Towards a Pro-Poor “Agenda For Change”

Opportunities and Experiences of Slum Policy and Practice in Sierra Leone

By Benjamin Bradlow, Shack / Slum Dwellers International
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Foreword

A major concern of this work is about an apparently irreconcilable divide. This polarity between the ‘formal’ and the ‘informal’ has not helped in creating comforting or complimentary instead of conflicting policies and actions between these two spheres of societal existence typical of all under-developed and developing countries. This divide is variously described as system ‘rejects’, versus those in the system, or the system-elects; The ‘out-laws’ versus the ‘in-laws’; the approved versus the disapproved; the planned versus the unplanned. Though informal settlements are, de jure, in violation of several aspects of the law, they remain the responsibility of officialdom, whether by design or default, including Government inaction over the years that has served to condone or encourage the spread of slum settlements. Thus the latter can be described as ‘unplanned-for’ or ‘accidental’ children, for whom parental responsibility must still be borne.

To that end I subscribe to and endorse this report, commissioned by the YMCA of Sierra Leone, which attempts to “create a framework for the kinds of relationships that can produce an organic and sustainable set of policies”. I am a great believer in socio-economically sustainable but fair policies, which is impossible without an effective and realistic engagement of especially those on the receiving end of policy.

But over and above that, the Local Government Act of 2004 governing all nineteen local councils in Sierra Leone including the Freetown City Council, is ahead of its times in formally prescribing inclusivity and participatory governance. Part XV of same is titled Transparency, Accountability and Participation. In part XI, the Development Plan that guides the development of the locality and which informs the budget, must involve wide consultations with residents and other stakeholders prior to approval. Council meetings are open to residents, and monthly financial reports, minutes of Council, and schedule of Council activities must be put up on every ward notice board. Part XIII provides for Ward Committees in every ward consisting of ten elected residents.

At the national level, officialdom recognizes the bottom line problem is poverty, hence the guiding national policy is the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP II), which encapsulates the President’s Agenda for Change. The latter states in the forward to the Agenda for Change that:

‘Extreme poverty remains pervasive. Consequently, over 60% of our people are unable to afford one decent meal a day. This abject poverty is compounded by significant problems in the health and educational sectors."
As a result Sierra Leone has consistently ranked at the very bottom of the UN Human Development Index.’

The Agenda For Change has four strategic priorities, viz Power, Transport, and Agriculture, all undergirded by the fourth priority of Human Development. His Excellency the President Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma further therein states in his wisdom:

‘Fourth, in order to maintain the progress we will make, we must ensure sustainable human development through the provision of improved social services. Effective delivery of basic social services is essential for ensuring economic growth and poverty reduction. We are committed to bringing the service delivery closer to the people, by pushing forward our policy of decentralization and devolution of service delivery functions to local councils.’

Though the paper commissioned by the YMCA focuses on two albeit very significant slum settlements, it belies the fact that Freetown has a very large number of informal settlements, up from under thirty a decade ago to well over 100. The Council’s long-term ambition is a city without slums. Such a policy is informed by the following:

1. In the absence of massive investment in basic infrastructure, many of these settlements are likely to remain sub-standard, because they are built on environments that are non-conducive for unplanned human settlement.

2. Cosmetic ‘Improvements’ in the absence of the required infrastructure investment can sometimes compound the problem, as was proved after the interventions in six depressed areas by the IDA Funded Freetown Infrastructure Rehabilitation Project in the nineties. Such depressed areas - Kroo Bay inclusive - have as a result experienced a swell in numbers and rapid expansion and greater congestion, leaving human conditions worse than before the intervention.

3. A multiplicity of issues need to be tackled for ultimate success, inclusive of engaging and reshaping national policy to among other things stem the rural-urban drive, and redirect labour where it is most productive and needed. Key among such policies is the national housing policy and addressing the dual land tenure system.

4. Slums pose serious threats to the environment, with devastating cost to the city economically and ecologically. They are mostly disasters waiting to happen, as borne by the increasing death toll from landslides, floodings, disease, etc.
Freetown slums are unique in terms of the gravity of the incredibly inhumane living conditions. Available statistics in local hospitals and health centers attribute most mortalities to residents from such communities, which effectively makes them death traps. Mike Davis’ ‘Planet of slums’ states p.150 that “today’s megaslums are unprecedented incubators of new and reemergent diseases that can now travel across the world at the speed of a passenger jet...”. No responsible government can turn a blind eye to such settlements, whether in the city or not.

The above however does not mean that the Government or Council is prepared to ride roughshod over slum settlements, or carry out forced evictions. As a matter of fact, the SLUM Strategic Management Agreement is the first recent official guide on slum issues. It was initiated by the FCC under the study on slum issues undertaken in conjunction with the Cities Alliance in 2009, and signed by the Hon. Ministers of Local Government; Works Housing and Infrastructure; Social Welfare, Gender and Children’s Affairs; Lands, Country Planning and the Environment; and His Worship the Mayor of Freetown. One of the clauses for example states it aims to:

*Ensure that the SLUM residents are involved in the decision-making process leading to the development of neighbors they live in, being understood that those decisions are to be taken in the interest of the SLUM and overall Freetown community, the urbanities and the city as a whole.*

We trust this work will open a healthy dialogue that will ensure effective collaboration of all stakeholders in order to sustainably tackle what is effectively a national emergency.

*Bowenson F. Phillips*

*Chief Administrator*

*Freetown City Council*
Introduction

Informality pervades the cities of the Global South. By “informality” we refer to the fact that housing, land, services, and economic livelihoods of many urban residents fall largely outside formal laws and practice. Informality is one of the pervasive characteristics of slums. More than any one characteristic of slums as identified by UN-Habitat and other official, multilateral agencies — bad housing conditions, lack of proper water and sanitation, etc. — “informality” is a term that encompasses the basic existence of slum dwellers throughout the cities of Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Political institutions and the policies they formulate are, on the other hand, quintessentially “formal.” They create the laws and bureaucracies by which both government officials and citizens structure relationships of money and power. Informal traders and dwellers are outside of these arrangements. They do not have tenure, they do not live in houses approved by government, they do not sell their goods in markets registered with government, etc.

The challenge for slum-related policy, whether we refer to policy makers, bureaucrats, or slum dwellers, is that such policy is trying to bridge the worlds of the “formal” and “informal.” This report is concerned with understanding what kinds of both policy and practice exist with regards to slums in Sierra Leone. The first section of the report covers the major institutions and political arrangements of the formal world: general slum policy at the local and national levels, land policy, administration of data for formal planning purposes, housing policy, institutions of housing finance, processes of eviction and relocation. The second section of the report focuses on the more informal arrangements of slum communities themselves, in particular those of Kroo Bay and Dworzack. They represent two different kinds of slum communities in Freetown, in terms of construction, density, the problems they face, and the ways in which their more informal forms of community leadership operate. Finally, this report contains recommendations for achieving a pro-poor policy environment regarding slums in Sierra Leone. The policy recommendations contained within are not just about specific legislative items, but also about creating a framework for the kinds of relationships that can produce an organic and sustainable set of policies. These are methods for structuring the kinds of engagements between formal and informal actors so that they can work together to develop policy and practice to bridge this all-too-present divide.
**Methodology**

The research was commissioned by Y Care International to support a project aimed at transforming young people’s lives in slum settlements in Sierra Leone, implemented by YMCA Sierra Leone (YMCA-SL) and funded by Comic Relief. YMCA-SL is a non-governmental organisation that focuses on community interventions that affect the lives of young people in the country. The slum project of YMCA-SL, in operation since 2007, has a particular focus on the lives of young people in urban slums, primarily in two slum communities in Freetown – Kroo Bay and Dworzack. In addition to those programs directed solely at young people, such as skills training, and youth advocacy development workshops, a major part of the slum project has been to support the formation of women-led, daily savings groups in slums in Freetown. These savings groups follow the methodology of community-based slum dweller federations affiliated to Shack Dwellers International (SDI) in 33 different countries throughout Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

The research began with a desk review of existing literature on slums in Freetown, which included previous YMCA settlement enumeration and baseline profile reports. A team consisting of the SDI consultant, an NGO professional from Ghana’s People’s Dialogue on Human Settlements, and two leaders of the community-based Ghana Homeless People’s Federation, traveled to Freetown to conduct face-to-face interviews with a range of politicians, bureaucrats, and community leaders (see appendix 1 for full list of key informants), as well as to support the activities of the Sierra Leone Federation of the Urban and Rural Poor (FEDURP).

The goal of the research was to review existing policy and practice, and to make recommendations for further community work and advocacy around a pro-poor urban agenda in Sierra Leone. Though the report does address documented policy, much of the practice in Sierra Leone with regards to slums falls outside the writ of policy. Significant portions of slum-related policy appear to have been produced by outside consultants from multilateral agencies. It is worth noting that this report has also been researched and produced by outsiders. The methodology of SDI, the transnational network of slum dweller federations in Africa, Asia and Latin America, is fundamentally concerned with empowering those who face the challenges of urban poverty and exclusion to organize around their own capacities to address their own developmental goals. The analysis and recommendations in this report are made in the spirit of supporting an organic process of and by those most closely enmeshed in the particularities of the Sierra Leonean context. The course of the relationships of
formal and informal actors within this milieu will determine the kinds of policies and practice that emerge.

1. Existing Government policy and practice

Post-war Sierra Leone has made halting steps towards the establishment of a functional, democratically-oriented civil service. At both local and national levels, we can begin to perceive the outlines of human settlements policy, as well as the means by which such policy is to be implemented. In this section we will look at the legislative and policy context for the local governance of Freetown, as well as at the national level. At both levels, the effects of war compose a unique backdrop for the way that human settlement policy has emerged over the course of the past decade. Displacement during the war has augmented the rapid pace of urbanization that is common to much of West Africa, as well as the Global South.

Formal political capacity has thus far been sorely insufficient to enable the nascent post-war bureaucracy to make effective interventions with regards to shelter, land, water and sanitation in urban areas. Lack of coordination between the many multilateral agencies that do work in Sierra Leone appears to have compounded any effort within the local bureaucracy to plan and implement human settlements policy effectively. Policy makers and ordinary bureaucrats alike have thus far been unable to engage meaningfully with those affected by such policy: communities of the urban poor. This means that both local and national government functionaries in the urban sector are left guessing about how to develop and implement a strikingly top-down policy agenda.

As a general rule, despite the massive influx of urban inhabitants in the past decade, urban issues barely register on the national political agenda. A Statistics Sierra Leone Survey from 2004 indicated that almost half of the population (43%) had migrated in the last year. The vast plurality of migrants had moved to the Western Area (42%), which includes Freetown. The survey celebrates the successful relocation of internally displaced persons to their rural homes, yet the influx into Freetown in the post-war period has been a significant development in the demographic reality of the past decade. The lack of emphasis on an urban-focused development agenda is best reflected in the government’s much touted — by its own officials — Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper 2 (PRSP2). The stated focus of this document is on electricity, transportation, agriculture, and health. Though all of these issues could theoretically have some bearing on an urban agenda, there are no major policy documents in

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1 Sierra Leone Integrated Household Survey, Statistics Sierra Leone, 61-2.
Sierra Leone that prioritize urban development, except for, perhaps, water and sanitation issues articulated under the rubric of “health” in the PRSP2.

1.1 The post-war urban context

Freetown is an extraordinarily dense city. Built under British colonial administration for a planned population of 200,000, Statistics Sierra Leone estimated the population of the city as almost quadruple that amount in 2004. During the war, many residential buildings were destroyed. Countrywide, approximately 2 million people were displaced during the 11-year war. The extent of the buildings destroyed in Freetown would be enough to cause a housing shortage, but the city has since experienced a rapid influx of new residents, as many displaced Sierra Leoneans fled the countryside and came to look for work in the country’s primary city. Other cities such as Bo and Makeni are growing, but Freetown is by far the largest. It is home to 15% of the country’s population.

Homelessness and landlessness are chronic problems, and not just for the poorest of the poor. According to Kemoh Tarawallie, general manager of the Sierra Leone Housing Corporation (SALHOC), the city needs to build 500,000 houses just to get back to pre-war levels of housing stock. This does not begin to take into account the new residents of Freetown that have arrived since the end of the war in 2002. The formal housing that does exist is expensive. It is not unusual for a landlord to require payment of 2 years of rent upfront in order to lease an apartment or house. The average occupancy countrywide is 6.5 people per room, and often 3 generations of a family can live in the same house.

1.2 Policy and Practice in the slums of Freetown

“It is simple. People keep dying every year in that place ... Government will have to say, ‘No. Enough is enough!’”

— Sam Franklin Gibson, Acting Deputy Mayor of Freetown and Councillor in Freetown Ward 389

The seaside slums of Freetown, such as Kroo Bay and Susan’s Bay, are densely inhabited, flood-prone areas. The summer rainy months of June, July, and August, can cause major floods in both slums. Kroo Bay is decades old, but its post-war growth has meant that residents are building shacks closer and closer to the sea. Already inadequate drainage systems are coming under increased strain. Children run through the same stagnant water frequented by the domestic animals kept in the

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2 2004 National Census figure, as quoted in Michael Johnson, “An Assessment of the Urban Conditions and Systemic Issues Contributing to Slum Development in Freetown, Sierra Leone,” 2. Report funded by Cities Alliance.
settlement: pigs, goats, and chickens. The growth in Kroo Bay, along with the rise in population in areas uphill from Kroo Bay, has reduced the absorption of soil and effectiveness of drainage during the rainy season. This has led to an increase in flooding. Residents who have lived in the same shack for over twenty years report that they have only begun to experience major flooding in their shelters in the last two.

In 2010, the city council instituted new by-laws that focus primarily on a wide range of nuisance violations. These relate primarily to the disposal of garbage\(^3\), child labor\(^4\), keeping of animals\(^5\), and health hazards\(^6\). Every one of these by-laws could theoretically challenge the informal economies and livelihoods present in Freetown. They are designed to bring some order to what can appear to be an incredibly chaotic city. But these new by-laws may, in fact, be part of longer-standing practice in the city.

Though this research is concerned with a number of different kinds of government policy documents, it may be most instructive to look at policy primarily through the lens of practice. For much of the action taken by government authorities concerning slum settlements falls outside of the writ of any official documentation. The bylaws are perhaps a start towards codifying existing biases against the existence of informality in the city. The response by the city council and the mayor to the flooding in Kroo Bay has had many twists. And it is easy to question if policy towards Kroo Bay has been affected solely — or even primarily — by interest in the well being of the settlement’s residents.

In a corner of the main hallway leading to the mayor’s office in Freetown city hall hangs a pristine artist’s rendering of a waterfront development done by a South Korean development and investment firm. The location of the proposed development? Kroo Bay. “In Kroo Bay, they are occupying prime land,” said Aiah Brima, development planning officer for the city council. In 2009, a Korean firm tried to kick-start a development of high-rise luxury apartments and offices. The project was to be funded in partnership with the Housing Finance Corporation (HFC), a parastatal mortgage lending institution that started lending the same year the Korean firm made its pitch. The plan would have entailed the eviction of the current residents of Kroo Bay to make way for the construction and eventual occupation by more upscale Sierra Leoneans.

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\(^3\) Freetown City Bylaws, Statutory Instrument No. 6 of 2010, published 19 February 2010.
In August 2009, the Freetown mayor called for the eviction of Kroo Bay residents after severe flooding in the slum. Brima noted that there are two reasons for why the city believes that *in situ* upgrading should not be an option for the current residents: 1) Health — “As we see it, the conditions in that place are not conducive to human living,” and 2) Land tenure — “They are there illegally and we don’t want to set a precedent.” Relocation is therefore the path that city government has pursued up until now. During last year’s August rains, Mayor Herbert A. George Williams issued a decree that the residents should be moved, citing health concerns. But this call for eviction was not made in consultation with the Ministry of Lands, and did not follow the legal route for eviction (see below section on “Evictions and Relocations”). No one has been evicted, but the possibility remains.

If the site is considered safe for development aimed up market, as the initial enthusiasm for the Korean plan suggests, then we can dismiss the health concerns out of hand. It is clear that, for the current residents in Kroo Bay living in the settlement the way that it is currently planned, life is often unhealthy and dangerous. But the city government’s concerns, as articulated by Brima, do not appear to consider the health status of the land / location a *fait accompli*. Based on this reason for the city’s concern about Kroo Bay alone, *in situ* upgrading may very well be a feasible and favorable solution.

But this brings us to Brima’s outstanding concern: land.

### 1.3 Land in Freetown

“We are fast running out of land in Freetown.”

- Kemoh Tarawallie, General Manager, Sierra Leone Housing Corporation (SALHOC)

Only the present-day city of Freetown was once a British colony. The rest of Sierra Leone was a protectorate. This is the prevailing explanation for why Freetown’s land laws differ from the rest of the country. The Western Area of Sierra Leone, which includes Freetown, is the only place where freehold title is, in legal terms, a possibility for residents. The rest of the country is leasehold or communally owned. But, according to Tarawallie, the legal structures are not always respected. “This [leasehold outside of the Western area] is only on paper. You can go to Bo and buy land,” he said, referring to Sierra Leone’s second biggest city. Freetown was built for 200,000 inhabitants; the current population is at least four times that size. It is little wonder that land is scarce.
Land planning in the city is disorganized. According to Tarawallie, little to no zoning is evident in post-war development of the city. Most slums are built on government or “crown” land in the city of Freetown, which the government has under freehold title. A National Housing Policy was developed in partnership with UN-Habitat in 2006, but officers in SALHOC and the Ministry of Works, Housing, and Infrastructure (MWHI) reported little familiarity with its contents. “I know bits and pieces,” said one of these bureaucrats. Officers of the MWHI have been unable to locate the final draft of this document since the new government came into power in 2007.

In late May 2010, one could not get anywhere close to the city hall compound without being bombarded by tax collectors asking for payment of local rates. Billboards dot the city encouraging residents to perform their patriotic duties and pay rates. The incentive, then, to make land available for potentially lucrative private investment is great.

At the national level, land policy is confused. This is reflected in the fact that the country is divided by two different kinds of tenure systems — what Tarawallie calls “a colonial relic.” The Ministry of Lands, Country Planning and the Environment (MLCPE), is currently in the process of developing a new land policy for the country in partnership with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Thus far one workshop has been held that has included the ministers of Environment, and Agriculture, and representation of civil society through the Sierra Leone Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (SLANGO).

Current national policy on land holds no provision on informal settlements, according to William Farmer, the director of surveys and lands in the MLCPE. Much of policy and implementation has been devolved from the national to municipal level, but Farmer complained about the worrying lack of capacity in the municipalities, including Freetown. A reason for this, he said, is an acknowledged lack of communication on both sides at the national and municipal levels. The example of the administration of SALHOC indicates problems in communication between ministries at the national level.

Key to the problems behind the mandate of the ministry is the broken tenure system, where even basic notions of freehold ownership are murky. It is clear that the government does not have enough information about current land ownership, which is making already confused land tenure arrangements seem almost illegitimate. This is especially the case if formal understandings of tenure are being disregarded in places where free hold is said not to exist, as Tarawallie suggests. According to

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7 Johnson, 13.
Farmer, the tenure system is under fundamental review as part of the UNDP land policy development program. “We are making a desperate effort to develop a land bank,” said Farmer, noting that the ministry is about to undertake a country-wide effort to lead this effort.

### 1.4 Data and Planning Administration

The administration and collection of information regarding slums is a challenge in any country that has a proliferation of informal settlements. Sierra Leone, and the city of Freetown, are no different in this regard. Kroo Bay is a prime example. Though local government estimates had the population of the settlement at between one to two thousand inhabitants, a community-led enumeration of the settlement in August 2009 found that the population was 10,989. Government and consultant-driven surveys of informal settlements are almost always based in survey practices of sampling and even aerial photography. Conversely, a community-led enumeration methodology was employed by the community of Kroo Bay, along with many other communities that have used the social technology of enumeration pioneered by urban poor federations affiliated to SDI. This survey entails community members questioning their neighbors door-to-door on a wide range of social indicators, receiving much more accurate data, as well as enhancing community coherency around a prioritized developmental agenda. Statistical discrepancies between the government / consultant-driven model and the community-based model cannot help but have ramifications for planning and policy regarding the area.

Abdul Karim Marah, deputy development planning officer for the Freetown City Council, noted that outside consultants from the EU and Cities Alliance have conducted baseline surveys of a few slums in the city, including Kroo Bay. But these surveys were not conducted utilizing the door-to-door, community-led methodology long-employed by SDI affiliates. Rather, the consultant-driven surveys that have been undertaken since 2006, have been based on sampling and focus groups. Though the government has not collected definitive information on the extent of the different groupings of tenants and structure owners, Marah raised this as an issue impeding the government’s ability to engage with legitimate structures within the community.

In a discussion with Abu Haruna, a leader of the Ghana Homeless People’s Federation, Marah acknowledged that although there had been some discussions with the Kroo Bay community’s leaders regarding a possible relocation, this was a matter of isolated instances of consultation. The intention appears to have been primarily to gain approval for government plans, not to develop a joint strategy for developing the area. The government strategy, of course, has not been geared towards
letting the community stay in Kroo Bay. Marah indicated that he would be interested to learn more about the community-led information gathering and planning strategies that SDI affiliates use.

Planning throughout the city is also missing a sense of coherence. A city development plan exists, but the city does not appear to be driven by the strategy it describes. The development of the plan was funded by the European Union, and its major findings are not the touchstones city officials use to describe their objectives. This is most evident in comparing the approach in practice to Kroo Bay with the following passage from a “recommendations” section in the Freetown development plan:

When planning the development process, the economic function of the slums in the context of the urban economy must be studied well and be taken into close consideration. This is particularly true where slum rehabilitation cannot avoid resettlement (due to hazardous environments of the present slums, overcrowding, and technical problems of protection against flooding). Nevertheless, resettlements should be kept to an absolute minimum and should follow legal rights. Slum dwellers should receive compensation and future secure tenure, no matter whether they were (informal) owners, or tenants, or else. Communities should be resettled only with their consent and as a social entity, or at least large parts of a collective community.8

Though most planning is done at the city level, there is interest at the national level, particularly in the Ministry of Works, Housing, and Infrastructure, in slum profiling. This allows for a wider set of information about slums at the city-wide level. It is possible that the UN-Habitat-commissioned “slums and informal settlements report” from 2006 did some of this, but the report appears to have been tossed aside and no one is aware of its contents (see below). The Ministry requested funding for such survey activities in last year’s budget allocation, but did not receive the money.

1.5 Housing policy and institutions

The national Ministry of Works, Housing, and Infrastructure (MWHI) is the main ministry in charge of housing policy. In 2006, UN-Habitat worked with the ministry to fund the production of three related documents: a national housing policy, a national housing program, and a slums and informal settlements report. The first two were produced and approved by cabinet, and the third has floundered, with the process for its cabinet approval having been superseded by the change in ruling party

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8 Freetown Development Plan: Pre-Identification Study 2008, 129.
after elections in 2007. It appears as though none of the three documents are operational in any sense. The ministry has been unable to locate the final drafts of any of the documents for its own use, and ministry officials were not familiar with their contents.

Policy and action regarding slums and informal settlements does not appear to be a priority within the ministry. This is particularly the case because of an ongoing push towards government decentralization. “Slum issues are basically with the city council,” said Nancy Tengbeh, deputy permanent secretary in the Ministry. In a briefing with the SDI research team, Tengbeh referred repeatedly to the PRSP2 document which she said forms the “backbone of the agenda for change,” the rhetorical thrust of the current government’s development program. However, the document to which she refers makes nary a mention of housing or urban policy.

The relationship between the Ministry and SALHOC, theoretically a parastatal that should fall under the Ministry’s control, is near non-existent. SALHOC was formerly part of the MLCPE, but under the new government, moved under the MWHI. But the MWHI is not on the board of SALHOC and they rarely communicate. “If we actually want to make these parastatals functional, they have to be answerable to the relevant ministry,” Tengbeh said.

Institutions for finance and technical expertise regarding housing are only beginning to take shape post-war. SALHOC is a parastatal company charged with developing housing throughout the country. The National Commission for Privatization manages it, with minimal involvement from the Ministry of Housing. The act incorporating SALHOC states that at least 60% of its resources should be for low-income citizens, 30% for middle-income and 10% for high-income. For a country with such an acute housing shortage — and this is particularly the case in urban areas — the lack of interest in public or private investment in housing is a huge hurdle. Private investment is minimal, particularly when it comes to low-income housing stock. And the public monies that go towards housing are not actually for building houses, according to Tarawallie. “The money that they do allocate is for making policy,” he said.

SALHOC received an initial tranche of funds from the government shortly after the war, but it was always intended to be a self-financing institution. It began with 600 pre-existing units for low-income residents in Freetown, another 60 for high-income residents, and small pieces of land. The rent in the low-income units were so low, said Tarawallie, “it was as if we were subsidizing people to live in them.” SALHOC decided to sell the units to the sitting tenants, which ended up being a subsidized sale. Some
of these units were and are occupied by low-level government functionaries, and SALHOC is claiming that the government still owes it 2 billion Leones (approx. USD510,000). SALHOC currently is refusing to pay any tax to the government until that amount is repaid. Both sides appear to have unofficially accepted this stalemate. In the past year, SALHOC has built 20 houses for low-income residents in Freetown, the only place where it has ever had projects. But it is hoping to focus on high-rise apartment buildings in the future, in order to make better use of scarce land in the city.

The national government has made it a priority to privatize parastatals, which has given hope that SALHOC could receive renewed capital to pursue new projects. Currently, the company is barely operational, Tarawallie admitted. The institution has long-term potential, but only “if we go through a catharsis of some sort.”

The other main institution related to housing is the new Home Finance Company (HFC), which was capitalized by the National Social Security Insurance Trust (NaSSIT) in 2008. The focus of the HFC is to address the post-war housing deficit easing access to home finance. It was set up with the support of the HFC Ghana, which has been active for 19 years, with a long track record of innovating in housing finance throughout Ghana. HFC has worked with SALHOC to absorb 10 SALHOC-issued loans. Many of the lease-holders were in arrears and defaulting on the loans. HFC’s strategy was to pay off the arrears and principal of the loans and then issue a new loan. On the new terms that HFC has set for the loans, repayment has been consistent thus far.

None of the HFC ventures — or any government or parastatal initiative — have gone to scale. HFC has funded the building of five 2-bedroom houses in the Hamilton area of Freetown. The model was to provide funds to a private developer and then look for buyers. In total, HFC has given out about 85 loans since July 2009. Though HFC did not provide exact socioeconomic statistics on who their customers are, they claim that their customer base includes police officers, informal traders, and photographers, which is supposed to demonstrate that they are reaching a working class part of society. The lending rate for HFC loans is at 19%, which is about 10% lower than commercial banks, and they have begun buying mortgages from other banks. Because of its long-term funding model from NaSSIT, HFC is claiming to be able to spread losses over much longer periods of time than a commercial bank. It is also planning to access funds from international sources by listing on the new Sierra Leone stock exchange within the next year.

1.6 Evictions and relocations in Freetown
Brima admits that the Korean interest in the Kroo Bay area is probably long gone at this point. The latest development focus for the area is an European Union-funded project to improve drainage and build a sewage treatment plant there. Still, Brima noted, this would require the removal of at least some of the residents. The terms of reference for the EU project for infrastructure provision in Kroo Bay also stipulate a relocation process for some affected families. This plan is laid out in the document as one to be driven by consultants, and an NGO is to be recruited for sensitizing the community to what appears to be a pre-ordained process of relocation. The process for eviction requires little to no consultation with those affected. Officials in city council and the national MLCPE described the same process prior to the eventual removal: (1) The city applies to the MLCPE to get the eviction approved. (2) The Ministry takes this to Parliament for approval. (3) The Ministry provides surveyors to demarcate the land. (4) The city council conducts a survey in order to determine who will be moved. (5) The land gets planned for new development by the Ministry.

There have been two recent cases of government removals of slum residents. In both cases the removals were from seaside slums to areas further uphill. Residents of Old Wharf were relocated two years ago to Grafton, but Brima acknowledged this as a failure. When alternative development did not begin at Old Wharf, the erstwhile residents left Grafton and moved back. According to Tarawallie, German aid agency GTZ funded a project in partnership with SALHOC to move people from Marbella also to Grafton, where units had been built for residents. Many of the residents sold or rented the units and then moved back to Marbella.

In Kroo Bay, the city government has been working with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to facilitate a possible relocation. According to Brima, the council has already identified two possible sites for relocating residents of Kroo Bay: Yam’s Farm and De Beer Water. It is also clear that the will within the council to develop an actionable plan for relocation that involves the residents’ concerns is contested. Brima asked why the residents of Kroo Bay — many of whom were born there — could not go back to their ancestral lands. “Most of these people have land in the northern provinces,” he said. Competing interests with regards to the future of the Kroo Bay settlement mean that much has been discussed, but little action has been taken. A historic, rapidly growing community lies in the balance.

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9 Terms of reference for recruitment of consultant, “Freetown Development Plan: Preparation of a Resettlement Plan in the Kroo Bay area”
2.1 Community organization: Kroo Bay

Elections in and of themselves are a relatively weak barometer of the consolidation of democracy. It is, of course, a hopeful sign that post-war Sierra Leone had a peaceful change of political party rule in 2007. But the emergence of civil society groupings able to engage constructively and effectively with government will be perhaps an even greater sign of Sierra Leone’s political development. Community-based organizations are one of the more difficult and important kinds of civil society groups of this nature. Politicians and bureaucrats active in the urban sector in developing countries throughout the world have difficulty appreciating both the necessity and the means of engaging communities that are organized to address their own developmental challenges.

The emergence of the Sierra Leone Federation of the Urban and Rural Poor (FEDURP) in slum settlements throughout the city of Freetown is a key innovation in bridging this persistent divide. Its focus on daily savings, women leadership, and community-based information gathering, has served to augment and make more effective existing, male-dominated leadership structures in slum communities. Government, particularly at the local level, is quick to adopt top-down, programmatic agendas that dictate action to communities without more than nominal consultative meetings with these communities. The Kroo Bay example is a vivid illustration of this.

Despite the often paternalistic attitudes of government towards Kroo Bay, community initiatives there have been instrumental in beginning a slow turn of the tide towards planning and policy implementation through partnership between government actors and community leadership. The key leadership organization in the community is what is known as the Community Steering Group (CSG), which includes traditional leaders. Such associations exist under similar names in informal settlements throughout the city. The CSG in Kroo Bay is composed of representatives from traditional leaders and chiefs, youth leaders, and other, predominantly male leaders. In an interview with the CSG, members described their role as two-fold: (1) to plan for development and represent the developmental interests of the community, and (2) managing public relations externally and sharing information with the wider community internally.

There have been two major development initiatives that the CSG has undertaken in the past three years. In 2007, they began working with the Sierra Leone YMCA’s slum project to install ten water standpipes and to build a community center. The CSG worked with the community at-large to identify the most advantageous locations of
the standpipes. It also negotiated with the MLCPE and the original owner of the land to acquire the title for what is now the location of a well-maintained community center.

By far, the greatest challenge that has helped grow the capacities and focus of the CSG is the continuing threat of eviction. The mayor threatened the community with eviction after flooding in August 2009 resulted in the loss of life, as well as the loss of property. The community is clearly of two minds with regards to relocation, at least in principle. But the community is united in opposition to the approach of government as pertains to a possible relocation. When the mayor issued his unilateral eviction order, he asked the CSG to communicate the decision to the community at-large, which the committee refused. It was, in any event, unlawful for the mayor to make this declaration, as he did not go through the channels of the MLCPE and Parliament (see above section on “Evictions and Relocations in Freetown”).

The clearest sticking point is that the community claims that the government has made no provision for alternative accommodation in the case of eviction. Moreover, residents feel that their terms of relocation will be steep, because they are so reliant on the market nearby for their economic livelihood. One resident spoke of the possibility of being moved to the upscale neighborhood of Hill Station: “Even if I were to be taken to Hill Station, I would prefer to be in Kroo Bay.” Proximity to the market at the edge of the settlement was the oft-cited reason for such sentiment. An enumeration survey conducted by residents in August 2009 revealed that two-thirds of residents are self-employed. The dense, bustling informal trading areas of the nearby city center are therefore key locations for income generating activities.

Though there is a theoretical willingness among some community members to move, the fundamental agenda of the CSG appears to be development in situ. In this regard, the community has conducted an enumeration survey, which helped identify the developmental priorities of the community. The four biggest needs, as identified by the community through last year’s enumeration process are as follows: (1) Drainage, (2) Toilets, (3) Passable roads, (4) Skills development. And the governmental processes of collecting information related to developmental priorities have been frustrating for a community that has already demonstrated a capacity to manage such activities. The community is still waiting for an environmental impact assessment report that will help determine the course of the eviction order from government. But there are questions about why they have not been involved in the gathering of information for that report. After all, residents say, they bear the brunt of the
environmental impact every day. As youth leader Hajji-Bah put it, “You want to talk to consultants? No. You talk to us.”

Engagement between formal political structures and the CSG in Kroo Bay is minimal. CSG members report that they have not had communication with two of the three ward councilors who are responsible for the interests of different parts of the settlement. One of the ward councilors is a member of the CSG, but did not attend our meeting, despite having promised to do so. Communication regarding the community’s enumeration report has also been ineffective. Many officials in the city council reported to have never seen the report or only heard about it.

The FEDURP savings schemes in Kroo Bay are making headway in pioneering social technologies of community organization that strengthen the community at-large. The eviction threat has brought extra coherence to the male-dominated political leadership of the CSG, but the effect on the women-led savings schemes has been less clear. Some federation members claimed that savings had suffered in the wake of the eviction threat. Still the federation has made headway at the political level. Engagements between city officials and federation members at the World Urban Forum in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in March were said to be the start of greater understanding of community concerns.

2.2 Community Organization: Dworzack

Dworzack is built on land once owned by an Eastern European farm owner. The settlement has grown rapidly, particularly in the post-war period. A YMCA baseline study estimated that the population of Dworzack is approximately 15,000 people.¹⁰ Houses here range from tin shacks to bigger, multi-room, concrete dwellings. This reflects a socioeconomic diversity within the settlement that does not predominate in a place like Kroo Bay.

Though, as a general rule, slums share many of the same characteristics — lack of tenure, lack of basic services, population density, etc. — Dworzack is very different from Kroo Bay. Whereas Kroo Bay is located at the seaside, Dworzack is located in the hills of the outskirts of Freetown. Though residents in both settlements lack formal title to the land where they reside, Dworzack, unlike Kroo Bay, does not appear to be under imminent threat of eviction.

Like Kroo Bay, Dworzack has a CSG. But, unlike Kroo Bay, there appears to be little sense of common purpose within the CSG. Community members report that division along political party lines within the CSG and the community at-large impedes any

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¹⁰ The same study estimated the population of Kroo Bay as 5,000 to 7,000, which was well below the figure obtained through the door-to-door enumeration conducted by the community with the support of YMCA: 10,989.
kind of coherent developmental agenda. When a community youth leader accused the CSG of being captive to divided political motivations, a CSG leader retorted, “In terms of our work, we are perfect.” A chief reported that it is difficult to get community members to attend meetings without providing a financial incentive. Tribal differences also lie behind some of the divisions in the community. Residents complain that the politicization of appointments to the positions of councilors and members on ward committees renders these bodies useless as means of representing community concerns. The ward committee is mainly composed of members of the national ruling party. Moreover, community members reported that the working relationship the community and the city council is weak due to a lack of information flowing between the two bodies. Some councilors do not understand their responsibilities, said one community member. The chasm in Dworzack between ordinary community members and their leadership is wide.

The main issues identified by community leaders and ordinary members in interviews was access to water and roads. The steep hill on which the settlement is built means that to be far away from water is a great impediment, especially if one lives downhill from the closest water tap. In fact, this turned out to be a major sticking point after a councilor initiated a process to bring water taps to the settlement. Many complain that accessibility remains an issue. The land on which the settlement is built has natural water springs that are not being utilized. The community has requested help from the YMCA to build 3 spring boxes, and has also engaged the city council and the National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA) to assist in this regard.

The FEDURP savings schemes in Dworzack are a marked contrast to other forms of community leadership there. Savings scheme members report that there are no divisions, despite the fact that they belong to different political parties and tribes. The federation there is on a first phase of loans from collected savings, and are looking at the possibility of issuing a second round of loans. As a general rule, loans are issued with an interest rate of ten per cent. The federation is cohering in Dworzack through regular exchanges between the savings schemes in the settlement.

3. Interactions between government and slum communities

Sustained, constructive engagement between government actors and slum dwellers is a key prerequisite for the expansion of capacity both within government and communities to deliver on developmental agendas. Yet it is clear that interactions between organized groupings of slum dwellers and government officials have only occurred in the post-war period to nominal extent. The intractability of the
relationship between government actors and slum communities is a clear result of the inability to structure meaningful engagements between the two parties.

Previous YMCA-commissioned baseline studies in Sierra Leone evaluated community understanding — particularly among youths — of government policy through statistical surveys. The questions in these surveys mainly pertained to perceptions of how representative different government institutions (parliament, city council, etc.) were of community concerns. A critical understanding of the community leadership initiatives in existence, as well as their track record in engaging with the institutions of the State at any and all levels is useful in understanding how perceptions play out in practice. In the review earlier in this document of the types of grassroots leadership organizations already in existence in Kroo Bay and Dworzack, we can see two different models, in large part determined by the manner and extent of State interventions in those settlements.

The Kroo Bay case is instructive as it is a priority of government action — at both the national and local levels — regarding slums in Freetown. Lack of understanding of the concerns for slum dwellers has quite clearly led to policies that are aggressively anti-poor: threatened evictions without the provision of negotiated alternative accommodation, top-down programmatic initiatives that do not engage the poor besides communicating predetermined policies, etc.

One Freetown city officer shed light on this divide when he ruminated on the dangerous, unsanitary conditions in Kroo Bay: “I do not understand human beings,” the officer said. “How important is it to live where you could die and be in proximity to affluence, or to live on the hill and be far away from affluence?” Discussions with community members, such as those conducted during the enumeration survey or even during the interviews for this research report would more than answer such a question.

One high-ranking city officer insisted that any kind of dialogue with slum dwellers must be structured in a way that asserts the pre-eminence of government actors: “Only the council, only the government, can initiate that linkage of dialogue.” Dialogue that has gone beyond merely informing slum dwellers of government plans has yet to take place in Kroo Bay or anywhere else, according to interviews with multiple politicians and bureaucrats in city council. Abdul Karim Marah, deputy development planning officer in the Freetown City Council, described how the council interacted with the Kroo Bay community around previously planned initiatives, such as the Korean investment proposal. There was a consultation with
the people council perceived to be elected leaders from the community. Then the council felt they had free reign to move forward on the project.

The slow move towards decentralization appears to be leaving government officials at all levels a bit uncertain as to how far they can or should go in engaging with communities. Francis Reffell, the YMCA slum project coordinator, said that allocation of resources has been a particular sticking point in this regard. Until recently all resources were centralized and development plans would be submitted to relevant Members of Parliament (MPs) in order to gain access to funds. Now these allocations are done by city council. Complicating things even further is the fact that though councilors should theoretically have the power to disperse these resources, political leadership appoints them, and therefore the mayor is perceived to have real keys to the proverbial purse strings.

A new kind of engagement between slum dwellers and city officials has begun to emerge after savings scheme members in the FEDURP interacted with the Chief Administrator of Freetown during the World Urban Forum in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in March of this year, according to Reffell. There FEDURP representatives made the case that sustained, meaningful engagement could be a means of producing an inclusive, pro-poor settlement to the question of what to do in Kroo Bay. The ongoing practice of enumeration and savings in that community was reported to have been an attractive model to the Chief Administrator but he was unavailable for an interview.

4. Towards a bottom-up “agenda for change”

The national government’s PRSP2 is intended to layout Sierra Leone’s “agenda for change.” This comes after two previous phases of national planning dedicated to reconciliation and post-war reconstruction. Since 2008, the government has therefore shifted to what can be referred to as a “developmental” agenda, seeking to address “balancing human development with growth.”

When we talk about pro-poor policy-making, ultimately we are talking about where policy comes from. Programmatic initiatives that come from the State, with little involvement of poor communities in their formulation may be “developmental.” By “developmental” we mean that the rhetorical emphasis of policy may very well be oriented towards the uplift of the poor. But a “developmental State” is not necessarily a “pro-poor” State. For the poor must be empowered as partners with the State in both the development and implementation of policy. This is not an empty ideological agenda. Especially in cases where there is an acknowledged lack of capacity within State institutions to both develop and implement policy initiatives capable of
reaching any kind of scale, organized communities of the poor are essential partners. The kind of policies recommended below all point towards the facilitation of the kinds of relationships between organized communities and the urban poor and formal political actors, which put paid to the notion that one can be “pro-poor” without actually involving the poor.

### 4.1 Institutions of pro-poor policy development

Too often, policy is determined at a theoretical level that is hard to bring down to the ground for implementation. The reliance on outside consultants for the development of policy has been rife in the post-war period in Sierra Leone. And it is clear that though government officials at all levels are quick to refer to the fact that such documents were produced, government activities do not seem particularly concerned with the contents of these reports and policies. For instance, it is telling that it was so difficult to access consultant-driven housing policy documents for the purposes of this research. Housing ministry officials do not know the contents of a policy document that could theoretically provide shape to the basic functions of the ministry.

In order to achieve a policy environment that can be termed “pro-poor”, a basic prerequisite will be the meaningful involvement of communities in the development of policy. At the local level, incorporating participatory planning mechanisms is also a major challenge. The lack of the voices of slum dwellers at the table with public and private sector actors who craft local planning policy is evidenced by the severe lack of communication on the potential eviction of large swathes of the community of Kroo.
Bay, as well as the relatively smaller project of installation of water taps in Dworzack. The creation of multi-stakeholder forums in order to direct policy creates coherence among different actors within the urban sector. Duplication of effort or work that is at cross-purposes is an all-too-common blight on the operations of development actors, whether they come from the public, private, or NGO worlds. Forums with an executive committee that includes representatives from slum communities have been practiced in both low and middle-income countries in Africa in order to facilitate the development of policy. Such forums should be established at both the national and local levels — with relevant alignment between the two — so as to lend coherence to an inclusive, multi-stakeholder development slum policy. The substantive inclusion of organizations of the urban poor will be vital to the success of such initiatives. These forums need to be structured in ways that will have a direct bearing on legislation, institutions, and funding designated to implement such policy.

4.2 Pro-poor data collection and planning administration

One of the most powerful tools for governments to make effective interventions in poor communities is to facilitate community initiatives to collect the kinds of information that have a direct bearing on planning and their related flows of resources. The practice of enumeration among SDI affiliates has a proven track
record in empowering communities to come to the negotiation table with relevant State actors ready to articulate and craft specific developmental agendas.

The community of Kroo Bay conducted an enumeration last year shortly before residents came under threat of eviction. Among other things, the enumeration put numbers and a methodology behind the articulation of an agenda for *in situ* upgrading, as well as an understanding of how and why people live in this hotly-contested settlement. Many of the questions that came up in government office after government office during the research for this paper are answered within this document: the plea of Gibson, the deputy mayor of Freetown — “I don’t understand these people” — receives a direct response. The numbers and figures are there for anyone to see and understand. They are the people’s own numbers.

The key is to use this document to move the agenda of the community forward in its relationship with the State. An important first step is to get the city of Freetown to acknowledge the information as official and legitimate. This will allow any planning regarding the settlement to begin taking place on the terms of those who live there. As the community gains capacity to engage with government, especially after having collected and analyzed their own information, it will be better-placed to advance its interests as represented through the data that they own.
Towards a Pro-Poor “Agenda For Change”:
Opportunities and Experiences of Slum Policy and Practice in Sierra Leone

The Cape Town example mentioned earlier is predicated on the power of community-based information gathering to inform informal settlement upgrading practice. Enumeration has been used in Mumbai and Nairobi to relocate tens of thousands of slum dwellers from dangerous shelters next to railway lines. Community-led enumeration paved the way for these relocations to happen in ways that were sustainable and advantageous for slum dwellers, as well as for the State and private sector actors who had an interest in clearing space along the railway lines. This meant that people did not move back to the newly cleared space, and were generally happy in their new locations. The comparisons with the relocations that have taken place in Freetown are striking. In the cases of Marbella and Old Wharf, many of the residents moved back to their original settlement. A lack of consultation and partnership between government and affected communities appears to have played a big role in the failure of these relatively top-down initiatives. Facilitating a community-led information gathering process is the way for local government to go in engaging in sustainable and meaningful ways around both in situ upgrading and potential relocation. Pursuit of pilot slum upgrading projects rooted in community enumeration data can be an effective model for practical demonstration of policy possibilities.

Case study 3: Community-led enumeration and the railway line relocation in Nairobi, Kenya

Two of the biggest slums in Africa lie along the railway in Nairobi: Kibera and Mukuru. So when the government parastatal that runs the line decided that it would need to relocate many of these slum dwellers as part of a rehabilitation effort, they realized that only a community-led process would create a sustainable solution. The communities of Kibera and Mukuru agreed that they would be willing to relocate as long as they controlled the information that was used for the process.

In both communities, enumerators counted businesses and residents, door-to-door, surveying a wide range of social indicators. Community members meditated disputes about the information amongst themselves, building trust and community coherency in the process. They also worked together with the SDI-affiliated slum dweller federation Muungano wa wanavijiji to plan an alternative site for accommodation of displaced residents.

The relocation of tens of thousands of slum dwellers is proceeding peacefully because all the stakeholders talk to each other and treat each other as equal partners. The community produces and owns the information that serves as the basis for any kind of development. The development of the railway line could have been the bane of poor people throughout Nairobi. Because the government agreed to a community-led process and partnership, the project has become a win-win for all stakeholders.
4.3 The slum dweller federation model

Especially in the post-war context, where capacity in both the bureaucracy of government institutions and the organic leadership of slum communities is often low, the model of the relatively new FEDURP present an opportunity for all such actors. Though the federation is only active in some settlements in Freetown, there is great potential for the scaling up of its activities. The Kroo Bay enumeration from 2009 revealed that 14% of the community consider themselves to be part of the federation. This number may have taken a hit since the eviction threat, which federation leaders report has reduced enthusiasm for the practice of daily savings. When household security is under an acute threat like eviction, it is common for any planning for the future (like savings) to diminish.

The advantage of the FEDURP model is that it has a clear developmental orientation, as opposed to the more political thrust of other kinds of community leadership structures. The political and tribal divisions reported to be part of Dworzack’s CSG and relevant ward committees, were nowhere to be found in the savings schemes in the same settlement. The federation savings schemes can therefore work with political leadership to spread the social technologies of community-based capacity for financial and information management. In engagements with politicians and bureaucrats, communities will actually have the capacity to partner with government rooted in the finance and knowledge capacities required to pursue any kind of development initiative.

What will be required is for the FEDURP to be scaled up. Time, resources, and energy will be needed to facilitate exchanges between savings schemes throughout the city in order to learn about savings, issuing loans, collecting information through enumerations, etc. The new institution of the HFC is an indication of will within
government towards exploring creative approaches to ensure that housing finance reaches lower income brackets.

Savings in the Ghana Federation of the Urban Poor is already done through Boafo, a micro finance department of HFC Bank, Ghana. This is a means of bridging the gap between informal practice of informal slum dwellers and the formal finance institutions. HFC in Sierra Leone indicated an interest in pursuing such arrangements when the FEDURP is developed to the point where it feels comfortable engaging at such a level. Promisingly, HFC is also interested in financing incremental developments. An example given by HFC employees was to first finance the purchase of land and then later finance house construction.

Emerging incremental practice in places like the Kambi Moto housing development in Huruma, Nairobi, will be useful touchstones for using the SDI network to learn about alternative methods of housing construction and finance that work for the poor. This can break down the concept of incrementalism to floor-by-floor house construction such as in Kambi Moto or even step-by-step bulk service provision, currently being implemented in various cities in Zimbabwe by the Zimbabwe Homeless People’s Federation. In both cases, organizations of the urban poor were able to negotiate with authorities to change outmoded or irrelevant human settlements standards in ways that work for the poor themselves.

**Case study 5: Incremental upgrading in Kenya and Zimbabwe**

Incrementalism is a means of development that incorporates the strengths and capacities of the poor. When one only earns small amounts of money at a time, one can improve one’s house and livelihood bit-by-bit. The Kenyan slum dweller federation, Muungano wa wanavijiji has put this into practice through an incremental housing project in Kambi Moto neighborhood of Huruma, Nairobi. The federation negotiated with city authorities to agree to let the residents build a model of semi-detached, multi-storey units. The residents must save in order to contribute to the building of the first two storeys and then are required to contribute further savings in order to build the planned third storey. If you visit now, you will see that some houses have the full three storeys. Other residents say they are looking forward to the time when they will have saved enough to add on to their house.

The Zimbabwe Homeless People’s Federation has similarly negotiated with local authorities throughout the country to agree to allow incremental development. Here, the focus is on water and sanitation infrastructure. The Federation has negotiated with a number of municipalities to begin projects for borehole water provision and "ecosan" alternative toilet technology to combat the high cost of traditional infrastructure in the country. The idea is that the provision of this kind of infrastructure can then facilitate stronger, healthier communities when housing construction proceeds. The municipalities that have adopted these attitudes now serve as learning centers for officials and residents of other municipalities who are curious to adopt similar strategies.

In both cases, organized communities of the urban poor have worked with authorities to change outmoded or irrelevant human settlements standards in ways that work for the poor themselves.
authorities to move them away from strict standards that bare little resemblance to the lived reality of poverty.

The lack of effective planning tools at both the city and national level can be a key opening for scaling up federation and community-building activities. Integrating the practical power of community-based information gathering such as enumeration and even city-wide informal settlement profiling into the planning apparatus of the State, will provide poor communities an important toehold in the development and implementation of policy. All engagements with politicians will need to be seen as opportunities for building capacity within the federation, as well as communities at large to advocate for their agendas. **Policies that incorporate innovations and methods of learning of networked organizations of the urban poor, like the slum dweller federations linked through the alliance of SDI, will be key to scalable urban development policy and practice in Sierra Leone.**

### 4.4 Evictions

Finally, there should be no mistake that underlying this report is an unequivocal statement against forced eviction. Statements made by some officials regarding potential eviction in Kroo Bay indicate a theoretical willingness to forcibly remove residents of the slum. Such an action would contravene international law and would make Sierra Leone as a violator of basic human rights. **Sierra Leone should make a national commitment that any relocation of slum dwellers be conducted only after a) meaningful engagement with those affected by the move and b) adequate provision of alternative accommodation, social and livelihood possibilities.**

### 5. Conclusion

It is difficult for government actors to acknowledge that they do not have all the answers. Their charge is to represent their constituents and provide services for them. Throughout the world, we often find bureaucrats and politicians throwing up their hands waiting for a silver bullet to come along and solve intractable problems from the top-down. This is especially so for those in the urban sector dealing with the growing and seemingly intractable issue of slum formation.
But the solutions that have been implemented successfully and shown the potential for scale are not quick fix silver bullets and they do not come from the top. Rather, success has come through patient and deliberate work by government actors with an overriding interest in inclusivity and multi-stakeholder ownership of development. Success has come through the hard work of poor communities themselves — organizing around their own capacities to manage and leverage finance, as well as to manage and produce information and learning. Success has come through acknowledgments by all sides that the way to achieve tangible change in the lives of ordinary people is through sustained engagements between all those who have a stake in this change. This is the success of both strong, confident governments and strong, confident communities; the strength of one feeds on the strength of the other.

The first section of this paper looked at the specificities of the urban context in Sierra Leone. The post-war environment has presented unique challenges to the urban center of Freetown both in terms of population influx and shelter availability. The divide between policy and practice in the slums of Freetown has perhaps been exacerbated by governance capacity issues in the last decade. Land and housing practice in Freetown has been confused by unclear policies, many of which were developed by outsiders, that have not actually gained traction among the relevant line institutions. Data and planning administration has been difficult with no consistent method for the collection of data, as well as a clear understanding for how the information can be tied to planning policy. Finally, the insistence on forced eviction as a means of both threat and action in Freetown has meant that government is in the business of State-sponsored dispossession and exclusion in the city.

The second section examined the means by which communities in the slums of Kroo Bay and Dworzack are organized. These are two different communities with disparities in terms of the capacity of organic community political organization, as well as the kinds of challenges each community faces. The emergence of the women-led FEDURP has led to growing capacity around innovative social technologies such as daily savings and community-led enumeration that has changed communities wherever there is a federation affiliated to SDI. The following section looked at how these formations and institutions of government and slum communities have been able to interact with each other.

Finally, this report included recommendations for new, pro-poor slum policy instruments. These relate to a) the kinds of institutions by which policy is developed, b) the way information is managed and tied to resource flows, c) the ways in which
government identifies, recognizes and facilitates the policy and practical capacities of organizations of the urban poor, and d) the abolition of forced eviction.

Governments and organized communities share the same destiny. Governments cannot serve their people without involving and including their people as part and parcel of the crafting and implementing of policy. The two sides reinforce each other. Most governments would not like to be branded “anti-poor.” But “pro-poor” policy is much more than rhetoric. It is a specific set of policies and institutions that are aimed at models of inclusivity and growth. When governments and communities are able to recognize and grow the capacities of each other, it will be not only the poor who benefit, but the entire nation.
Appendix 1. Key Informants Interviewed

1. Aiah Brima, development planning officer for Freetown city council
3. Sam Franklin Gibson, acting deputy mayor of Freetown and councilor in Freetown Ward 39
4. Samuel De Cox Koroma, General Secretary, CSG Kroo Bay
5. Abdul Karim Marah, deputy development planning officer for Freetown City Council
6. Francis Reffell, coordinator slum project, YMCA Sierra Leone
7. Ismaila Morie Sheriff, head of legal affairs and company secretary, Home Finance Corporation
8. Nancy Tengbeh, deputy permanent secretary of the Ministry of Works, Housing, and Infrastructure
9. Kemoh Tarawallie, general manager of Sierra Leone Housing Corporation
10. Communities (including FEDURP members) in Dworzack and Kroo Bay

Institutional breakdown of government stakeholders interviewed:

**National**
- **MINISTRY OF LANDS, COUNTRY PLANNING, AND THE ENVIRONMENT**
  - William Farmer, director of surveys and lands
- **MINISTRY OF WORKS, HOUSING, AND INFRASTRUCTURE**
  - Nancy Tengbeh, deputy permanent secretary

**Parastatal and government-affiliated organizations**
- **HOME FINANCE CORPORATION**
  - Ismaila Morie Sheriff, head of legal affairs and company secretary
- **SIERRA LEONE HOUSING CORPORATION**
  - Kemoh Tarawallie, general manager

**Local**
- **FREETOWN CITY COUNCIL**
  - Sam Franklin Gibson, acting deputy mayor
  - Aiah Brima, development planning officer
  - Abdul Karim Marah, deputy development planning officer
Appendix 2. Key Reference Documents

1. Freetown City By-Laws, Published 19 February 2010.
2. Freetown Development Plan, Funded by European Union.
4. Sierra Leone Integrated Household Survey 2003/4, Published November 2007
8. Terms of reference for recruitment of consultant, “Freetown Development Plan: Preparation of a Resettlement Plan in the Kroo Bay area”
9. SDI website: www.sdinet.org

Appendix 3. Photo acknowledgements

Front cover, from l-r, top to bottom
Kroo Bay, Benjamin Bradlow, SDI
Dwarzack, Benjamin Bradlow, SDI
Humura Nairobi, Benjamin Bradlow, SDI (case study 3)
Accra Savings Scheme, Benjamin Bradlow, SDI (case study 4)
Towards a Pro-Poor "Agenda For Change": Opportunities and Experiences of Slum Policy and Practice in Sierra Leone

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