

FREETOWN CITY LEARNING PLATFORM

PRACTITIONER BRIEF #2:

Community Livelihoods Opportunities

Freetown, Sierra Leone
January 2020



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THE BARTLETT

This Practitioner Brief has been produced based on the discussions and agreements that took place during the **City Learning Platform (CiLP)** meeting in October 2019. The meeting was hosted and coordinated by the **Sierra Leone Urban Research Centre (SLURC)**, who also reported on the agreements.

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I. INTRODUCTION

City Learning Platform: livelihoods opportunities for community development

The **City Learning Platform (CiLP)** is a space for learning and sharing, in which different actors can gather to discuss current urban issues and potential solutions, and to coordinate and develop proposals for the upgrading of informal settlements in the city of Freetown. Informal settlement communities are represented at the CiLP through their **Community Learning Platform (CoLP)** representatives. The CiLP, in coordination with multiple CoLPs, seeks to provide a democratic and safe space to learn and discuss informal settlement upgrading, with a strong focus on participatory and inclusive practices. It aims to feed into, and disseminate, the discussions taking place as part of the Transform Freetown Framework, the National Development Plan and other policy developments.

Practitioner Briefs are a series of publications produced by the CiLP to share with a wide range of practitioners and other urban stakeholders the main issues, recommendations and principles which have emerged from the CiLP meetings.

The first Practitioner Brief focused on defining the “Principles of Engagement for the City Learning Platform”, outlining five fundamental principles: *A shared vision, a common purpose; Sharing knowledge and information; Sustainable and knowledge-based solutions; Collaboration, participation and communication; and Mutual respect and trusted relationship.*

Livelihoods opportunities for community development

This second brief focuses on one of the main priorities to improve the quality of life in informal settlements in the city of Freetown: **community livelihoods opportunities**. What do we know about community livelihoods opportunities in Freetown? What are the challenges, and what kinds of support can improve community livelihoods opportunities? What can different actors do? These are

the questions that this document seeks to address, outlining concrete ideas to support livelihoods in Freetown's informal settlements.

The content of this second Practitioner Brief emerged from discussions held during the CiLP meeting on 25th September 2019. The stakeholders attending this CiLP meeting related to their themed interest 'Community livelihood opportunities' included representation from:

Community Learning Platforms (CoLPs)

of seven informal settlements of Freetown: CKG, Cockle Bay, Dworzack, Funkia, Moa Wharf, Oloshoro, and Portee/Rokupa

International and national NGOs

ARE, CODOHSAPA, CRS, GOAL, Restless Development, YDM, YMCA

Academia/research institutions

SLURC, FBC

Private sector

MUNAFALtd

Government authorities

Ministry of Planning and Economic Development

This meeting has been possible thanks to the participation of the Sierra Leone Urban Research Centre (SLURC) in the Knowledge in Action for Urban Equality (KNOW) programme, and the Comic Relief Sustainability grant provided to the Pull Slum Pan Pipul (PSP) consortium.

Estimations suggest that the informal economy provides jobs for as much as 70 percent of Freetown's population, and therefore it is indispensable to develop: a comprehensive understanding of how these livelihoods operate; how they affect social and economic relationships inside and outside of the settlements; how they interact with the rest of the city economy; how they affect the location and housing decisions of informal settlements dwellers; and how they differently affect men and women, young and old. Practitioners that seek to improve the livelihoods opportunities of residents of informal settlements should bear in mind the complexity of these and other questions. As such, this brief offers a summary of the main recommendations that emerged from the CiLP regarding the key challenges, opportunities and potential support mechanisms for community livelihoods, discussing the role that different actors can play in supporting community livelihood strategies.

II. LEARNING FROM PREVIOUS RESEARCH

What do we know about community livelihoods opportunities in Freetown?

The different ways in which residents of informal settlements navigate livelihoods opportunities in Freetown has been the focus of several research and community engagement projects in the past. This document starts by acknowledging and summarising the main conclusions of some of those engagements, highlighting the main lessons regarding the crucial role of community livelihoods for Freetown's economy.



Fishing livelihoods in Portee-Rokupa. Image: SLURC

Key messages from SLURC research project:

"Urban Livelihoods in Freetown's Informal Settlements"

The livelihoods activities of informal settlement residents make an important contribution to the settlements and the wider city. These sectors provide livelihoods for a large number of people, with limited capital, while contributing to key sectors of the city economy. They are based on trusted relationships cultivated over long periods of time, and informal institutions, such as home-based enterprises. Such activities help to filling a governance gap left by city and central government authorities.

KEY MESSAGES

- **The livelihoods systems of informal settlement residents contribute to their wellbeing and contribute economically to the city**, allowing 'formal' economic activities to be viable.
- **Livelihoods systems are linked with the histories and identities of communities** and provide employment and basic income security to a significant number of residents (women and men). This is especially the case for 'open access' livelihoods activities, which can be accessed by those with limited assets. Examples include cockle picking, trading, sand mining, stone quarrying and fishing. Earnings from these activities fill the gaps left in the absence of both large formal job markets and social protection systems.
- **The value chain analysis of livelihoods systems shows distinctively 'male' and 'female' nodes.** Women often combine household care tasks with income generation, and these are also usually the lowest paid, least powerful parts of the value chains. Women in more powerful and lucrative roles normally have family members with influential roles in the sector.
- **While providing basic income security, some livelihoods activities are linked to environmental risks** in densely populated neighbourhoods. However, policy and regulatory interventions should **provide better alternatives, rather than undermining existing livelihoods.**
- **Local NGOs should work together with people working in the sectors**, and the state, to identify adaptation strategies for livelihoods that can thrive in changing urban contexts.

Source: **Koroma, B., Walker, J., Rigon, A.** 2018, Understanding urban livelihoods in Freetown's informal settlements, *Policy Brief No. 2*, SLURC: Freetown.
See also: **Koroma, B. Rigon A, Walker J, Sellu S. A.** 2018. *Urban livelihoods in Freetown's Informal Settlements*. Freetown: SLURC

BOX 2

Reflections from Samuel Jamiru Braima, Senior Lecturer, Department of Economics & Commerce, Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone:

"Livelihoods opportunities for community development: livelihoods, poverty and institutions"

- > **The livelihoods and community development projects implemented should be based on a holistic approach encompassing many components** of health, education, skills training, capacity building and awareness-raising On livelihood opportunities.. Project work should be aligned with government development programmes and facilitate linkages to public services and schemes for the project beneficiaries.
- > **Each community development project should be attuned to local needs, through an initial needs assessment**, after which the final design and outcomes of the project are decided. Typically, a project should be implemented in the same area for a period of 3-5 years in order to achieve impact and sustainable development. Each project should ultimately aim to enable the beneficiaries to become change makers in their communities. Cross-cutting areas of intervention under community development and livelihoods are: education, health, women empowerment, skills development, and agriculture.
- > **The asset base of poor households is significantly limited compared to that of non-poor households** and therefore limits poor households' livelihood options. This is a result of disabling policies, institutions and processes leading to restricted access to land, water, natural resources and other assets. A lack of assets to fall back on in an emergency makes poor households more vulnerable to shocks such as flooding. Shocks contribute to negative livelihoods outcomes and a further depletion of household assets, leading to a downward spiral of deepening poverty. Meanwhile, non-poor households enjoy a broader livelihoods asset base, which widens their livelihoods options and reduces their vulnerability to shocks. This enables the non-poor to pursue winning livelihoods strategies and to achieve positive livelihoods outcomes.
- > **To enable poor households to overcome their poverty, development projects can take three broad lines of action:** (a) they can help poor households to build up their assets- especially their human and social capital (such as education, health and income); (b) they can transform the policy and institutional context to become more pro-poor, or (c) they can reduce vulnerability, by strengthening resilience at the community and household level, in parallel with support for disaster prevention and risk management at higher institutional levels.

Source: Notes from presentation delivered by **Samuel Jamiru Braima**, meeting of the City Learning Platform, October 2019.

Youth Development Movement (YDM) Freetown, Sierra Leone: "Findings of tracing survey as part of the Pull Slum Pan Pipul (PSPP) Sustainability project"

Background: In the implementation of the Pull Slum Pan Pipul (PSPP) five-year project (2013-2018), 756 youths, from the 8 of YDM's operational informal settlement communities, were trained in various job skills including: catering, tailoring, hair dressing, carpentry, welding, aluminium work, electrical installations, auto mechanic, and electronics.

A tracing study to evaluate the impact of the job skills training long-term showed that:

- * A total of 470 graduates (202 male /268 female; 7 with disabilities) were traced and interviewed
- * 41% (total 196 with 104 M/92F) of the 470 traced are in gainful employment. The reminder are yet to be engaged in employment activities.
- * For those that were employed, 80.1% (157 graduates) are receiving below Le 500,000 per month- the minimum wage; 7.1% (14 graduates) earn between Le 500,000 and Le 600,000; and 8% (16 graduates) get between Le 600,000 and Le 1,000,000. 4.8% (9 graduates) did not respond.
- * Out of the 470 interviewed, 63% (298 graduates), would like to be linked to employment opportunities (30 of whom are already in employment).
- * 52% (156 graduates) out of the 298 who want to be linked to better job opportunities, want self-employment livelihood opportunities; while 43% (137 graduates) want to be employed in formally paid employment; and 5 want to be placed in an internship.

Based on the findings of the survey, YDM concludes that:

- * The employment rate is low, and it is clear that most graduates need start-up capital to engage in self income-generation in the context of low formally paid employment possibilities.
- * Slightly more male youths (53%) were involved in employment activities than their female counterparts, although more female youths (57%, 268 graduates) were trained amongst the total interviewed number (470)
- * The majority of youths among those traced remain under-employed or unemployed, and need to be motivated and linked to opportunities for employment and an improved standard of living.

Source: Notes from presentation delivered by **YDM**, during meeting of the City Learning Platform, October 2019.

III. ALTERNATIVE STRATEGIES

Challenges, alternatives and supporting mechanisms for improving community livelihoods opportunities



KEY CHALLENGES

What are the main barriers to the improvement of community livelihoods strategies?

Uncoordinated interventions by various developmental actors

Limited access to finance, loans for start-up costs of self-employment or start-up kits

Access to financing for small and middle-size enterprises

Limited support and skills to create self-employment

Limited resources to support longer-term skills training

Limited skills for employment, especially for the youth

Inflexibility and difficulty accepting re-training or alternative livelihoods

Ineffective monitoring of funders of community livelihoods interventions

Environmental factors like deforestation and flooding

Lack of land ownership, housing, and basic services

KEY SUPPORTING MECHANISMS BY ACTORS

What can different actors do?

The following section outlines the supporting mechanisms that different institutions can develop, and that are key in encouraging policy and programming to improve livelihoods opportunities in communities:

From Central and Local Government:

- > Involve communities in decision-making processes on livelihood opportunities
- > Encourage loan grant schemes for banks and support subsidies, especially for housing
- > Identify key growth and investment areas which can support the urban poor
- > Draft policies to incentivise the private sector to create more employment activities, especially for youth (i.e. tax incentives)
- > Promote decentralization to allow local councils to take the lead on urban development issues
- > Outline clear labour policies for Freetown
- > Train local workers to fulfil requirements for national projects and set requirements for quotas of employment of local workers for such national projects

From Community Based Organisations:

- > Build internal capacity to enable sustainable engagements with other actors
- > Register with the government and undertake organised activities
- > Systematically monitor interventions to ensure the achievement of outcomes
- > Link skills training to market analysis to ensure the viability of new skills
- > Guide future NGO/INGO interventions by providing the results of needs analysis activities

From Academia:

- > Provide research about relevant sectors to back government effort / areas for investment
- > Provide relevant training to different urban actors

From Private Sector:

- > Link training and stipends to support local skills (e.g. local artisans)
- > Invest in key growth areas to create more employment to absorb local labour
- > Provide financing for housing at low interest rates

From NGOs:

- > Use and support community-driven approaches in interventions
- > Engage programming to systematically support the formalisation of informal livelihood systems
- > Design interventions to be informed by research, and in line with community needs, and government national & local programmes
- > Ensure value for money and sustainability through coordinated efforts, monitoring and long-term planning
- > Relax policies to allow for the use of local skilled labour, rather than 'professional' contractors, to support implementation plans

KEY OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

What are the potential actions which can improve livelihoods?

- * **Better collaboration** amongst key developmental actors to implement integrated livelihood programmes
- * **Sensitization** of communities on alternative livelihoods (e.g. waste management opportunities)
- * **Investing in community-based** incubators to support small businesses
- * **Provision of assets and tools** (e.g. tricycles) by public entities and development partners (e.g. FCC) for alternative livelihoods opportunities (e.g. waste collection)
- * **Risk reduction interventions**, to reduce floods and other hazards
- * **Investment** from the private sector in small and middle-size enterprises
- * **Policies and projects** from the government, which rely on implementation and monitoring led by community members
- * **Training centres** that provide relevant skills, to build mid-level workers' power base in the current market
- * **Access to loan facilities** with low interest rates, accompanied by increased community awareness on loan management
- * **Profiling of livelihood actors**, ensuring effective coordination between different developmental interventions
- * **Provision** of start-up kits for groups and individuals for self-employment activities

12 Current enabling conditions

Active population, especially young and energetic youths, that are willing to engage in development activities

Available resources within informal settlement communities which can be mobilized such as savings groups, Osusu

Access to free education

Government frameworks, such as Transform Freetown Plan and National Development Plan, which can support livelihood opportunities

Existence of FEDURP, FESDA and cooperative societies in deprived communities that can assist in implementation of livelihood opportunities

Access to skills training facilities

Greater hygiene and sanitation awareness

Maps of hazardous areas, and recognition of areas of disasters and risks

Untapped livelihood opportunities like urban agriculture, poultry, fisheries



