and squalid living conditions. Currently a significant proportion of the city's population lives in urban informal settlements, which continue to grow and multiply. In order to address these complex challenges, it is critical to develop an urban research agenda that reflects the magnitude and the specificity of challenges facing inhabitants of urban informal settlements. The key question is: what knowledge do urban stakeholders, including city authorities, need if they are to improve the wellbeing of inhabitants of informal settlements and promote inclusiveness and equality in cities?

Firstly, new forms of data collection and analysis need to be prioritised by local and national governments, non-governmental organisations, and local communities. Secondly, research needs to be conducted in partnership with local actors and institutions; research priorities will ultimately be identified through increased collaboration and exchange.

This data will be invaluable for informing policymakers and guiding interventions to reduce inequality and poverty, and address processes of marginalisation in Freetown. Working closely with residents and community-based organisations is critical for collecting this type of information. Household data, community produced maps and profiles should inform and guide local and national government, give voice and visibility to inhabitants of informal settlements, and facilitate dialogue and exchange between urban stakeholders.

To facilitate the development of evidence-based policy, planning and programmes at the local and national level, emphasis should be placed on building the capacity of urban stakeholders. This is critical in order to implement research and produce knowledge that is relevant to Sierra Leone's urban development policies and practices. In order to ensure that Sierra Leone's urban agenda receives adequate recognition and support, local research agendas should be supported by international, high-level dialogue.

Whilst there exists a wealth of knowledge and evidence on Freetown's informal settlements, critical knowledge gaps remain. Of the evidence and data that exist, few studies are sufficiently disaggregated to give a true and dynamic picture of the geographical and demographic heterogeneity that characterises urban informal settlements. There exists also a paucity of recent, relevant and available data on informal settlements in Freetown. Given the rapid, dynamic shifts in the informal settlement populations much of the existing data should be considered inappropriate for guiding future policy.

The available research, reports and datasets on informal settlements in Freetown can be approximately divided into four categories:

- Geo-historical characteristics: historical background, physical location, general living condition, housing

situation, tenure situation;

- Demographic characteristics: population (composition and growth rate), ethnic composition, age distribution, religious composition, marital status, sex and occupational compositions;
- Socio-economy and Influence: socio-cultural structures, economic activities, internal inequalities;
- Environmental health, Infrastructure and Services: environmental condition, disease prevalence, disaster, facilities available, access to social services

Broadly, research exists on community profiling, assessing community needs, capacities, vulnerability to risk and disasters, settlement conditions, youth volunteerism, and household-level nutrition. However available reports and data only relate to 19 out of 34 major informal settlements in Freetown, and only four settlements have been investigated deeply. In the vast majority of literature, the primary unit of analysis was the household.

Overall there exists a lack of evidence for and understanding of the dynamics and drivers of change; how and why individuals, households, and informal settlements become marginalised, or fall into or climb out of poverty. Also there exists little data on how social structures and processes interact with material infrastructure and urban spatial planning in the city.

Within the limitations described above, there exist substantial profiles of informal settlement communities in Freetown. However, a number of critical information gaps must be addressed to support evidence-based urban policy and planning. These knowledge gaps relate to four main themes: vulnerability; livelihoods; land and housing; and health.

Various reports have identified the significance of vulnerability and shocks in reproducing cycles of poverty. However, it is critical that future research attempts to better understand how city-wide trends manifest as shocks and/or opportunities in informal settlement communities. In order to address the drivers of urban poverty and the proliferation of informal settlements, it is important to understand how individuals and households become vulnerable to shocks, including the specific challenges facing female-headed households.

We know that the majority of inhabitants of informal settlements also work within the informal labour market. But what is not understood is what forms of work are carried out, who the operators are, the labour conditions, or how different forms of livelihood relate to specific settlements. Similarly there is a significant knowledge gap on how different livelihoods relate to different areas within the city. Understanding these dynamic will allow for more targeted policies and planning that build on existing livelihood strategies to address the on going needs and aspirations of inhabitants of informal settlements.

There exists a significant knowledge gap regarding plot sizes and the ways in which the diverse housing needs in informal settlements are addressed and negotiated within the limitations of the settlement density and size. There exists also an important knowledge gap regarding the relationship between informal settlement tenants and structure owners, including the rights and entitlements of inhabitants of informal settlements, and how security or insecurity of tenure relates to individual and household vulnerability. Such information is critical for developing urban informal settlement policy and has important implications for future urban development planning.

Finally, there exists a significant knowledge gap around the social determinants of health in informal settlements. Moving beyond a purely spatial, GIS-oriented assessment of health services and infrastructure is critical for developing targeted and effective policies and interventions that address health issues in informal settlement communities; one of the primary drivers of risk and vulnerability.

The report consist of three main parts as follows: Part 1 presents a discussion of the methodology used in the collection, compiling and assessment of all the documents gathered on informal settlements in Freetown. Part 2 which is the major part, examines the content of all the documents in detail, highlighting the key knowledge areas of interest as well as the existing gaps. The methodology used for data collection and analysis

in the various documents is also examined in this section. Part 3 assesses the current training practices and gaps of the different development agencies approached for this study. The potential role of SLURC to address these gaps and to administer the data on informal settlements is also discussed. Further discussions in Part 3 include the challenges and opportunities for doing urban research in Sierra Leone.

PART I: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

Addressing the existing challenges in urban informal settlements requires accurate data on the social and spatial characteristics of the settlements as well as the broader dynamics and trends in the city. In Freetown however this presents serious challenges given the complex and frequently changing social and spatial situation of informal settlements. This is compounded by the generally very limited information on informal settlements, since records exist only on a few sites. Moreover, the mechanisms for collecting and analysing data on the different settlements are still not well developed, as data collection on informal settlements is not seen as a priority issue by either the Freetown City Council (FCC) or the central government¹.

This study builds on an earlier report that took inventory of data collections on informal settlements in Freetown. Similar to that study, the inventory has been updated from a review of technical reports, data reports, academic research, baseline studies, journal articles, and an indexed map. The inventory process involved interrogating and keeping track of data and related documentation collected mainly from the unpublished holdings of agencies and individuals studying or intervening in informal settlements. While the earlier study focused on developing an inventory of available informal settlement data and information (including an audit of its utility, method/validity and ownership) and to present an overview of the major gaps; recommendations on how best to collate, store and disseminate such information; including, developing a business model and plan for short term training and a summary of market demand for the different content, this new study has been guided by the following deliverables, to:

- Review and update existing knowledge relating to SLURC's four thematic clusters since the feasibility study report in 2013;
- Identify knowledge gaps, opportunities and priorities for future areas of research by the Centre;
- Identify capacity building gaps and needs of the different stakeholders and urban actors representing different sectors and interests;
- Describe the challenges and opportunities for urban research.

It should be noted that this study, which sets out to undertake a detailed data inventory on informal settlements, is far from exhaustive. This is because many documents that have information on Freetown's informal settlements are held in many different locations (including government ministries, NGOs, CBO's, the Freetown City Council, Njala University, by private consultants, and by a host of other private institutions) that could not be reached at the time of the study. Many may also exist in the libraries of some foreign universities where a number of Sierra Leoneans could either have studied or some Freetown- based informal settlements studies carried out by international scholars. For that reason, this work should be considered only as a starting point in a long journey of putting together relevant and important data on the existing informal settlements in ways that can influence urban policy and planning.

In effect, while the earlier study was a prelude to securing Comic Relief funding, which led to the establishment of the Sierra Leone Urban Research Centre, this study provides baseline information on the existing knowledge on informal settlements in Freetown as well as the skills gaps of different urban actors with whom SLURC will engage.

SLURC has being established as a globally connected research centre in Freetown with responsibilities to produce and disseminate urban knowledge in Sierra Leone; build the research and analysis capacity of urban

¹Data on informal settlements settlements is infrequently (10 years apart) collected as part of Sierra Leone's National population and housing census but the analysis is however, not based on place-specific characteristics.

actors; as well as, influence the country's urban policy and practice.

For the purpose of our analysis, a single inventory table (see Annex 3) was prepared to provide information on the basis of our assessment of documents including the criteria used. However, as Part 2 shows, this was supplemented with a series of other tables to bring out a variety of other important details that may have been missed out. In line with the earlier study, this work has focused on analysing documents in relation to the following:

1. What information do we already have about informal settlements?
2. How is the information currently stored and disseminated?
3. What are the information gaps that we would need data on?
4. How should the information be stored, managed and disseminated?
5. How are organisations currently meeting their training needs?
6. What challenges are organisations currently facing in meeting training needs?
7. What training skills do organisations need (now and in the next 5 years)?
8. How might SLURC/NU provide training that meets the needs of organisations?

The report consists of three main parts as follows: Part 1 presents a discussion of the methodology used in the collection, compiling and assessment of all the documents gathered on informal settlements in Freetown. The list of all the documents reviewed in this study is presented in Annex 1 and the map from the European Union-funded Urban Planning Project (UPP) in Annex 4. Part 2, the major part of the report, examines the content of all the documents in detail, highlighting key merits and demerits, as well as identifying key knowledge gaps. The methodology used for data collection and analysis in the various documents is also examined in this section. Part 3 assesses the current training practices and gaps of the different development agencies approached for this study. The potential role of SLURC to address this gap and to administer the data on informal settlements is also discussed. Further discussions in Part 4 include the challenges and opportunities for doing urban research in Sierra Leone. Unlike the earlier study, this work does not make suggestions on ways to collate, store and disseminate the data as well as a market analysis for the different content of the proposed capacity building areas. This was due in part to the lack of inclusion in the study deliverables and in part to time constraints.

PART II: METHODOLOGY

2.0 Data collection, compiling and assessment methods

2.1 Data collection

As has been earlier emphasised, this study builds on an earlier work undertaken in 2013 by a team comprising one international and two national consultants. Building on the first report, this second study was commissioned by SLURC and carried out by the two Co-directors. The study involved two separate workshops. The first workshop was held with the Pull Slum Pan Pipul² (PSPP) partners, while the second involved participants from the government ministries/ departments and agencies, the Freetown City Council, civil society organisations, NGOs, CBOs and local media. The two workshops were deemed necessary since they enabled us to identify new data/information sets on informal settlement communities which are held by different organisations as well as relevant information (reports, publications etc.) on urban settlement development in Sierra Leone that were missed out in the earlier study. Interviews were also held with some key urban actors and institutions working in some of Freetown's informal settlements. These included officials from the Ministry of Lands, Country Planning and the Environment, and the FCC to further develop these ideas, and to ensure that the findings of the scoping study reflect a broad range of perspectives. A comprehensive list of workshop participants is provided in Annex 1.

In the main, documents were collected from six main sources comprising:

1. NGOs working in Freetown's informal settlements
2. Local and national government offices
3. Njala University
4. Individual consultants
5. Internet searches
6. Journal publications

In carrying out the study, additional/new data sets distinct from earlier documents exploring informal settlements in Freetown were first identified. Five documents were collected overall. These documents were collected in part because of their availability and in part because of the strong insights they provide to Freetown's informal settlements. Most of the documents were in the form of reports and studies carried at community, township or national levels. Six other documents were identified as having recently being prepared by PSPP partners (see Table 7), but only one was shared with SLURC when requested.

2.2 Compiling the data

The data reviewed for this study was collected on only 19 informal settlements³ in Freetown. However, only four informal settlements (Kroo Bay, Dworzack, Susan's Bay and Marbella) were found to have been deeply investigated. Moreover, more information exists on Kroo Bay and Dworzack than on any other informal settlement. This is not surprising since, over half of all the collected documents (see Table 1) were produced by the YMCA (sometimes jointly), which is more actively involved in the two informal settlements.

²The Pull Slum Pan Pipul (PSPP) partners is a loose network of six organisations (including SLURC) funded by Comic Relief for informal settlement improvement interventions in Sierra Leone's capital, Freetown. The PSPP is a key component of Comic Relief's four Cities Initiative involving such other cities as Cape Town (South Africa), Lusaka (Zambia), Kampala (Uganda).

³There is much disagreement on the total number of informal settlements in Freetown. The Freetown City Council estimate that there are at least 28 informal settlement communities within the Freetown municipality.

One observation was that more information exists on informal settlements in the Eastern and Central part of Freetown than in the West. This is not surprising giving that because living conditions in the west of Freetown are broadly viewed to be much better than anywhere else in the city, very few informal settlements are likely to exist there (in the west) that should warrant the collection of a large volume of information.

While the scale and depth of the issues explored in all the studies varied broadly, three main scales of studies were identified:

- Studies that focus specifically on a few selected informal settlements in Freetown;
- Studies carried out at the city-scale but with specific reference to focus on a few selected informal settlements;
- Studies carried out at the national-level, but with strong insight into Freetown's informal settlements.

A key consideration in the data compilation stage was to define a duration for which the data used in the study could be considered reliable. This is in view of the fact that people are constantly fluctuating in and between informal settlements. This decision was particularly required for Susan's Bay where, in spite of the detailed study by the UN-HABITAT, all the data dates as far back as 2006, implying that some remarkable changes may have already occurred. This suggests the need to verify much of the existing data (Part Two) given the constant shift in people's movement in and out of informal settlements.

2.3 Assessment method

Following the compilation of the documents, they were assessed in terms of the issues they are addressing, the validity of information and the knowledge gaps. While an inventory table was developed to present an analysis of all the data collected for this study, it was deemed relevant to use additional tables for a further analysis of documents owing to the many gaps within, and the fact that the existing information is not too reliable. Moreover, owing to the lack of rigour on research methods in many of the studies as well as the limited sizes of their sampling, it was decided that each existing document be assessed in the form of a table (an adapted annotated bibliography).

PART III: Assessment of documents and an overview of existing gaps

3.0 Assessment of documents and an overview of existing gaps

3.1 Assessment of the content

The documents that were reviewed for this work explored several issues in informal settlements. However, the specific issues examined in each of the studies varied broadly. Amongst the key issues addressed in the documents are community profiles, needs, capacities, vulnerability, disaster risks, settlement conditions, youth volunteerism, poverty profiles, and nutritional levels. A number of these works were carried out in different forms consisting of baseline, mid-term and end-term surveys. Based on their individual content, the reviewed documents have been divided into seven main clusters (see Table 1) as follows:

- i) Survey
- ii) Poverty profile
- iii) Informal settlement improvement
- iv) Disaster risk reduction
- v) Trends
- vi) Reviews
- vii) Policy

It was observed that largely because the site for each of the informal settlements is not officially defined, different area sizes were assumed for each study. For this reason, the reports differed broadly in their estimation of informal settlement population, the settlement characteristics and the general information on the informal settlements. Additionally, it was usual for different names to be associated with the same informal settlement or for the same informal settlement to be considered as two separate settlements with different names ascribed to each. This partly reflects the lack of a holistic study on informal settlements; the lack of planning and demarcation of informal settlements by the FCC; and, the general lack of coordination amongst the different agencies operating in informal settlements.

Other aspects looked at in the (content) analysis is discussed below. It should be stated that for most of the work that focused specifically on exploring informal settlements, the main unit of analysis is the household.

3.1.1 Settlement Description

Most of the studies tried to be descriptive of the informal settlements. However, the type of issues that they addressed differed broadly. These have been classified roughly into four main categories as follows:

- Geo-historical characteristics: historical background, physical location, general living conditions, housing situation, tenure situation;
- Demographic characteristics: population (composition and growth rate), ethnic composition, age

- distribution, religious composition, marital status, sex and occupational compositions;
- Socio-economy and Influence: socio-cultural structures, economic activities, internal inequalities;
- Environmental health, Infrastructure and Services: environmental conditions, disease prevalence, disaster, facilities available, access to social services.

The main measures on which the analysis was based are as explained below:

Category: Main thematic issue/topics covered. Occasionally more than one issue/topic may be treated but the analysis focuses on the primary theme of the document.

Document: Title of report or publication reviewed in this study as reported on the front page

Author: Name of person/institution⁴ responsible for the document or report.

Date: Year of publication⁵ of report or document

Settlement: Name of community (informal settlement) where the study was carried out. Sometimes, the same informal settlement community is described by different names. Since no officially defined boundary exists for informal settlements in Freetown, there are a few cases where the same informal settlement is viewed as two separate settlements.

Category type: Provides further information on each of the categories earlier identified. More specifically, it provides insights on the type of document reviewed.

Scale: The level at which the study was carried out. While some documents refer to the city or national level, they also provide lots of details that are relevant to some informal settlement communities.

Key issues: Summary of the main focus of the reviewed document.

⁴ In cases where the name of author is not stated, the responsible institution is used.

⁵ Where the date of publication is not known, n.d. (No date) is stated against the document.

Table 1: Assessment of documents based on thematic clusters

Categories	Document	Author	Date	Settlements	Category Type	Scale	Key Issue (s)
Survey	1	YCARE, YMCA	2009	Kroo Bay	Household socio-economic & Community enumeration	Community	Information on access to assets but not detailed on tenure processes and vulnerability to disasters
	2	CODOHSAPA & FEDURP	2011	Colbot, Falcon Bridge	Community-led enumeration	Community	Information on population & household structure. Limited focus on access to assets, policy & planning & structuring factors
	3	BRAC	2013	Marbella, Susan's Bay & Kroo Bay	Community enumeration	Community	Brief information on households' cultural & socio-economic features, policy & planning and structuring factors
	4	YMCA	2009	Dworzack & Kroo Bay	Baseline	Community	Insights on access to assets, policy & planning, and the structuring factors
	5	Gudrun Stallkamp	2008	6 urban informal settlements (not indicated)	Nutritional	Community	Detailed information on malnutrition amongst children & h/h food patterns
	6	YMCA	-	George Brook, Omole Bush, Funkia, Kroo Bay & Kanike	Need assessment on livelihood education for youths	Community	Information on the educational situation of youths living in informal settlements
	7	YMCA	2012	Susan's Bay, Marbella, Mo Wharf, Colbot & Moyiba	Needs assessment on the status of youth, women & stakeholders	Community	Information on youths & women's needs, NGO intervention priority areas & the challenges to community disaster management efforts
	8	BRAC-SL	2014	-	GEC Baseline	National	Interesting discussion of baseline characteristics across treatment and control groups of BRAC-SL's Girls Education Challenge (GEC) programme
	9	BRAC-SL (Kabba, R; Rahman, M; Kain, R.J.)	2014	Congo Town, Kroo Bay, Susan's Bay & Mabella	Social & physical characteristics of 4 informal settlements	Community	Information on a broad range of issues involving the social demography and physical characteristics of the 4 informal settlement communities.

	10	YMCA & CO-DOHSAPA	2015	Cockle Bay, Oloshoro, Moe Wharf & Colbot	Community Enumeration and Profiling; assessment of community vulnerability and capacity	Community	Interesting description of the communities in terms of the environmental situation as well as the socioeconomic, cultural and demographic characteristics.
Poverty profile	11	World Bank	2012	-	Poverty	National	Very good analysis of potential trends driving growth and poverty dynamics in Freetown
	12	ACF	-	Bottom Oku, George Brook, Kuntorloh & Marbella	Food security & Livelihoods	Community	Interesting comparison amongst the characteristics of different informal settlements. Some insight on barriers to moving up the social ladder
Informal settlement improvement	13	UNHABITAT	2006	-	Informal settlement improvement	National	Information on access to assets. Analysis of housing policy & factors shaping informal settlement development
Disaster risk reduction	14	YMCA, YCARE	2012	Kroo Bay & Dworzack	Youth-led community based	Community	Description of youth volunteerism opportunities & challenges
	15				Youth volunteerism	Community	Information on youth volunteerism, demographics, values, attitudes & perceptions.
	16			Dworzack & Kroo Bay	Community vulnerability & capacity assessment	Community	Information on access to assets, policy & planning, & the factors shaping the vulnerability of informal settlements
	17	Macarthy, J.M	2012	Dworzack, East Brook, Aberdeen & Kingtom	Community vulnerability and adaptive capacity assessment	Freetown	Analysis of the vulnerability of settlements to climatic hazards; risks; and, the existing capacity to adapt. The factors shaping vulnerability are also analysed.
Trends	18	Michael A.O. Johnson	2009		Causes of informal settlement formation	Freetown	Analysis of the general informal settlement conditions & the factors leading to informal settlement development

	19	Sankoh, F.P; Pan, X; Tran, Q.	2013	-	Effects of Solid Waste Disposal	Freetown	Very good analysis of the impacts of having a dump site near a residential community. Inter- esting suggestions to properly locate and manage dump- sites to minimise the environmental effects and for the Freetown City Council to resettle all residents living less than fifty me- tres away from the dumpsite.
Reviews	20	Abdul Manaff Kemokai	2010	Dworzack & Kroo Bay	Midterm review of YMCA's informal settlement devel- opment projects	Community	Interesting discus- sion on the impacts of YMCA's project in transforming the lives of inhabitants of informal settle- ments.
	21	Mohamed Sidie Sheriff	2011		YMCA's End term review - Transform- ing young people's lives in informal settlements	Community	Information on the role of YMCA's project in trans- forming young people's lives
	22	Benjamine Bradlow & SDI	-	Kroo Bay & Dwor- zack	Towards an infor- mal settlement policy and practice	Community	Analysis of the policy & insti- tutional factors shaping growth in Freetown informal settlements & the development inter- ventions
Policy	23	Suheil Madanat & Ibrahim Njai	2006	-	Sierra Leone Hous- ing policy	National	Outlines the Sierra Leone policy framework for the housing sector.

3.1.2 Geo-physical characteristics

Information on the geo-physical characteristics of informal settlements is provided in a number of studies. However, this information is limited to only a few settlements, especially Kroo Bay and Dwarzack where the YMCA and YCARE, owing to their active interventions in the two informal settlements, have carried out some interesting studies. Much of the information gathered relates to the factors leading to the emergence of informal settlements, a description of the physical site, informal settlement land ownership, access to housing, and a description of the general living conditions in informal settlements. Information is also presented on housing conditions, tenure types, rental values, water points, and prevailing hazard risks.

“Most of the occupied structures are limited in space to provide enough room for 4 persons, such that most household are crammed in these tiny space they call their home...the nature of dwelling houses are poor partly also because the land is owned by the state and the people are in perpetual fear of evictions.” (YMCA, 2009: 4-12)

Information is however lacking on what the households actually do to access land, housing, as well as other informal coping mechanisms. While some works provide information on the recent improvements that have been carried out in informal settlement communities, there is however, a consistent lack of definition of ‘slums’ and ‘informal settlements’ in much of the work. Moreover, boundary demarcation was a major problem in most of the studies since informal settlement boundaries in Freetown are only approximately defined (see table 2).

Table 2: Selected informal settlement boundary definition according to a selection of the reviewed texts

Title of Text	Author and Date of publication	Informal settlement name	Boundary definition	Other informal settlements present within this boundary
Community-led enumeration and profiling: The state of 11 coastal slums in Freetown, Sierra Leone	YMCA & FEDURP (2009)	Falcon Bridge	Located on the coast line of Freetown in Constituency 107, Ward 378	Government Wharf, Susan's Bay
		Government Wharf	Located on the coast line of Freetown in constituency 107, Ward 378	Falcon Bridge; Susan's Bay
		Magazine wharf	Located on the coast line of Freetown in constituency 105, ward 374	Marbella
Moving out of poverty in the Freetown slums	(ACF International, 2012:10)	Marbella	Located on the coast line of Freetown in constituency 105, ward 374	Magazine wharf
			Borders one of the busiest markets and business areas in Freetown	Magazine; Susan's Bay
			Located on the East Coast of Freetown constituency 107, wards 377 and 378 and, bounded by the sea.	Falcon Bridge; Government wharf
The improvement of slums and informal settlements in Freetown	UN-HABITAT (2006)	Susan's bay	foreshore informal settlement located close to the Marbella informal settlement	

Consequently, a number of studies have used demarcations based on their own valid judgements. This approach has tended to provide inaccurate figures on the total number of inhabitants of informal settlements with information reported on the same informal settlement community being different from those of other works. Apart from the works by Michael Johnson and the UN-Habitat, all the other works lack an assessment of how urban trends/dynamics are affecting the emergence and quality of life in Freetown informal settlements. Several also fail to provide an analysis of the policy and planning procedures that influence the emergence of informal settlements in Freetown.

3.1.3 Demographic characteristics

Only seven studies investigated household's characteristics. However, as each of these studies was carried out separately, different sets of attributes were examined. For example, while the study by CODOHSAPA and FEDURP (Doc 2) examines age distribution as well as marital, educational and employment statuses of households, the study by UN-HABITAT (13) privileges such other attributes such as gender and religion. Three of the studies carried out at Kroo Bay and Dwarzack by YMCA, focused specifically on examining youths, with data collected on households relating to the total number of youths, their age distribution, sex, marital status, employment, education levels, and the number of children that young people directly look after per household. For example, one of YMCA's study reports (Doc 15) describes household demographic characteristics as follows:

"There is a relatively even gender balance...Educational attainments range from a few years of primary education to completion of tertiary level education. Approximately 60% are Muslim, reflecting the dominant religion in Sierra Leone, while the remaining 40% identify as Christian."

Nearly all the information is however basic and do not provide disaggregated details on the different group categories within informal settlements. A study by Action Contre la Faim (ACF) however, endeavoured to provide such disaggregated information (for different poverty level groups) on four informal settlements, but this study only focused on access to housing and water. Also, because Sierra Leone's national census result is normally reported by wards/chiefdoms/district and regions, it was difficult for most studies to determine the actual population living in informal settlements.

3.1.4 Socio-economy and influence

Some of the formal and informal structures that make up the social capacity of communities (from which households draw upon) are briefly discussed in some of the works. These include a list of community and social groups consisting of women and men's groups as well as groups for the young and for the aged. Some works also provide brief information on the NGOs and CBOs working in the communities including their areas of intervention (See Table 3). This is however limited to only a few communities. There is a broad claim in most of the studies that social structures within informal settlements are critical to household coping strategies. This is supported by claims from individuals and households relating specifically to the reasons and benefits for joining such groups.

Table 3: Development agencies working in informal settlements and the respective intervention areas

Community	List of development agencies	Areas of intervention
Falcon Bridge	Association for Rural Development (ARD)	Microfinance
	Concern Worldwide	Disaster Risk Reduction
	Save the Children	Provide pupils with learning materials
Kanikay	GOAL	Skills training; Award scholarships to school-going pupils
Magazine wharf	GOAL	Health and sanitation
	Concern Worldwide	Health and sanitation
Marbella	GOAL	Child protection; youth skills training; health care; day care for deprived kids
	Concern Worldwide	Construct health centres; provide health and sanitation facilities
	Save the Children	Provide educational materials to school-going children
	YMCA	Youth skills training
Old wharf	Christian Brothers	Provides scholarships and learning materials to school going children
	Family Home Movement	Provides ice to preserve fish
Pamronko	Action Aid	Provide learning materials to school going children; train and sensitise teachers on HIV/AIDS
	OXFAM	Health and sanitation
	ACF	Provide safe drinking water
	YDM	Rehabilitate water wells; youth skills training
Portee-Rokupr	Concern Worldwide	Construct bridges, Disaster management; educational support; health and sanitation
	GOAL	Provides support to vulnerable children; awards scholarship; construct water wells
Susan's Bay	Save the Children	Forms children's clubs; sensitise on HIV/AIDS
	Concern Worldwide	Disaster management; health and sanitation
	GOAL	Financial support to women
	Save the Children	Child protection; HIV/AIDS sensitisation
	YMCA	Youth technical and vocational training
Kroo Bay	YMCA	Construct Community centre; skills training; adult literacy & advocacy; community saving schemes
	Concern Worldwide	Construct Health centre; hygiene and Health promotion; HIV/AIDS sensitisation and Teen-age pregnancy
	Red Cross	Emergency response, relief, medical
	NaCSA	Paving and banking
	BRAC-SL	Provides Essential Health care; train community health volunteers; hygiene and Health promotion

[Source: YMCA & FEDURP (2009); BRAC-SL (2013); CODOHSAPA & FEDURP (2011)]

There is however a dearth of information on community representation and participation in decision-making processes. The text (Doc. 11) that touched briefly on community engagement and civic responsibility focused on investigating the benefits households gain from the existence of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and Community Steering Groups (CSGs) in the two informal settlements (Kroo Bay and Dwarzack) where they exist.

Only three of the reviewed works make reference to the political capacity of informal settlement communities but these are generally in the form of short statements. Two of the works relating specifically to Kroo Bay

and Dwarzack claim that the two main political structures, the Ward Development Committee and the Local Council Committee, which people should draw upon when fending for their livelihoods are, in reality, not responsive to community needs.

“In the Dworzack Slum, majority of the young persons revealed that the Area Chief, Ward Development Committee, Parliamentarians, Local Council Committee and Freetown City Council are to no extent responsive to their needs... over 45% of youths in the Kroo Bay slum attested that... (they) are to some extent responsive to their needs.” (YMCA, 2009:65)

The few advocacy groups that have emerged to fill this gap have also been polarised along political party lines. All the three studies make no mention of the existing informal structures of dominance and power that influence individuals and households access to resources. There is also limited information on individual's access to decision making processes, their capacity and willingness to participate in community decisions, the ability to assert themselves when making claims for their right as well as what households actually do to access the existing political structures.

Some of the studies that provide information on household financial assets focus on an analysis of their livelihood profiles. This involved investigating household's income sources, average monthly earnings, expenditure patterns, employment status, and the sources of credit. A few studies also describe the different livelihood strategies of households including the changes in their income and the reasons for the change. Much of this information is however, basic and is limited to only a few settlements. Information is however lacking on what the urban poor do to access financial assets.

3.1.5 Environmental health, infrastructure and services

Information was provided on a number of communities regarding the existing health and educational facilities as well as the drinking water facilities and the food status of the population. On the issue of health, there is brief information on the prevalence of diseases (especially cholera), the frequency of health problems along with the treatment patterns. No information is provided however, on access to health facilities for the different informal settlement community groups. Information on education focuses on the educational levels of the different households, the differences in access for the different poverty groups, the existence of youth literacy and vocational skills training programmes, and the contributions made by these programmes in transforming young people's lives. Information on people's personal perceptions in terms of their individual capacities and willingness to apply the acquired knowledge and skills and to also claim their rights is nonetheless lacking.

For communities on which the food status of the population was assessed, information was provided on community sources of food, access to food for the different households, household food pattern, the nutritional elements, and levels of malnutrition amongst children. Whereas information on the latter was more detail (even though the informal settlement names were not identified), information on all the other elements was very brief. Moreover, many of the studies do not provide information on what the urban poor are doing to for example, dispose of their waste or access drinking water.

“Whilst accessibility to water supply is gradually improving, sanitation has remained the same and most people particularly in Kroo Bay do not have toilet facilities at their homes. Most inhabitants of Kroo Bay and Dwarzack still access these facilities⁶ within their communities irrespective of their qualities and level of competition to access them.” (Kemokai, 2010:22)

⁶ Though quite substandard

With regards to water, there is no information on the quality, accessibility, and the power structures that influence its delivery. Such information is no doubt, critical for policy and planning decisions. While a lot of information is currently being gathered both by the Freetown City Council and the Ministry of Lands, Country Planning and the Environment, under the European Commission-funded Urban Planning Project, much of the emphasis is on the use of the GIS. The tendency to look at research as a GIS exercise hinders our understanding of the provision/availability of services in informal settlements. For example, it does not mean that just because there is no water point, people do not get water from other sources using their ingenuity. Information is also lacking on whether or not there are norms and regulations guiding water, housing or health delivery in informal settlements.

3.1.6 Policy and Planning Issues

Given that collecting and making available accurate and reliable information on informal settlements can profoundly influence policy and planning decisions regarding their improvement, several of the texts were assessed in terms of whether or not they brought to the forefront many of the challenges facing the urban poor in informal settlements. Specific attention was also given to texts containing some important governmental policies affecting informal settlement development in Sierra Leone. Key amongst these is the National Housing Policy, which was analysed in terms of its role in the production of informal settlements as well as the actions prescribed for dealing with informal settlements in Sierra Leone. Other selected agencies providing nutrition and health services in informal settlements were also analysed in addition to the institutional factors which influence informal settlement development in Freetown. One key issue that was broadly highlighted is the point that Sierra Leone still has no specific policy on informal settlements.

“Sierra Leone has yet to develop a national policy approach to the issue of slum and informal settlements. Government interventions in these depressed areas have been recurrent demolitions, provision of disaster relief assistance during flooding and landslides, relocation and provision of emergency medical assistance in the event of an outbreak of diseases such as malaria, typhoid and cholera” (Johnson, 2009:18).

As a result, lots of lapses exist in the approach taken by the government (central and local) towards informal settlements.

Some of the texts provide interesting information on the key actions taken by households in addressing several of the problems faced in their informal settlement communities. These include descriptions of the tenure procedures, emerging practices addressing housing deficits, discussion on the informal processes by which inhabitants of informal settlements acquire their dwellings, and an analysis of the main gaps in NGO interventions in informal settlements. Much of the information is however, very brief since the works did not provide the kind of details that will allow a better understanding of the issues, including problems and response strategies. Such knowledge is arguably relevant for developing constructive ideas to either advance or inform policies on informal settlements.

Furthermore, no mention is made in all the works of whether or not forums exist for dialogue on informal settlement matters, specifically that relating to the Presidential Taskforce⁷ on Slums, which was established in 2015. There is also a lack of information on whether or not individuals and households in informal settlements are knowledgeable on pertinent issues relating to the key policies influencing informal settlements since such understanding is critical in increasing their chances of impacting the review as well as the creation of any new policies.

⁷ In the aftermath of the flooding in Freetown in September 2015, the government of Sierra Leone set up a presidential taskforce to help raise funds to support the flood victims as well as respond to the challenges of informal settlement development in Freetown.

3.1.7 Structuring Factors

The structuring factors shaping informal settlements in Freetown were assessed in terms of the shocks (i.e. the type and levels of harm) frequently faced by inhabitants of informal settlements, as well as the trends (i.e. the urban processes) that exacerbate the situation. While information on shocks was provided for only a few settlements, it was found to be generally interesting. Shocks are presented as one of the main constraints that limit the ingenuity of human action in informal settlements and to the vulnerability of households and their settlements to disaster risks. A historic profile of community disaster risks is presented for Dwarzack along with a mapping and ranking of its vulnerability⁸ and hazard risks. This is however, lacking for all the other informal settlements. Vulnerability is analysed primarily in terms of its physical attributes (location in at risk areas, poor and inadequate roads and services, poor housing conditions) with rarely any attention given to its social and economic dimensions. Moreover, much of the information provided (on vulnerability) is not detailed. For some settlements, there is a brief discussion on the challenges to disaster management and the constraints individuals and households face in dealing with emergencies.

3.1.8 Trends

Some texts provide a good analysis of the potential urban processes driving growth and poverty dynamics in Freetown. For example, Doc 18 attributes the processes driving urban poverty in Freetown to include the city's rapid population growth, the devastation caused both to the city infrastructure and its economic base by the decade-long civil conflict, as well as the low capacity of institutions to meet the existing demand for urban services in the city. Other texts that provide some insights on the barriers for moving out of poverty include Doc 12, which specifically identifies loss of job/contract work, death of the breadwinner, abandonment of household by the husband, seasonal hardship, and the many responsibilities that households usually face as the key barriers. A few texts however, focus on the factors that shape the production and vulnerability of informal settlements. Of particular note is Doc 23 which points out widespread poverty, high unemployment, and the prolonged economic stagnation as the main vulnerability factors, which stimulates greater desperation for inhabitants of informal settlements to live in any type of shelter.

Several other texts identify the key barriers which impede the growth effort of households to include the high cost of living, heavy rains, lack of financial resources, low wages, high unemployment, and the lack of economic opportunities open to households. These factors along with such others as the rapid urbanisation of Freetown, housing scarcity, the constraints imposed by the rugged topography, difficulty in accessing land, tenure, and the rising poverty have arguably coalesced to cause the proliferation of informal settlements as well as the vulnerability of households to biophysical risks. For two of the settlements (Kroo Bay and Dwarzack), there is a discussion of how political institutions of the state and the laws they formulate shapes the actions taken towards informal settlements. This analysis is however weak on the themes of gender and power since it does not provide sufficient information on the implications for women of the trends shaping the informal settlements as well as the powers and interests that are driving the change.

⁸ Gasper et al (2011: 150) has attempted to clarify the relationship between risk and vulnerability by arguing that unlike risks which create the likelihood of hazard events, vulnerability is about the specific attributes of systems which increases (or decreases) the potential for harm.

3.1.9 Priority needs and aspirations of inhabitants of informal settlements

Several of the texts provide interesting information on various priority needs which households consider to be critical for the improvement of their lives. One of the texts (Doc 2) by CODOHSAPA and FEDURP, which is based on their intervention in 11 informal settlement communities in Freetown lists not only the priority needs⁹ of the informal settlements but also makes recommendations¹⁰ on what future actions are required, based on the lessons learnt. Such valuable information is however lacking on most other Freetown informal settlements.

“When asked to describe the area they live in, volunteers and absentees began with positive attributes of the area, including: a strong sense of community, social activities, helpful neighbours, and personal safety.” (Cumming, 2012:17)

Information on people’s aspirations, their sense of identity, and what they consider as appropriate for their individual and collective advancement are presented in some of the texts. Some also provide interesting insights on the values and perceptions of local residents as well as a number of other identity issues. The sense of citizenship is also expressed in some communities. Strong desires are also expressed by some female inhabitants of informal settlements to engage in trade with several of the youths showing interest in vocational skills training. It is not shown however how different livelihood assets influence individual and household aspirations.

3.2 Assessment of key knowledge gaps

The foregoing analysis shows that data was collected on diverse attributes on informal settlements relating for example, to the number of inhabitants, the number of dwellings, the dwelling type, occupancy rates, access to land, systems of tenure, and types of services available. There is however, a dearth of information on the prevailing plot sizes including ways in which the diverse housing needs in informal settlements are addressed within the limitations of settlement densities and sizes. This suggests the need for added information on the rights and entitlements of inhabitants of informal settlements to tenure security including the existing relationship between tenants and structure owners within the informal settlements (see Table 4 for additional details).

Moreover, even as most documents agree that inhabitants of informal settlements derive much of their livelihoods from engaging in the informal labour market, it is not clear what kinds of jobs are actually carried out, who the operators are, how much is earned, how the livelihood activities are linked to individual neighbourhoods, conditions in the work place, the type and sources of support, or how livelihood activities can be enhanced.

Information is also missing on the causes of shocks to household’s livelihoods, the shock types, what households do to resist, cope with, or become liable to the shocks, including the specific challenges that female-headed households face when dealing with shocks to their livelihoods. Addressing all these information gaps would require giving priority to three main aspects to be explored in relation to the data inventory on Freetown

⁹ Doc. 2 identifies a list of priority needs for the 11 informal settlement communities profiled. While communities sometimes differ in terms of their priority needs, the following needs were found to be critical in the improvement of their lives/living conditions: safe drinking water, toilet (public), health centre, schools (primary and secondary) community centre, market place, drainage and bridges, road networks, skills training options (vocational), recreational centre, and agricultural tools and seedlings.

¹⁰ Doc. 2 recommends the setting up of multi-stakeholder platform where discussions, plans and decisions can be made to address the problems of informal settlements. Other recommendations include carrying out short to medium term upgrading interventions that can gradually “remove the slum from the people...”; and, to conduct a similar survey/ profiling of other informal settlement communities not already covered by the study.

informal settlements. These include (i) livelihoods, (ii) vulnerability and (iii) land and housing (see Table 4 for further details). An added (fourth) aspect that was considered to be prioritised but with very little information on its attributes was urban health owing largely to the severe threat it continually present to human life especially in informal settlements. The prioritisation of these four aspects was articulated as a strategic focus, based on the policy environment and planning approaches in Freetown, and the need to address some key planning challenges.

Table 4: Key knowledge gap and priority research areas

Research thematic area	Key Knowledge gap and the specific Issues		Main priority for research
	Knowledge gaps	Specific issues	
Land and housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Land tenure in informal settlements - Data on the structuring factors influencing informal settlement development - Informal settlement boundary limitation - Description of the general informal settlement conditions (physical, social, economic, environmental etc.) - Data on informal settlement population size, social-economic, cultural, physical and demographic characteristics of residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who really owns the land? • What are the title arrangements for land? • How can we determine whether or not land in informal settlements is legally acquired/occupied • What do households actually do to access land and housing? • How do inhabitants of informal settlements cope with the challenge of access to land and housing? • How are 'slums' and 'informal settlements' defined in Freetown? • What is the total number of residents per informal settlement community in Freetown? • What are the policies for managing the development of slums and other informal settlements in Freetown? • What are the demographic characteristics of residents in other informal settlements? • How can data on informal settlements be disaggregated to reflect the different group categories within informal settlements? • What is the actual population living in informal settlements? • What are the formal and informal structures that make up the social capacity of communities? • Which are the NGOs and CBOs working/intervening in informal settlement communities in Freetown? • What do the urban poor do to dispose of their waste / access drinking water etc.? • What are the power structures that influence water delivery in informal settlements? • What are the institutional factors that influence informal settlement development in Freetown? • What are the tenure procedures in informal settlements? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land tenure systems in informal settlements • Housing and urban services (demand, availability & access) • Human living condition in informal settlements • Disaggregated data on the different group categories for each informal settlement • The structuring / institutional factors influencing informal settlement formation & development • Community social capacity and power structures

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do inhabitants of informal settlements do to address housing deficits? • What are the informal processes by which inhabitants of informal settlements acquire their dwellings? • What are the existing forums for dialogue on informal settlement matters? • How knowledgeable are inhabitants of informal settlements on pertinent policy issues influencing informal settlements? • How do political institutions and the laws they formulate shape actions towards informal settlements? 	
Urban livelihoods & the city economy	- Information on access to assets including the structural factors influencing it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the state of community representation and participation in decision making? • What is the political capacity of informal settlement communities? • What are the existing informal structures of dominance and power that influence individuals and households access to resources? • What factors influence individual's access to decision making processes in Freetown? • What is the existing capacity of individuals to effectively participate in community decisions and to assert their agenda? • What do households actually do to access the existing political structures? • Which assets (financial, human, natural, physical, social) do households depend on for their livelihood? • What are the livelihood strategies of households living in informal settlements? • What do the urban poor do to access financial assets? • How are the aspirations of individuals and households influenced by the different livelihood assets? • What kinds of job do households actually undertake and who are the operators? • How much money is earned from the different activities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Households livelihood assets and the influencing factors • Households livelihood strategies • Civic participation and engagement • The informal economy. Small scale enterprises and human livelihoods

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are the livelihood activities of individuals linked to their neighbourhoods? • What is the condition of the existing work places? • What are the types and sources of support to the work places/ job outlets? • How can the activities of the work places be enhanced? • What are the differences in access to education for the different poverty groups? • What are the inhabitants of informal settlements' personal perceptions of their individual capacities (knowledge and skills)? 	
Urban vulnerability & resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data on vulnerability of settlements to climatic hazards - Data on the existing capacity of households to adapt - The factors shaping vulnerability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the shocks (i.e. type and level of harm) to households livelihood? • Which known trends (i.e. urban processes) exacerbate the shocks? • What makes households become liable to the shocks that they face? • What specific challenges do female-headed households face when dealing with shocks to their livelihoods? • Which disaster risks exist in the other informal settlements (apart from Dwarzack) in Freetown? • Which specific settlements are vulnerable to disaster risks? • What factors influence the vulnerability of individuals/ households/settlements to disaster risks? • What constraints do individuals/households/communities face in dealing with emergencies? • How do urban trends /dynamics affect the emergence and quality of life in Freetown informal settlements? • What are the implications for women of the trends shaping informal settlements? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vulnerability of individuals/households/communities to disaster risks and the coping/adaptation approaches • Urban disaster trends and the influencing factors • Effects of urban disaster on household livelihoods
Urban health		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which diseases are more common in the community? • Which health problems are frequently reported? • What are the treatment patterns? • How do residents (in the different communities) access health facilities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community health emergencies and risks • Health facilities, access & treatment patterns

Having reviewed the documents in terms of the key areas of strength, weaknesses as well as the existing gaps, the next subsection will now briefly examine the methodological approaches used for data collection and analysis in the various documents

3.3 Assessment of the Research Methodologies

All the texts reviewed were observed to have employed different data collection methods with much of the data collected from primary and/or secondary sources. A number of the studies were conducted based on the use of quantitative components but with very small samples. Some however uses qualitative components with only a few using the mixed methods approach. For some of the studies that focused specifically on collecting data on informal settlements, the data collection process was revealed to be very participatory and transparent, involving the active role of residents. This was however, not the case for a few others. The involvement of residents is very critical for studies such as this, which aim to inform policy. This owes largely to the depth of local knowledge that the local community has about the places where they live.

Only a few texts (e.g. Docs. 1, 7 & 14) did not explain the exact methodology used as they relate specifically to the data collection procedure, the sample size and the data analysis procedure (see table 5). One of the texts (Doc. 7) did not in fact, provide enough details on its findings but mostly recommendations. Some of the studies however, limited themselves merely to questionnaire-based interviews which were often too narrow to take detailed accounts of the complex and changing conditions in informal settlements. Some of the surveys, which used questionnaires, provided a detailed description of the living conditions of informal settlements, with the possibility to make comparisons between the different settlements. However, because the focus was more on the commonalities in households attributes rather than on their diversity as well as on the distinctive attributes of the settlements, it was difficult to get a clear understanding of the particular characteristics of the households, including the specific circumstances of each settlement. Such understanding will be key for designing interventions. While a number of works collected data from both primary (e.g. enumerations, interviews) and secondary sources (e.g. documentary reviews) the procedures for collecting the data were in most cases, neither clearly explained nor were the sample sizes large enough.

In spite of this, it was observed in a few cases that small samples did not severely weaken the strength and trustworthiness of reports especially where rigorous analysis procedures were applied. A major drawback however was that, many of the reports did not make any considerations of policy or planning. Notwithstanding this, a number of the works – especially those involving community enumerations – provided valuable information on several aspects of informal settlements that are often missed out in a number of Sierra Leone's national censuses and other demographic and household surveys. They are also helpful in helping the city authorities understand that informal settlements are a critical part of Freetown's urban fabric since they concentrate a significant proportion of the city's population. Some specifically recognise the heterogeneity of different settlements, while a few recognise the need for further research on a range of issues. The studies are also useful in guiding the relevant questions to ask when conducting baseline surveys on a number of informal settlements.

Table 5: Assessment of the research methodologies of documents

Document	Focus of the study	Communities studied	Data Collection Methods	Data Collection Procedure	Sample size	Analysis procedure
Doc. 1	Household socio-economic survey	1 (Kroo Bay)	Not indicated	Not explained	Not stated	Not explained
Doc. 2	State of 11 coastal informal settlements in Freetown	11 informal settlements	Quantitative & qualitative (Mixed)	Survey and group discussions	Not clear (uses primary & secondary data)	Not explained
Doc. 3	BRAC informal settlement Information	3 informal settlements	Quantitative	Survey	Very small	-
Doc. 4	Poverty profile	Sierra Leone Freetown	Quantitative	Survey	Very small	Very good
Doc. 5	Moving out of poverty in informal settlements	4 informal settlements	Qualitative	Interview, Focus group	Small, not representative	Good, No focus on policy & planning
Doc. 6	Improvement of informal settlements	Freetown Susan's Bay	Quantitative	Survey (uses primary & secondary data)	Very small	Good with interesting recommendation
Doc. 7	Youth Led Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction	2 (Kroo Bay & Dworzack)	Qualitative	Not explained	Not stated	Few details on analysis & findings but mostly recommendations
Doc 8	Baseline Survey on Girls Educational Challenge (GEC) programme on marginalised girls	Sierra Leone	Mostly Quantitative (with a few qualitative component)	Survey with limited Focus Group interviews	Highly representative	No description of the data analysis procedure. Very good discussion of study findings
Doc. 9	Physical and socio-demographic mapping of informal settlements	4 informal settlements	Quantitative & Qualitative	Desk review & Social mapping	Very small	Interesting details on research findings
Doc 10	Community profiling, enumeration, and assessment of vulnerability and capacity	4 informal settlements (Cockle Bay, Oloshoro, Moe Wharf & Colbot)	Quantitative & Qualitative	Survey and FGD	Highly representative	Good discussion of
Doc 11	Youth Volunteerism and Disaster Risk Reduction	2 (Kroo Bay & Dworzack)	Qualitative	Interviews, focus group, observations	Very small	Good with interesting suggestions for further research
Doc. 12	Nutritional surveys and CMAM feasibility study	Freetown & Tonkolili – 6 urban informal settlements	Quantitative	Two cluster surveys	Highly representative	Good analysis (but informal settlements not identified)
Doc. 13	Vulnerability and Capability Assessment	1 (Dworzack)	Quantitative & qualitative (Mixed)	Surveys, use of GPS, interviews, & focus groups	Not stated	Good (but based on quantitative technique only)
Doc 14	Assessment of the urban informal settlement conditions	Freetown informal settlements	-	Secondary data	Not stated	Not explained
Doc 15	Needs assessment survey on livelihood education for youths	5 informal settlements	Quantitative & qualitative (Mixed)	Survey & interviews	Not stated	Not explained

Doc. 16	Mid-term review of YMCA's 'Slum Development Project'	2 (Kroo Bay & Dworzack)	Qualitative	Interviews & focus groups	Representative	Interesting analysis but the procedure is not explained
Doc 17	Vulnerability assessment to climate change impact	4 (Dworzack, East Brook, Aberdeen & Kingtom	Quantitative and Qualitative (Mixed)	Survey, Interviews, FGD, Observations & Desk review	Representative	Good. Data is analysed using a vulnerability assessment model. Interesting details of research findings.
Doc. 18	Opportunities and experiences of informal settlements policy and practice	2 (Kroo Bay & Dworzack)	Quantitative	Desk review of literature on informal settlements in Freetown	Not stated	Not explained
Doc 19	Environmental and health impact of solid waste disposal in cities (in this case, Freetown)	1 (Culvert, near Granville Brook)	Quantitative and qualitative (Mixed)	Desk review of secondary data, Interviews and structured questionnaires (open & close)	Representative (65% sample size from 971 households)	Interesting discussion on the environmental & health impacts of solid waste disposal at Granville Brook dumpsite on the surrounding human settlement.
Doc. 20	Baseline survey on informal settlement communities	2 (Kroo Bay & Dworzack)	Quantitative	Survey based on the use of questionnaires	Not representative	Data is analysed using Microsoft Access & SPSS
Doc. 21	Needs assessment survey on status of youth, women & stakeholders	5 informal settlements	Quantitative	Survey based on the use of questionnaires	Not representative	Interesting analysis. Procedure not explained
Doc. 22	Transforming young people's lives in informal settlements	2 informal settlements (Kroo Bay & Dworzack)	Qualitative	Documentary & project data analysis, Focus Groups, Case Studies & Interviews	Not Stated	Interesting analysis. Procedure not explained
Doc. 23	Sierra Leone: Revised National Housing Policy	Sierra Leone	-	-	-	-

3.4 Assessment of validity of information

The criteria used to assess the validity of information contained in each document were policy relevance¹¹, rigour¹², degree of empiricism¹³, and timeliness¹⁴. This study could have used a larger number of criteria but it was considered practical to work with only four. It seemed reasonable to use these criteria as they have been variously used in similar studies related to documentary evaluations, and as such have been tried and tested. Once the documents had been compiled, each text was evaluated against the four listed criteria. Documents and data were assessed based on expert judgement, involving the use of ranks and symbols (see table 5). Table 6 presents information on documents analysed based on the evaluation criteria.

Table 6: Criteria ranking

Rank	Very high	High	Middle	Low	Very low
Symbols	√√	√	√0	0	00

(Where 'very high' indicates an outstanding performance of criteria with regard to the particular text and, 'very low' representing a very poor performance).

Table 7: Assessment of the validity of documents

Text	Policy Relevance	Rigour	Empirical	Timeliness
Doc. 1	0	00	√0	√0
Doc. 2	00	√0	√	√
Doc. 3	00	0	√0	√
Doc. 4	00	√0	00	√√
Doc. 5	00	√0	√√	√0
Doc. 6	√	√	√√	0
Doc. 7	00	00	√0	√√
Doc. 8	0	√√	√√	√
Doc. 9	00	√	√0	√√
Doc 10	0	√	√√	√√
Doc. 11	0	√√	√	√0
Doc. 12	0	√	√√	√√
Doc. 13	√0	00	√0	√0
Doc. 14	√0	√0	√0	√
Doc. 15	√0	√	√√	√√
Doc. 16	√	√0	00	√
Doc. 17	√	√√	√√	√
Doc. 18	√	√√	√√	√√
Doc. 19	√	√√	√√	√√
Doc. 20	0	√	√√	√0
Doc. 21	√	√	√√	√√
Doc. 22	√0	√	√	√√
Doc. 23	√	0	√	0

¹¹ An assessment of the extent to which the document addresses the objectives that the study set out to investigate. Moreover it assesses the degree to which the findings can inform policy.

¹² Defines how correctly the procedures set out to collect data and find answers to the questions were followed.

¹³ Reflects the degree to which the findings of the study are based upon hard evidence reflecting information collected from the field.

¹⁴ Reflects the extent to which data collected and used in the study remain valid and correct as at the time this work was carried out.

As could be observed, only seven texts satisfactorily met the four validity criteria. These include documents 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 20 and 21. Even though validity gaps were observed in terms of all the criteria, the most perceptible gap relates to policy relevance. This suggests that much of the data on informal settlements has been produced with rarely any consideration of policy.

3.5 Assessment of how current information is being used

In spite of the existence of this huge pool of information on informal settlements, very little is known about it outside the sphere of the few NGOs working in informal settlements. Much of the information has been developed by NGOs (usually, with support from external partners) as an initial step to developing detailed proposals for donors. The study documents (papers etc.) are not widely shared since authors (individuals and organisations) generally prefer holding onto their work. Whilst only a few documents were found to be somehow, policy relevant, the practice of holding onto such valuable information suggests that rarely can such studies be relied upon as an appropriate means to influence policy. This is owing to the constraints it imposes on the links between knowledge production and policy making, specifically regarding raising awareness on the issues, inspiring advocacy, as well as easing the uptake of such knowledge in ways that enables the influencing of policies.

3.6 Assessment of how data is currently stored

It was observed that organisations generally store their data individually and in isolated places (in the form of printed copies, Excel, SPSS, Stata, etc) with rarely any systematic approach to dissemination (see Table 7). A few NGOs however, exchange data with their overseas partners through electronic means. In the case of YMCA, FEDURP and CODOHSAPA for example, such data is frequently stored as a database in goggle cloud. Data storage and dissemination is constrained by a number of factors including poor internet access, limited access to databases, lack of culture for open data sharing, lack of local data centres and poor infrastructure to facilitate sharing.

Most interviewees agree that the setting up of databases for the storage of data is critical since it facilitates access to and the dissemination of data. This can allow the sharing and reuse of data. Many considered that issues related with the governance of data, particularly those relating to ownership can best be addressed through joint agreements (Memorandums of Understanding) which clearly define the rights and responsibilities of the individual parties.

Table 8: Some recent studies and the data storage mechanisms by organisations

Organisation name	Title of the report	Shared with SLURC		Status	Information Storage and management
		Yes	No		
Restless Development	Mid-term review (Empowering young women and girls in Freetown urban slums)		√	Awaiting	
CODOHSAPA	Community and Household profiling of 16 slums		√	Awaiting	Posted & held on ONA. Information managed by SDI
YMCA & CODOHSAPA	Community profiling, Enumeration, Vulnerability and capacity assessment report on 4 slums	√		Shared with SLURC	
YDM	Baseline report on 8 slums		√	Awaiting	Held in hard & soft copies
	Community Mapping in 8 slums				
Restless Development, YMCA, CODOHSAPA, YDM & BRAC	Joint Baseline Survey of 26 slum communities in Freetown		√	Awaiting	No clear

PART IV: Capacity building gaps and needs

4.1. Capacity building efforts of urban actors

An assessment of training practices of various organisations shows that most organisations have relied on their funding partners to provide their training needs (Table 9). These training were either conducted externally or internally. For instance, YMCA/CODOHSAPA and YDM do not provide in-house training but do occasionally receive training skills from their partnership with YCARE International and Transform Africa, respectively. CODOHSAPA and YMCA had also received training in data collection and management through local and international exchanges organised by SDI network in Accra. CODOHSAPA had benefitted considerably from their collaborative partnership with YMCA, especially, in Monitoring and Evaluation training. Where necessary both organisations often hire external consultants to do in-house training of trainer's workshop for staff. Restless Development, similarly, provide training for staff in Research, Monitoring and Evaluation in India. In addition, external facilitators are hired from the Ministry of Health and Sanitation to conduct the sexual and reproductive health in-house training. BRAC-SL however conducts its own training but prefers to send staff overseas whenever their organisation lacks the required skills. YDM had received training skills from their partner (Transform Africa) in project implementation, monitoring and evaluation, leadership, and report writing. The WASH-Consortium similarly provides their own training from within the capacity of the five (5) organisations¹⁵ that constitute the membership. Where this is not possible, external consultants are often hired to do so. GOAL likewise hires external consultants to provide training but occasionally sends their staff for training in other countries.

With regards the FCC and the Ministry of Lands, Country Planning and the Environment (MLCP&E), training was provided by GOPA under the EU-funded Urban Planning Project. Training was provided by both local and international consultants drawn from different backgrounds. The training elaborated on addressing general urban development challenges without focusing on any specific organisational needs. At the end of project in January 2014, a huge gap was created, given the absence of any functional system within the two institutions for providing further training. This presents a major challenge as opportunities to build capacity by providing short-term training are limited at central venues where workers from different organisations can build their skills and share experiences. Unsurprisingly, a fragmented approach where each agency conducts training commensurate with its resources and needs has prevailed, thus missing out on benefits of networking, experience-sharing and learning across agencies and programmes.

The key programmes undertaken towards capacity building efforts at the various organisations are highlighted below:

Table 9: Current approaches to meeting organisational training needs

Organisations	Type of training	Organisation offering the training	Topics of training
YMCA/ CODOHSAPA	External Internal	YCARE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data collection and management Monitoring and evaluation
YDM	External	Transform Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project implementation Monitoring and evaluation Leadership skills Report writing
RESTLESS DEVELOPMENT	External Internal	Institution in India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research Monitoring and evaluation Sexual and reproductive health

¹⁵ The five organisations making up the WASH Consortium include Oxfam, ACF, Save the Children (UK), Concern Worldwide and GOAL Ireland.

BRAC-SL	Internal External	Self	
WASH Consortium (Oxfam, ACF, Save the Children, Concern Worldwide, Goal Ireland)	External Internal		
Freetown City Council and Ministry of Lands, Country Planning and the Environment	Internal (local and international consultants)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General urban development challenges with a focus on organisational needs

4.2. Specific capacity building gaps and needs

In spite of the different arrangements for training in all the organisations, progress towards building staff capacity has been slow. One key gap is that, organisations mostly tend to react to the specific organisational needs and support services of staff, rather than adjust their training programmes based on research and planning. Moreover, much of the training acquired externally was generally observed to be driven by the wider market, with rarely any consideration of the specific contexts within which organisations work. Besides these organisations have not yet develop their individual training units and hence determine their own training needs and agenda, there is limited capacity to deliver (self) training that leads to the development of appropriate skills and a favourable working environment. Most local NGOs appeared to be relatively weaker than their international counterparts in terms of skills capacity particularly for delivering on project activities. In addition, the demand by urban actors and stakeholders for systematic skills, knowledge and capacity building on the urban processes affecting those living in informal settlements in the urban local bodies is lacking in Sierra Leone. Any future capacity building and training programmes to be undertaken by SLURC to meet the different organisational needs and requirements of the different cadre of officials must be assessed and accordingly design training activities.

There is also the problem of lack of appropriate institutional framework to support capacity building for urban planning and management. Given the lack of overall capacity, the urban stakeholders are not in a position to even articulate their demand for training. In this regard, there is an urgent need to strengthen the capacity of the Urban and Regional Planning Unit of the Institute of Geography and Development Studies (Njala University) to develop curricula that would fill the capacity gaps of urban actors.

Further issues related to subject matter, new developments, information from NGOs, Ministries Department and Agencies (MDA), and expectation thereof; have to be addressed through capacity building activities.

In view of the gaps identified, the SLURC proposes to strengthen and consolidate different capacity building activities and address them as demand arises.

The main capacity building programmes and activities identified by urban stakeholders and actors during the scoping study workshop is as shown in Table 10.

Nearly all the agencies recognised the importance of short-term courses as a major driver of capacity building in their individual organisations. While there were common grounds in a number of areas for training needs (see Table 10), some differences were observed amongst urban actors and stakeholders in a few areas reflecting the different programmes and activities run by organisations. Even for capacity building and training areas where there was a shared demand, some slight differences were observed specifically relating to the depth of delivery of the content. The issue of 'depth' was more of a concern to the few International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) interviewed. SLURC is expected to provide capacity building support in terms of identification of training needs, preparation of training materials, and training of trainers, international knowledge exchange visits etc.

Table 10: Capacity building gaps and needs

No.	Capacity building gaps and needs for urban stakeholders and actors
1.	Management, storage and analysis of data
2.	Civic engagement and participation, particularly the capacity of inhabitants of informal settlements to demand for change
3.	Resource mobilisation – grant writing skills and funding sources
4.	Professional management (leadership, technical and financial skills)
5.	Communication and Networking
6.	Policy and regulatory measures in urban planning and management
7.	How to influence government policy decisions?
8.	Project implementation and urban management
9.	Advocacy strategy development
10.	Participatory methodologies for data collection
11.	Data management/analytical skills (e.g. SPSS)
12.	Understanding how city-wide processes influence urban informal settlements
13.	Disaster management and climate change risk reduction/adaptation strategies
14.	Risk and vulnerability assessment approaches
15.	Research approaches for youth
16.	Writing and communication skills – publications, policy briefs and public dialogue, concept notes, writing reports.
17.	Project management, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
18.	Mapping and GIS to ensure that individual and institutional technical competencies are developed for the purpose of capturing key data on informal settlements

4.3 Developing a capacity building strategy

The capacity building of the urban actors and their stakeholders has to be carried out in both short-term and long-term. In the short-term, the main approach to capacity building will be through designing training courses tailored to respond to the needs of the urban stakeholders (including NGOs, local authorities and public sector agencies) and managed over a three-year period. The capacity building and training programmes shall focus on the identification of individual and institutional training needs, production of training tools and manuals and facilitation of the training process, conduct training of trainers in the specific training demands already identified and conduct training programmes for urban stakeholders. The training will be enhanced through mentoring and professional networking with international partners. This will require an iterative set of short learning sessions, followed by practice and sharing of experiences periodically. It is envisioned that SLURC will develop a broad policy framework for capacity building in order to strengthen the involvement of various actors including the involvement of private and academic institutions, encouraging academic and professional institutions to introduce courses related to urban planning and management in Sierra Leone.

Capacity building efforts of key stakeholders should be given the utmost priority including coordination and monitoring of various initiatives. This will build up the capacity of urban actors to ensure robust implementation of urban development agenda.

The key elements of the strategy are as follows:

- Creation of an urban development platform under which various initiatives from various urban actors will be brought on a common platform to expanding capacity building opportunities
- Provide systematic training and capacity building for key urban stakeholders (local researchers, civil servants, NGO staff and residents of informal settlements) who will enable them discharge their duties

and responsibilities effectively.

- Identify training and capacity building needs for formulating future capacity building programmes and activities
- Hands-on learning and international exchange visits programmes and activities to expose urban stakeholders in Sierra Leone to other urban contexts and research centres
- Capacity building initiatives will be demand driven to the extent where possible

Long-term capacity needs shall be addressed by academic and professional institutions, including the Urban and Regional Planning Unit of the Institutes of Geography and Development Studies (Njala University) and other existing public institutions suitable for the capacity building of urban stakeholders. SLURC will also play an important role in the documentation and dissemination of information, to urban actors about government policies, programmes and guidelines, besides acting as a knowledge hub and providing training services. This will assist the various urban stakeholders to prepare plans and policies for consideration by government towards sustainable urban development planning efforts.

4.4 Opportunities for SLURC

Despite the challenges, opportunities for SLURC intervention in informal settlements are evident in the renewed interest by urban actors and their increased willingness to engage. Major opportunities for progress include:

The need for the **creation of urban development platform for urban actors** which will bring greater voice and focus and better dialogue and data required to create the capacity for more informed discussions. They are with the hope that SLURC will become a platform to facilitate collaboration between NGOs, private sector, city authorities, government and universities in order to influence the national agenda for effective policy reforms for urban development;

Universities will now have more visible role to play in **civic engagement and policy dialogue**, thus adding independent critical thinking in the debates on urban development;

The Centre will be able to attract **external grants and opportunities for international partnership** with various organisations such as YCare International, Cities Alliance, and SDI etc.

There are already **research, monitoring and evaluation units in various institutions and organisations working** in informal settlement communities. This will more readily provide existing information on informal settlements across the city for documentation at the resource centre. SLURC in turn will be able to fulfill its responsibility by becoming a **National Urban Research Resource Centre for education, training, research and public discussion** on issues confronting informal settlements and the broader urban environment;

The establishment of a SLURC Resource Centre of Information (including managing a web site) will **improve access to information, and sharing and learning of best practices for urban actors**, allowing them to be more responsive to the needs of informal settlement communities and other urban development challenges.

There was a strong emphasis on the relevance of **advocacy and people-centred knowledge**. This will help them establish network with international and national agencies working in the sector to learn from each other.

Community groups also saw a role for SLURC in **coordinating activities**.

The **existing networks and associations** (for example, **slum dweller associations**, such as The **Federation of the Urban and Rural Poor (FEDURP)**), are found across informal settlement communities. The activities of FEDURP include the collection of relevant information on informal settlements. This could provide a useful

insight into data required to engage and contribute to major policy decision-making regarding informal settlement communities.

Short-term training programmes based on specific training needs of organisations held by SLURC. This training opportunities offered by SLURC will improve on the research capacities and reporting of urban actors and their institutions. This in turn will help enhance their capacities in the collection, management and dissemination of urban knowledge to communities, NGOs, government, and other relevant stakeholders.

SLURC will **foster cutting-edge and cross-cutting research, capacity building and technical knowledge** base of urban actors and their stakeholders.

Mass media (electronics and print media) could play a pivotal role in information dissemination and awareness raising about knowledge produced, documented and stored at SLURC Resource Centre.

4.5 Issues for urban research

Based on the discussion and consultation with key urban actors and stakeholders, possible research priorities and strategic thematic areas were identified and described. With the assistance of academic experts from UCL and NU these have been organised into seven broad thematic issues reflective of the synergies that emerge from the four broad thematic areas (Urban Health, Land and Housing, Urban Vulnerability and Resilience, Urban Livelihood and the City Economy) of SLURC research activities. Some of the issues derived from the discussion and consultation process during the scoping study are listed below for probable research:

Issue 1: Enumeration and definition of parameters

- Household profile of informal settlements
- Typologies of informal settlements

Issue 2: Housing and well-being/health

- Impact of overcrowding and housing typologies on health
- Upgrading as first options: change in mindset
- Security of tenure and shack owners vs. tenants' relationships
- Tenants' rights and housing eviction
- Housing affordability by the urban poor
- Housing typologies
- Housing models
- Local building materials as a solution to affordable housing?
- Land, environment and housing

Issue 3: Relocation and livelihoods

- Livelihood dynamics, opportunities and alternatives at micro/macro-scale
- Livelihood implications of relocation
- Assessment of livelihood activities of the urban poor
- Institutional analysis on land policy and planning
- Land demarcation and availability
- Relocation guidelines
- Eviction and upgrading of urban informal settlements
- Mapping designated areas of environmental protection

Issue 4: Livelihoods and health

- Migration and the chains of transmission of diseases
- Assessment of livelihood activities
- Livelihood diversification
- Livelihood and health
- Livelihoods and urban vulnerabilities

Issue 5: Livelihood dynamics and profile, including contribution to the city economy

- Livelihood dynamics, opportunities and alternatives at micro-scale
- Market system analysis: Connecting micro and macro dynamics
- Challenges and opportunities for collective modes of production
- Contribution of informal settlement dwellers towards the city economy

Issue 6: Land dynamics, policy and planning

- Institutional analysis on land policy and planning (i.e. zoning)
- Land, environment and housing
- Land demarcation and availability
- Land data including the application of cadastral and geographical information system
- Land ownerships
- Land markets

Issue 7: Models of service delivery

- Mapping out practices and innovation for service delivery
- Management of solid waste and implications for technologies, knowledge transfer and urban management.

PART V: CONCLUSIONS

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

The scoping study has focused on examining the existing information on urban informal settlements in Freetown. Its scope has been limited only to information in Freetown informal settlements that is both 'available' and 'accessible'. This study is therefore not exhaustive as several documents containing valuable information on informal settlements were not accessible at the time of this study. This does not however, diminish the reliability or validity of the inferences drawn since a reasonably large sample of documents was used. The documents have been assessed both in terms of their content, methodology, strengths, weaknesses and gaps including data storage, management and dissemination.

Though a wealth of knowledge and evidence is available on the Freetown informal settlements, critical knowledge gaps remain. To enable the environment for increased evidence-based policy decision making at both the government and local municipal level, adequate emphasis must be placed on continuing to increase the capacity of urban stakeholders and their communities in implementing research, producing knowledge and providing training towards Sierra Leone's urban development policies and practices. This should be an integral component of efforts to improving the capacities of urban stakeholders and their communities at both the community and the city-wide scale. A research agenda needs also to focus attention on the use of more appropriate study designs and methodologies for answering some of the complex programmatic and policy questions that remain unanswered.

The challenges related to capacity building of urban actors and stakeholders are multiple and have to be addressed at various levels. A mechanism has to be created that fosters an environment of learning and skills building of urban actors and stakeholders through regular training. Besides this, individual and institutional needs should be assessed and training programmes designed accordingly. Issues related to subject matter, new developments, information on the government's new urban development agenda, knowledge services and management, and expectations thereof, should be addressed through these capacity building programmes.

Research should be conducted in partnership with local institutions and emphasis should be placed on building the research capacity of local investigators. Future priorities in research will ultimately be identified through increased collaboration and knowledge sharing. Yet, to ensure that urban research agenda receives continued attention, it will be important to arrange high-level dialogue for discussing commitments of urban actors and stakeholders in using evidence based research in developing urban development policies and strategies. Interestingly, there appears to be an increased recognition that urban development planning issues in informal settlements deserve special attention and that a positive change in the urban research environment is imperative. Such a change will benefit not only the urban researchers and research institutions, but also the local authorities, donor agencies, NGOs, and community-based organizations.

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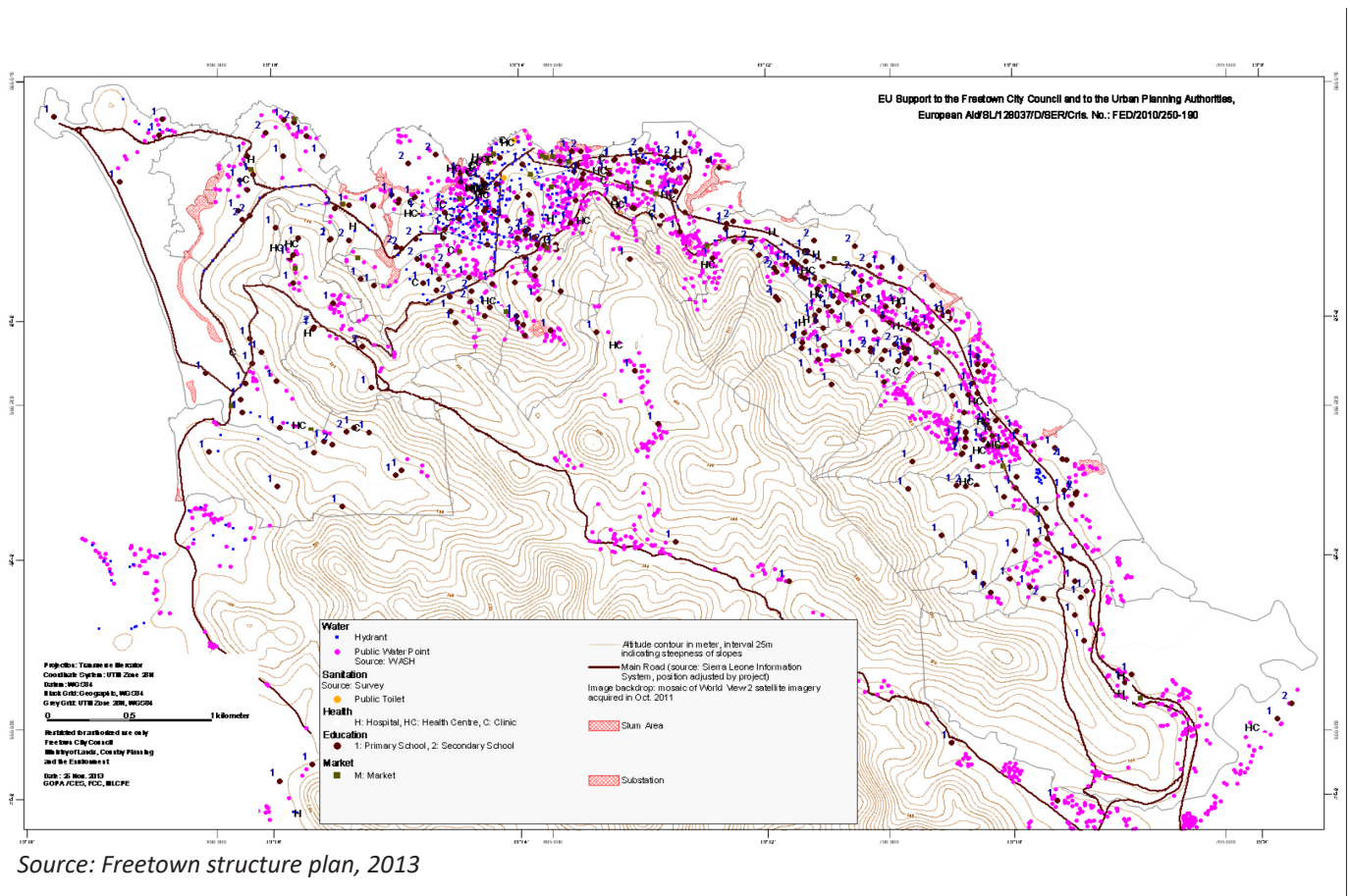
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Map showing some informal settlements and urban services distribution in Freetown



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.

To know more about SLURC, please follow us on Twitter: @SLURC_FT

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