

Monrovia City Corporation's Slum Initiative

Preparation of Monrovia Slum Upgrading Initiative

P112372

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1. Executive Summary

Decent housing is one of the fundamental essentials that all humans are entitled to. It is at least as important as education, health and employment. Housing should not be seen in isolation, good housing sets the scene for all other things to function effectively. There is no doubt that those who are adequately housed are less likely to suffer from infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, typhoid fever and malaria. This in turn makes it less likely for them to be absent from work and schools; absenteeism which reduces their life chances. The importance of housing on any political agenda must therefore not be ignored and should receive much more than lip service.

This report focuses on low income housing in the urban city of Monrovia, the capital city of Liberia. A lot of attention is paid to the five slum settlements of West Point, Sonewein, Salt Beach, Clara Town and Logan Town. It has to be emphasized that these are not the only slum settlements in Monrovia and that they cannot be claimed to be the worst slum settlements in Monrovia either. The Census results, the finals of which are yet to be released, have already identified over 20 slum settlements in Monrovia. Low income housing issues should therefore be given priority by the government of Liberia. The challenges faced by those living in such desperate conditions and those struggling to deliver essential services within these settlements must be acknowledged and best efforts made by all concerned to deal with such challenges.

Section 3 of this report deals with the initial difficulty of trying to adopt a working and acceptable definition of a slum. It also discuss the main characteristics of slums in general as identified in the UNHABITAT definition; this includes overcrowding, poor physical conditions of the housing units, lack or limited access to basic facilities such as clean water and sanitation and the general poor infrastructure.

A thorough needs assessment of the five selected slum settlements already referred to above has been undertaken. This assessment covers the following: access to water, adequate sanitation, recreational facilities, economic activities, schools, electricity and the conditions of the roads and alleyways within these settlements. It is not surprising that all of these facilities are generally in poor condition. This report adopts a realistic approach as far as what is actually needed to improve the lives of low income earners in these settlements - taking into consideration the limited resources, the cost recovery mechanism that is already in place, the government's policy on related issues and the ability of the end-user to pay for such improvements.

Past and current interventions by the government of Liberia, individuals, aid agencies and also the private housing sector in dealing with the challenges that housing poses in cities such as Liberia are also discussed briefly.

Section 7 of the report is perhaps the most important section. It looks in detail at strategies that can be adopted by all interested parties in, not only improving current slum conditions, but also in preventing the further development of slums in

Monrovia. A detailed analysis of a successful slum improvement program is set out and possible lessons that can be learnt from this project discussed.

Recommendations and possible courses of action are discussed. In concluding this report it is stressed that slums are the most obvious manifestation of failed low-income strategies. This is not a problem that is unique to Monrovia; it is a worldwide problem that is not going to go away without continued and intense efforts. All players should bear in mind that the prognosis is that the population of urban cities is on the increase. Unfortunately, this influx is, by and large, not going to be by those who can afford decent homes in cities but by the poor and destitute who arrive in search of better opportunities.

2. Introduction to the “Slum Initiative”.

This “slum initiative”, promoted by The World Bank, has been initially funded by Cities Alliance, and is in line with target 11 of the objectives of The Milenium Declaration “to improve the living conditions of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020”.

This report aims to provide a framework that identifies systemic issues in the development and degradation of slums in Monrovia, in particular the 5 main slum settlements identified in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) document. It also explores measures that can be taken to avoid the further development of slums in Monrovia and to ensure that conditions in the five slums settlements already referred to above are improved. A needs assessment study was done in all five settlements with all relevant stakeholders. The study focuses on priority needs, capacity gaps and examines how existing institutions at both national and local levels deal with slum-related issues. The goal of this exercise does not stop at the making of recommendations as to how conditions can be improved but also at the identification of a possible NGO that can take a lead role in championing the realization of at least some, if not all, of the recommendations of this report.

Many residential areas in the Monrovia have typical slum characteristics: - occupation by a high proportion of low-income earners, lack of basic infrastructures, ambiguous or insecure land tenure rights, high population density, poor environmental conditions, poor or very poor building quality, absence of an urban culture, high levels of criminality and delinquency, among others. It important to note that the general consensus amongst slum dwellers in relation to crime is that criminal activities are very common and most of such crimes are perpetrated by those living outside their communities.

2.1 Background

Monrovia, the capital of Liberia, was founded in 1822 by freed slaves from the United States of America and was named after the US president James Monroe. It is located on a hilly peninsular between the Mesurado river and the Atlantic ocean on the West Coast of Africa. The Mesurado River separates the mainland from Bushrod and Balli islands. Bushrod Island is occupied by mangrove swamps. This geographical feature considerably reduces the amount of land readily available for human settlement and other related activities.

Monrovia is the political, financial, commercial and international centre of Liberia. The Free Port of Monrovia, the Roberts International Airport and a road network to neighbouring countries connects Liberia to the rest of the world. The James Spriggs Payne Airport mainly handles domestic flights.

In 1986, the population of Monrovia was estimated at around 572,000 inhabitants. This number peaked at the height of the civil war; between 1990 – 2004 the population of Monrovia was reported to have doubled to over 1,000,000. It is hardly surprising as there

is a tendency for movements into cities during wars as these are considered to be safer living areas. Urban centres in Liberia either have inadequate services or lack basic services and infrastructure. Notwithstanding this, a high number of economically active members of the population migrate to urban centres in search of better opportunities and jobs. (UNHABITAT, 2006, Liberia Urban Sector Profile).

Table 1: Population Growth Rates and Average Household Size

County	Population		Annual Growth Rate (%/year) 1984 – 2008	Average Household Size	
	1984	2008		1984	2008
Bomi	66,420	82,036	0.9	4.0	3.4
Bong	225,813	328,919	1.0	4.9	4.7
Gbarpolu	48,399	83,758	2.3	4.6	5.6
Grand Bassa	159,648	224,839	1.4	4.0	5.4
Cape Mount	79,322	129,055	2.0	4.5	4.8
Grand Gedah	63,028	126,146	2.9	5.2	7.6
Grand Kru	62,791	57,106	-0.4	4.9	5.3
Lofa	199,242	270,114	1.3	5.2	4.4
Margibi	151,792	199,689	1.1	4.5	4.8
Maryland	69,267	136,404	2.8	5.8	7.8
Montserrado	491,078	1,144,806	3.5	5.4	4.7
Nimba	313,050	468,088	1.7	5.8	5.9
Rivercess	37,849	65,862	2.3	5.9	4.5
Rivergee	39,782	67,318	2.2	5.4	7.0
Since	64,147	104,932	2.1	6.6	5.8
Total	2,101,628	3,489,072	2.1	6.1	5.1

The population of Liberia as a whole has increased from 2,101,628 in 1984 when the previous census was taken to 3,489,072 in 2008.

2.2 Analysis of the Situation and Proposals of Intervention Strategies

Liberia faces a huge developmental challenge after experiencing more than 15 years of civil war that caused a widespread political, social and economic decline. One of the major aspects of such challenges is the low person-to-land ratio, land, unlike many other resources, cannot easily be increased. There are very limited means by which this can be done and such methods are very expensive and labor intensive. Lack of access to land by the urban poor is one of the key contributory factors responsible for the growth of slum settlements in Monrovia. It has often been said that the issue of land is one which is likely to cause another war in Liberia if not reformed effectively and efficiently.

One of the key objectives of the initiative is the production of an analysis of the situation in the five slum settlements identified as the focus of this study. These are West Point, Clara Town, Randell Street, Sonewein and Logan Town. This analysis is aimed at producing a realistic appraisal of the social, economic, political, physical and institutional framework at play within these settlements. Attention should be paid to previous actions taken with the aim of improving the living conditions in these slums. It is worth noting that slum settlements can be found in other areas of Monrovia including Slipway, Bassa Community, Bishop Brooks, Bernard Quarters, Buzzi Quarters, Newport Street, Lynch Street, Chugbor, Gaye Town Community, Wood Camp, Pipeline, Red Light Community, Zinc Factory, Kesselly Boulevard, River View, Shoe Factory, Chicken Soup Factory, Topoe Village, Battery Factory, Chocolate City, Bassa Town, Duan Town and Dixville (Preliminary Census Results 2008).

The resulting document (Part I – *Needs Assessment*) provided the basis for the discussions leading to the elaboration of a proposal on Strategies for Slum Upgrading (Part II - *Proposal of Intervention Strategies*) defined and agreed at the national level in collaboration with the relevant government institutions.

2.3 Methodology

The working methodology was not limited to a mere translation of terms of reference; instead, it sought to establish a continuous and systematic process comprising: (a) the observation of the slums in order to identify local actors, (b) applied research and (c) strategic plans for improving the living conditions in these settlements, therefore, the participation of all actors is crucial.

The Monrovia City Corporation is more or less the driver of the initiative. The taking of ownership of the initiative by the corporation is vital to ensure the sustainability of the program. Several subjects linked to the growth processes of the slums in Monrovia are discussed in the study: (a) the probable causes of their existence, (b) the inhabitants' main

sources of income, (c) the phenomenon trends in the country and (d) the national vision of the initiative.



Plate 1: Representation of the Elderly Group at West Point

Consultative meetings were held in all of the identified slum settlements. Efforts were also made to ensure that such meetings were representative of the communities in general. All the various groups within the communities were invited to the meetings and their contributions taken on board. In Sonwein, the initial consultative meeting was cancelled and had to be rescheduled due to the lack of female attendants at the initial meeting. External consultative meetings were also held with various NGOs currently involved in the provision of services in slum settlements. Meetings covered topics such as past, current and future interventions. Key personnel in government ministries and parastatal agencies were also consulted. The three national workshops held as part of this exercise provided an invaluable forum for all of the major players to help shape the future path of this initiative.

2.4 Analysis of the Situation of the Slum Settlements

A detailed needs analysis of the five slum settlements was conducted as part of this exercise. Background information such as the age of the settlement, the religious and ethnic composition of the various settlements was analyzed. The main characteristics of the slums were also analyzed, including access to water, adequacy and means of sanitation. Details of governmental agencies' activities, community based organizations,

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and International NGOs (INGOs) engaged in the provisions of services and the nature of their current and past interventions were also assessed. Reference was made to how best the existing services within the settlements can be improved.

2.4 Proposal of a strategy and slum upgrading

This stage was driven by the needs assessments that were identified as a result of the inspection of the facilities and structures within the slum settlements and also the suggestions and recommendations at the second and third national workshops. At these workshop key stakeholders from the relevant government departments, NGOS and INGOS, members of the various slum communities and organizations within the slum communities were represented. This was useful for the identification of the kind of actors and entities that will be involved as the program develops and the identification of the types of actions and implementation form.

2.5 Conclusion of the study

The comments and contributions of the national workshop were included in the document and the final results were submitted to the World Bank and the Monrovia City Corporation.

Section 3 Slums in Monrovia



Plate 3 Dumpsite less than 10 yards Away from a Slum Settlement

3.1 Definition of Slums

When used in its generic terms slum is often used to describe very bad housing conditions. Such conditions are usually evidenced by overcrowding, lack or inadequate sanitation facilities, badly put together housing structures, limited or no access to clean drinking water and precarious location.

There is no universally agreed definition of slums. However, slums often refer to poor housing conditions within cities. The word slum is generally used to describe “a wide range of low-income settlements and / or poor human living conditions”. (UN-HABITAT 2003).

Living in slums often entails enduring some of the most intolerable housing conditions, frequently including sharing toilets with hundreds of others, living in overcrowded and insecure neighbourhoods and constantly facing the threat of eviction. Those living in slum conditions are more likely to contract waterborne diseases such as cholera and typhoid, as well as the opportunistic ones that accompany poor nutrition and/or HIV/AIDS. Slum life places a serious degree of social and psychological strain on slum residents, which often leads to broken homes and social exclusion. Slum dwellers are often victims of crimes.

3.2 Characteristics of Slums

It would be deceiving to suggest that slums are homogenous. Studies show that each slum to some extent has its own, separate, unique features in comparison to others. This is often in terms of composition of those who make up the settlement, income level, the needs of the community and the perception of the inhabitants of their immediate surroundings. However there are certain characteristics that most if not all slums have in common and these are examined below.

3.2.2 Location

Slums are usually located along land that is either on the hills, close to the swamps or very close to the sea. It should be said that if the right investment strategy is used to develop such land it can be successfully used to provide high quality living areas. However, this is not the case when such land is resorted to by the urban poor to address their housing needs. This group lacks the necessary means of developing the land and therefore uses such land for the construction of houses that are often poorly put together. As a result of this the locations of such slum housing settlements present a danger to those living in them. During the rains especially, they are susceptible to flooding. This not only results in the very vulnerable losing their lives but also in the destruction of properties, and often results in people who are either unable to leave their homes or to gain access to their homes. For those located along the hills, landslides are a very common threat.

In relation to the five slum settlements that are the focus of this study, West Point and Randell Street/Salt beach are located along the seaside. Clara Town and Logan Town are very close to mangrove swamp land, Sonewein is unusual in that it occupies flat, dry land.

3.2.3 Lack of basic services and poor access

This is often cited as one of the main characteristics of slums. This includes lack of, or inadequate access to, safe drinking water and sanitation. This is a very common feature of the slums around Monrovia. Such conditions are better in some areas compared to others. For example Clara Point is on the verge of having 22 water stand-pipes installed. Logan Town and Salt Beach do not have any stand-pipes in their immediate vicinity. Residents either have to buy water or travel long distances to collect it.

The access roads, pavements and alleyways in these settlements are all in a desperate state of disrepair. This presents a serious problem in terms of service delivery - for example, the collection of solid waste - and can have serious consequences in cases of emergencies. Apparently, often people have to pay to be carried on to the main roads in an emergency, as vehicular access in most cases is impossible.

3.2.4 Sub-standard housing and inadequate structure.

Slum areas are associated with a high number of sub-standard housing usually constructed using non-permanent materials such as plastic and straw roofs. Floors are usually made of earth. Poverty amongst slum dwellers means that they are unable to afford decent housing structures. Such structures usually do not meet any building regulation requirements.

The size and quality of materials used in the construction of house varies within a settlement and from one settlement to another. In settlements such as Logan Town and West Point, there are a few houses that have been constructed with the use of durable building materials. These are of brick, with zinc roof and well laid concrete flooring. In areas where there are water and electricity mains, such homes have access to standing water taps and mains electricity. Salt Beach stands out as one that does not have any such houses. This reflects the economic conditions of those living in this particular settlement.

3.2.5 Overcrowding and high density.

Overcrowding refers to low space per person and high occupancy rates. Many slum units have five or more people sharing a single room, which is also used for cooking, sleeping, living and sometimes the conduct of small-scale economic activities. All five settlements can be said to be very overcrowded, both in terms of the number of housing

units within the available space, and also in terms of the number of people having to share room spaces. It is not unusual for parents and up to five children to be found living in a single room. Sometimes people have to share a room with non-family members. Such living conditions mean that there is little or no privacy and also tend to result in sexual abuse and exploitation.

All five slum settlements can be very easily identified. Upon approaching them what one initially sees is a sea of corrugated sheets and make-do shacks, made from less durable materials stacked together.

3.2.6 Security of tenure.

Most slum dwellers do not have security of tenure. This means that they can be evicted at any time. Residents have suggested that this is an issue that should be resolved by the land being legalised and the existing tenants granted security of tenure by the government. This could be seen as a long-term strategy of maintaining the units as the occupants are more likely to invest their limited income in carrying out the necessary maintenance, knowing they are not mere tenants at will.

In all five slum settlements, the overwhelming majority of inhabitants are tenants. They do not have proper Tenancy Agreements outlining their rights and obligations. Landlords do not usually go through the process of obtaining a court order before evicting them. In cases in which landlords wish to have them evicted, they are only given a couple of week's notice. Failure to vacate the property before the end of the notice period, usually results in landlords forcibly removing the tenant's possessions out of the property and changing the locks. Some unscrupulous landlords seek new tenants who are willing to pay a higher rent and then ask the existing tenants to either move out or match what the prospective tenant is willing to pay.

3.3 Urban Growth in Monrovia

The most up-to-date statistics relating to the population and housing conditions in Liberia are the preliminary results of the 2008 National Population and Housing Census. Unfortunately, to date, the final results have not been released, as a result of which information on some of the most detailed aspects of the exercise are not yet available. The provisional results of the 2008 Population and Housing Census of Liberia cite the current population of Liberia as being 3,489,000. The population in 1984 was 2,101,628. There has been a population increase of 1,387,444. There has been a general trend of increase since 1962.

The current population of Monrovia is 1,010,970. Of these 519,085 are male and 491,083 female (2008 Preliminary Census Results). The city of Monrovia has the highest population of any urban district in the country. There is a huge gap between the population of Monrovia and that of Ganta, which is the second most populated city with

a population of 41,106 inhabitants. These statistics support the general hypothesis of rural migration into urban cities.

The role of the recent civil war in the growth of the population of Monrovia cannot be ignored. At the peak of the civil there was a mass exodus from the rural areas into urban cities - mainly Monrovia - as these were considered to be safer. It has been suggested that the population of Monrovia rose to nearly one and a half million during the civil war. In Monrovia, the area with the highest population density traditionally lay along the coast, in particular areas with a high incidence of economic activity. This was a privileged area for industrial development during Monrovia's era of economic boon in the 1970s. Most of those who migrated into the capital from rural areas were attracted by the desire to get good jobs and benefit from the concentration of infrastructure in the capital such as better healthcare facilities, schools, stadiums and the resulting improvement to their general living conditions.

Another factor that should be taken into consideration when considering the increase in the number of people currently living in Monrovia is the migration of those from overseas into Monrovia. It seems that that number of such migrants is relatively low in comparison to those who have moved into Monrovia as a result of internal migration. It is also true that this group of migrants can usually afford to access decent homes in the private sector, however, the resulting drain on the already limited infrastructure within Monrovia should not be ignored.

3.4 Water and Sanitation in Monrovia

This sector presents a number of challenges not only in its governance structure but also relating to how it is delivered and the resources available. Its current governing structure is fragmented. Key players in the delivery of water and sanitation in Monrovia are; The Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy, The Ministry of Public Works, The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, The Environmental Protection Agency, municipal and local governments and the Liberia Water and Sewer Corporation (LWSC) The LRDS has already indicated that it will give priority to the implementation of the water and sanitation components of the PRSP, this includes assistance with the development of appropriate governance mechanisms and procedures.

Monrovia's water supply has declined over the years. The current water supply in Monrovia is estimated to be 15 liters per capita per day. (2008, V Haraprasad, Assessment of the Water and Sanitation Sector in Liberia).

4 Needs Assessment

As is expected a detailed needs assessment of the five slum settlements selected for this exercise had be carried out. It has already been mentioned earlier in this report that the five settlements were chosen for this exercise by virtue of being the ones referred to in Chapter 9 of Liberia's PRSP document. [

Various meetings were held within these five communities concerning the project. These were not only limited to community leaders and representatives from the various organisations. All interested residents were also invited to these meetings. There was no selection criteria for attendance or participation at these meetings, all residents had the opportunity of attending and participating in such meetings. Pre determined pointers for discussions were used in all of these meetings. The advantage of this is that it guides the topic for discussions thereby ensuring that the most important points and issues are not only covered but that the views of the attendants are also canvassed on the existing conditions and how that can be improved.

4.1 West Point Settlement

West Point is a very vibrant community located along the port of Monrovia. The residents believe that the actual number of people living in Westpoint is higher than the official figures as per the last census. In their opinion the actual number of people living in the community is around 75,000. According to the information produced as part of the Population and Household Census 2008, Westpoint has 5,600 households and a population of 29,120 residents. The community leaders have explained the discrepancy in figures as due to a deliberate act of some of the residents not wanting to take part in the census.



Plate 4: Consultative Meeting at West Point

There are a number of organisations operating within the community such as youth groups, women's group, elderly groups and the West Point Commission which is the

local governing organisation within the community. Most of the residents at West Point are Christians. This is not unusual as Liberia is a predominantly Christian country. The dominant ethnic group in West Point is the Kru, other tribes that can be found within the community are the Lorma, Vai, Greebo, Kissi, Kpelle and Mende. It has a really good community feel. The residents are very proud of their community and there is a general sense of belonging. This is an invaluable asset that should be taken into consideration in terms of the upgrading process. It means that the residents will be able to take ownership and drive the various projects, an aspect which is important in ensuring the success of the programme.

The land on which the community is located is owned by the government. The community has been granted a Squatters Right Licence by Monrovia City Corporation. This only gives a limited right of occupation at the will of the government. They can be evicted from the land at any time if the government chooses to do so.

Basic Services and Infrastructure

4.1.1 Electricity

Electricity is provided by The Liberia Power Authority. Residents who can afford to have connections to these mains. Most of the residents are unable to afford the cost of these. There is a degree of street lighting although some residents do not think this is adequate. However, it makes the settlement feel a lot safer in comparison to others that do not have street lighting. Others use generators or kerosene lamps and candles. Electricity is not used for cooking. Local cooking stoves fuelled by wood or coal are the main sources for cooking. This presents the risk of fire especially when used in enclosed spaces and along very narrow alleyways, as is often the case.

4.1.2 Water and Sanitation

Direct access to clean drinking water has been identified as one of the main challenges faced by residents at West Point. There are no communal stand-pipes. The main water pipes were destroyed when the bridge collapsed in November 2006. This means that even residents who can afford the costs are unable to have private standing taps. Residents buy drinking water at a price of between \$15 – 25 Liberian dollars per five gallons. There are a number of communal wells within WestPoint, however two thirds of these are not in working order or the water is contaminated. Such water is only used for cleaning, cooking and laundering.

The World Bank has provided funding to support the rehabilitation of the bridge referred to above. The possibility of having the pipe works incorporated into this project should be explored further as this would be a cost effective way of resolving this problem.

West Point has a domestic sewer network. It has a somewhat elaborate network of communal toilets. Although these are inadequate as far as being able to meet the demand for their use, it has the highest number of communal toilets of all the five slum settlements that are part of this study. This settlement has four blocks of toilets containing a total of 32 toilets and 28 washing units used for having showers. The toilets

are managed by the local cooperative society that currently employs 7 staff. There is a charge of 5.00 Liberian dollars per use. It is worth noting that a number of the residents do not use the toilets for a number of reasons. These include, the time they are expected to wait for the units to become available, closeness to their homes and especially for the women hygiene and the risk of contracting infections.

The general perception among residents is that the cost is not much of an issue. This means that the residents are already used to the idea of paying for essential services and would make cost recovery of future improvements viable. Some residents defecate along the seashore, in open areas or in carrier bags along the alleys. Poor water supplies and the insufficient use of sanitation systems result in poor hygiene. West Point has been identified as one of the areas in Monrovia with a high rate of cholera incidents. Oxfam is currently undertaking a cholera prevention program there. This is mainly done through the country health service. This is an acute problem and it is therefore recommended that an awareness program focusing on links between such practices as “flying toilets” and diseases such as typhoid, malaria and tuberculosis should be embarked upon as part of the improvement program.

4.1.3 Solid Waste

Solid waste collection within West Point is no longer carried out by Monrovia City Corporation. This is now being carried out by the West Point Sanitation team, who operate from the office of the Commissioner. There is a daily charge for this service of 5.00 Liberian dollars per bucket of rubbish. One of the major constraints is the lack of a skip. They have to use carts which do not take much of the rubbish and then take it to the dumpsite. The problem with having a skip located within the community is that the rubbish truck will not be able to reach the location of the skip due to limited access.

Some of the residents use the beach as a dumpsite for disposal of their rubbish. This has serious environment implications caused by the resulting pollution. The current sensitization project that is being carried out by The Foundation for International Dignity (FIND) can be stepped up emphasizing not only the proper methods of rubbish disposal but also the consequences of rubbish not being disposed of appropriately.

4.1.4 Roads

The main roads within the community are in desperate need of being rehabilitated. They are only accessible to vehicles up to a certain point and thereafter only by motor bikes. There are no properly laid out side roads, the alley ways that are supposed to provide filter access are not properly laid out and most of them have had buildings constructed on them thereby obstructing access. This presents a serious risk in cases of emergency.

The Women’s Organization used to do voluntary, street cleaning and rubbish collection within the community from time to time. This was a very successful initiative that seems

to have lost momentum. The fact that they were not being paid for this service seems to be the main reason why this has been discontinued.

The Women's Organization within West Point is a credible and viable organization with a proven track record in the implementation of small projects. It is very important that the capacity of this organization is further developed, so that they are able to bid for provision and management of services resulting in the improvement program.

By way of a recommendation, it is possible to link the rehabilitation of the main roads in this community to the current program of roads rehabilitation in Monrovia that is being funded by The World Bank.

4.1.5 Drainage

West Point does have a covered drainage system. However, the drains do not currently function effectively due to them being constantly blocked. Another contributory factor to this problem is the fact that some of them have had structures constructed on them, this does not only block them but also makes it impossible to clear them out. During the dry season the drains are easily blocked and there is a constant overflow of rubbish and other waste products along the roads and alleys, in the rains this result in serious flooding of the roads.

Responsibility for the drainage system lies with both the Monrovia City Corporation and The Ministry of Public Works.

4.1.6 Schools

There are a number of primary schools within West Point or located in its immediate vicinity. These are not only limited to government schools, but also include private schools. There are no government secondary schools and children have to travel for between 30 minutes to 2 hours to make the journey to secondary schools.

4.1.7 Markets

West Point has three open markets. Most of the residents use these to sell their goods or to purchase food and other household essentials. The open plan layout of the markets does not present much of a problem in the dry season. However, during the rainy season this causes a lot of inconvenience for the traders and customers alike. This is particularly worsened by the lack of adequate drainage facilities.

The provision of a covered market area should be considered as part of the upgrading / improvement program.

4.1.8 Healthcare

There is a healthcare centre at West Point. In addition to this residents normally use Redemption Hospital or the health centre at Sonewein. This is already oversubscribed and causes a further strain on their very limited resources.

Residents complain of the adequacy of the existing health centre, the improvement of the health centre should be considered as part of the improvement program.

4.1.9 Recreational Activities/Facilities

West Point does not have any communal recreational facilities. Children usually play in the streets or out of the community. Clara Town has a community centre.

4.1.10 Current/Past Interventions

- ILO garbage collection
- OXFAM upgrading of schools
- RED CROSS garbage collection
- IOM waste collection
- IRC children's feeding
- RTP sports
- ZOA integration of refugees
- SCODES cholera prevention

4.2 Clara Town

Clara Town is a large slum settlement to the south of Monrovia. The community leaders estimate the population of the settlement to be in the region of 75,000. Interestingly the census data is much lower. According to the 2008 census data, Clara Town which includes Joe Town has 3,400 households and a population of 17, 680 inhabitants. Clara Town is located along the slums and has been in existence as a low-income dormitory settlement for over 100 years. Most of the residents were born there and have lived there for all their lives. There is, therefore, a strong sense of belonging to the community by the residents. It seems that its closeness to Monrovia town centre and its easy access to other places have contributed to it becoming a very popular settlement for low-income earners. Vai is the main ethnic tribe of the residents at Clara Town, this is followed by Grebo.

The land on which this settlement is located is owned by the government. Some of the land is now being claimed by individuals who lease out the housing units they have erected on the land. Most of the residents are tenants. The residents are engaged in a

range of economic activities. A small amount of them are professionals such as drivers, teachers and civil servants. A large proportion of them are engaged in small business such as petty trading. The women are mainly housewives.

Although there is a “susu”¹, there is no micro finance credit organisation. Satalite used to operate a micro-finance savings club within the community but the general perception is that this was very expensive and most of the residents therefore considered this to be out of their reach.

The provision of additional income-generating activities should be factored into the improvement program. In some areas micro-finance credit has been the main source by which unemployed women have been able to raise the necessary capital to start up their own businesses.

Basic Services and Infrastructure

4.2.1 Electricity

Main line connections are available in this area and the residents who can afford it have connections to the mains. Those are unable to afford the costs use generators or lamps and candles. There are no street lights, this makes the place very unsafe especially in the evenings and at night. This is of particular concern to women and the elderly.

The installation of communal lighting in the settlement should be given priority as part of the improvement program.

4.2.2 Water and Sanitation

Clara Town does have access to pipe-borne water. There are 10 private pipes from which residents usually buy clean drinking water. This costs 10 Liberian dollars for 5 gallons. Interestingly, unlike other areas the price of water does not increase during period of high demand. Concern, an international NGO, is currently in the process of installing 22 communal water taps. These should be fully functional by April 2009.

There are communal toilets in Clara Town. In total there are 88 units of toilets contained in 8 separate blocks. However most of these were destroyed during the war and no longer functional. The public toilets are managed by the community management team who charge 5 Liberian dollars per visit. Some residents feel that these are not very effectively managed. The community management team however feel that the reason why the general management of the toilet is not as good as it should be is due to the low level of income the service generates. There is a general unwillingness of the public to pay, preferring instead to use “flying toilets”.

¹ A “susu” is a form of savings club which is popular in much of Africa and the Caribbean. Members all pay an amount into the “bank” per week or per month. One member per week or per month takes the entire credit for that occasion. The next week/month, another member benefits and so on.

An increase in the number of toilets should be considered as part of the improvement program. This service should also be competitively tendered.

4.2.3 Solid Waste

Solid waste collection in Clara Town is done by the Community Waste Disposal Enterprise. This is a private company initially funded as part of the World Bank solid waste project. The team was trained by the International Labour Organisation. One of the setbacks faced by the disposal team is the limited number of skips available. Initially there were three skips, this is now down to one. The length of time it takes for the skip to be emptied also creates a further problem. Initially this was done within 2 weeks, currently the turn-over time is up to about six weeks. The cleaning of the public area in Clara Town is the responsibility of Monrovia City Corporation. Generally residents are not satisfied with standard of this service. There is a general feeling of discontent over the way in which the contract was awarded. Residents feel that it would have been more appropriate for a local firm to have been awarded the contract. This would have been an opportunity to create employment and boost the local economy.

4.2.4 Roads

As is common in all slum settlements the main road is in a very bad condition. It has a lot of potholes and is not properly laid. The alleyways that branch off the main roads are mainly inaccessible and provide very limited access.

4.2.5 Drainage

The drainage system in Clara Town is not only inadequate in terms of its size but is also inefficient. The drains are all clogged up by rubbish and some of its surface area has been encroached up, blocking the flow of water further. The drains have never been properly laid out and have not been concreted. This in itself is another cause of the blockages, as the earth falls into the drains.

The drainage system is one of the most pressing issues that have to be looked into further as part of the improvement program.

4.2.6 Schools

There is one government primary school in Clara Town; all the others are private schools. There is no government secondary school there. Though not within the community, the other schools are within easy reach by public transport.

4.2.7 Markets

There is one main covered market within the community. Outdoor trading in the streets is very common.

4.2.8 Healthcare

There is one fully functioning health centre within the community. Redemption Hospital is within easy access and is also used by the residents.

4.2.9 Recreational Facilities

There are no recreational facilities at Clara Town. The children play out on the streets. There is a community centre at Clara Town.

4.2.10 Current / Past Interventions

- ILO garbage collection
- World Bank garbage collection
- MSF health clinic
- Concern drinking water upgrade

4.3 Logan Town

Logan Town is located immediately across the Gabriel Johnson Tucker Bridge, on swamp land. It is one of the largest slum settlements in Monrovia. It is also one of the oldest settlements in Monrovia dating back to 1839 - the year King Peter was born. It is made up of ten different communities, these are: Jamaica Town, Sagon Town, Blamah Town, Little White Chapel, Central Logan Town, Zbondi Town, King Peter Town, Vicky Spot, Gbi Town and Gbabowin Community. Over 80% of the residents are Christians, followed by Muslims. Unlike the other settlements that form part of this study there is not a general sense of belonging to the larger community by the residents. This can probably be explained by the size of the settlement and the fact that residents see themselves as belonging to the various sub-communities rather than the community as a whole. Residents expressed a general feeling of not being safe within the community.

There is definitely room for some community development initiatives within Logan Town settlement. The sub-communities should be used as a focal point rather than trying to use the general community structure. It is very likely that the needs of the residents may vary depending on the sub-community they belong to.

Basic Services and Infrastructure

4.3.1 Electricity

The current electricity mains network has not got as far as Logan Town. For this reason, the facility to have communal street lights or private electricity is not available. The use of generators is the main source of electricity for those who can afford the costs and for the majority, who are unable to afford generators, the use of lamps and candles are very

common. People generally do not feel safe being out at night as the area as a whole is “pitch dark”.

The extension of electricity mains to Logan Town should be given priority. It is also recommended that the installation of communal lighting as part of this exercise should be considered.

4.3.2 Water and Sanitation

There are less than five communal standing pipes in the whole of the community. There are water mains in the area and private homes that can afford it are connected to LWSC. Some of the residents have cited the costs of paying for such services and purchasing the relevant materials as the main reasons why they have not been able to make use of this service. It is quite possible that most of the residents spend a similar amount purchasing water over the year but are able to afford this due to the cost being spread out over a period of time.

Residents pay a standard price of 5.00 Liberian dollars for a 5 gallon container of water. This is generally used for cooking and drinking. Well water can also be purchased privately at a cost of 5.00 Liberian dollars for two buckets. There are no communal wells in Logan Town. The price of water in Logan Town is the cheapest in comparison to all the other settlements.

The availability of water does not seem to be an acute problem in Logan Town. It can be purchased relatively cheaply within the community. It is very unlikely that these costs can be easily matched by any new project aimed at increasing the availability of water in this area.

In factoring affordability into the improvement, it is necessary to bear in mind that residents can afford to pay for expensive services if the cost is spread over a period of time.

Sanitation presents a less optimistic picture in Logan Town. There are no community toilets. A few of around 5% of the residents have private toilets. This means that the remaining 95% either use the swamp land or use “flying toilets”.

Sanitation is probably the most pressing issue that needs to be addressed as far as the needs of Logan Town community is concerned.

4.3.3 Solid Waste

Solid waste collection at Logan Town is done by two separate private companies within the community. There is a weekly charge of 25 Liberian dollars for this service. The company representatives at the consultation meetings expressed their dissatisfaction of the general reluctance of a high number of the residents to use this service. Some of the residents who do not use this service take their rubbish to the rubbish disposal site

themselves whereas others fly tip their rubbish within the community. Clean Liberia was trained by the ILO and were initially responsible for the collection and management of solid waste within the community, however funding for this organisation has since ceased and it is therefore no longer in operation.

The sensitization of Logan Town community on the importance of proper waste disposal methods should be done before the start of any improvement or upgrading exercise within this community.

It is worth exploring the possibility of having functions that encourage healthy competitive programs within the community. This would be an excellent opportunity to break down the existing barriers within the various communities. It would also encourage the various community groups and members to take ownership of their individual communities and their services - this would be of great benefit to the Logan Town community as a whole.

4.3.4 Roads

The main access road into Logan Town is in very bad condition. This is particularly severe in the rainy season when it is liable to flood. There are no properly laid down alleys and structures have been constructed along some of the alleyways.

The rehabilitation of the main road into the settlement can be incorporated into the current Monrovia Roads Program. It frequently gets blocked by earth and rubbish.

4.3.5 Drainage

Like Clara Town, the drainage system in Logan Town has not been constructed with the use of concrete. In the rainy season it overflows very easily. There are cases of houses being built on the drains thereby obstructing the flow of water. In some cases the drains pass through private land and access to carry out the necessary maintenance and repairs is usually denied.

It is possible that the costs of laying out a new and effective drainage in Logan Town can be met from the Liberia Community Infrastructure Program.

4.3.6 Schools

There is one community primary school in Logan Town, a Junior High School, and a number of private primary schools. Generally the focus group within Logan Town community felt that there is a need for the establishment of an adult literacy education school and a vocational institute within the settlement.

The establishment of a vocational institute within the community would be a very good social investment. This would enable the participants to acquire the necessary skills that can be used to embark on income-generating activities. This in turn means that they will be able to pay for some if not all of the services that are part of the improvement program.

4.3.7 Markets

Logan Town has one indoor market. It is common for trading activities to be carried out in the streets and along the alleyways.

Most of the residents are either casual labourers or petty traders. Most of the women are not engaged in any economic activities.

4.3.8 Healthcare

Logan Town does not have a community health centre. The nearest hospital is The Redemption Hospital.

The construction of a healthcare centre within Logan Town community should be given priority as part of the improvement program. There is an unfinished building close to the community that was in the process of being developed into a hospital before the war. It is possible that this can be purchased and used as the health centre. This would deal with the problem of being unable to find a suitable site within the settlement for the construction of a health centre.

4.3.9 Recreational Facilities

Logan Town does not have a community centre. The primary school building is used as one however this provides inadequate facilities due to its size. Also it can only be used at weekends or during school holidays for obvious reasons.

There are no recreational facilities within the community. The children play on the streets, use the school compound or make use of a nearby play facility.

4.3.10 Current / Past Interventions

- Clean Liberia a private company that was funded by the International Labour Organisation are engaged in waste collection within Logan Town.
- There is a playground at Stockon Creek that is used by the children in the community.
- Prior to the war the building site at King Tom was identified for the building of a community health centre but this was abandoned as a result of the war.

4.4 Sonewein

Sonewein is a large slum settlement situated in central Monrovia. It is in the heart of Monrovia's commercial centre and very close to the stadium, several of the government ministries and has a good network of public transport. It is a settlement that has been in existence for at least 100 years. The dominant tribe in Sonewein is Bassa and over 90% of the residents are Christians. There is a strong feel of good community relations within Sonewein to some extent. There is not a women's group in Sonewein there is no female representation as far as the management of the community is concerned. The women expressed dissatisfaction about this and they feel they are being kept out of the management team by the men. This accounted for a lack of willingness by the women to participate in the consultative meetings.

Most of the inhabitants of Sonewein community are tenants. It is believed that the land is mainly privately owned. The average rent is 10.00 US dollars for a room per month.

Most of the residents were born in Sonewein and have lived there all of their lives.

The gender department of MCC could be involved in efforts aimed at empowering women to take leadership roles within their communities. West Point Women's Group is a model of organisation that can be followed.

Basic Services and Infrastructure

4.4.1 Electricity

The most common form of electricity is by generators for those who can afford the costs. Liberia Electricity Corporation does not have plant in the area and so private electricity from LEC is not available. There is no communal street lighting. The community is very dark in the night and vulnerable members of the community particularly are afraid to be at night.

The inclusion of Sonewein in LEC's current program of works would be a very cost effective way of dealing with this current situation.

4.4.2 Water and Sanitation

There are communal pipes in Sonewein, however none of them are functional at the moment as they got damaged during the war. There are no communal wells and water has to be bought privately at a cost of 10.00 Liberian dollars for a 5 gallon container. Some individuals have had private wells installed in their compounds. This is however not a realistic option for most of the residents who are tenants. Some private homes also

have pipe water installed by LSWC. Residents only have to buy water during the dry season.

The rehabilitation of the water distribution in Sonewein can be included in LSWC's future program of works.

There are about 7 blocks of communal toilets in Sonewein. The cost of making use of this facility is 5.00 Liberian dollars for 3 visits. Most of the residents do use them. However these toilets close at 10.00pm. This means that after this time residents are forced to make use of flying toilets. The toilets are managed by the community leaders. The men are generally satisfied with how it is managed. The women however, not think the toilets are cleaned to a high standard.

4.4.3 Solid Waste

There is a rubbish clearance service that is carried out by the community management team. This not very commonly used and the team charges 25.00 Liberian dollars per week for door to door household collection.

4.4.4 Roads

The main road leading onto the settlement is in poor state of disrepair. Houses have been constructed along the alleys in an unplanned manner. The problem of vehicular access along the road is further worsened by the practice of traders having their goods displayed on the roads.

4.4.5 Drainage

Sonewein has a large open drainage system that runs through the settlement. This presents a very serious problem for the whole community but especially so for those living close to the toilets. Residents do not use the dumpsite but instead use the drains to dump their rubbish. The residents also feel that people from other communities bring in their rubbish and dump it in the drains. There is also a general concern that the dumpsite is located too close to the clinic and the drains.

4.4.6 Schools

There are four primary schools within the community. The community centre now houses one of the primary schools. The nearest secondary school which most of the children in the community attend is only 20 minutes away.

There are no adult vocational facilities in the community. Members of the community who can afford to pay to use the private vocational schools in Logan Town or George Town.

4.4.7 Markets

There is a very big market in Sonewein and the streets are used as open markets. Most of the women are engaged in “sell pay”. There are various susu clubs but no micro-credit organisations in operation within the community.

4.4.8 Healthcare

Sonewein has a health clinic. There is a general concern that the resources of the community are over-stretched due to the size of the community. The staff at the health centre cited lack of essentials such as drugs and the location of the dump site as one of the major setbacks they face in carrying out their duties.

4.4.9 Recreational Facilities

There are no forms of recreational facilities in Sonewein; children play on the streets.

4.4.10 Current / Past Interventions

- The market in Sonewein has upgraded as a result of a World Bank sponsored programme.
- There are communal toilets that were also part of an upgrading programme.
- The health centre was also funded by the World Bank.

4.5 Randell Street / South Beach



Plate 5 Attendance List being completed at South Beach Consultative Meeting

Randell Street, also known as Salt Beach, is the smallest of all the slum communities covered in this document. The population is likely to be under 2,000. It is a relatively new settlement. It seems it has not been part of any previous upgrading or improvement program. This is probably due to its size and the fact that it is relatively new compared to the other four who have all in one way or the other benefited from previous upgrading or improvement programs.

Randell Street lies along the seashore. It is very clear that it is occupied by some of the poorest urban dwellers in Monrovia. Unlike other settlements that show signs of some amounts of money being invested in enhancing the physical appearance of the buildings, all the buildings at Salt Beach are, more or less, of the same very poor quality. There is not a single dwelling unit that has been constructed with sand and cement. All the units are either made from very poor quality zinc or in some cases less durable material such as rice bags.

Most of the inhabitants are Christians and the ethnic composition is that of all the main tribes in Liberia.

Basic Services and Infrastructure

4.5.1 Electricity

Although LEC has mains in the area, none of the residents are connected to LEC or have generators. They mainly use lamps and candles. There is no street lighting within the community.

The fact that none of the residents have generators can be explained by two reasons. Firstly this may be due to the fact that there isn't a local market within the community and therefore no economic reason for them investing in generators. Another reason can be the fact that the residents are so poor and cannot afford the cost of buying and running a generator.

4.5.2 Water and Sanitation

There are no communal or private pipe water taps within the settlement. There are no wells also, this is likely to be due to the soil being sandy. Residents have to travel about a kilometre to buy water from kiosks for between 15 – 20 Liberian dollars per five gallons. Water is not readily available for sale within the community and residents have to go out and buy it.

The picture in relation to sanitation is just as grim. There are no private or communal toilets within the community. The beach is not an acceptable site for the disposal of bodily waste within the community.

4.5.3 Solid Waste

There is a skip available about 5km from the community. This is however not regularly emptied and is left to overflow for several weeks. This skip is part of a World Bank community program on the management of solid waste in Monrovia. It is very clear that a substantial amount of rubbish generated by the community is simply dumped along the beach.

4.5.4 Roads

There are no properly laid down roads or alleyways within the settlement.

4.5.5 Drainage

There are no drainage facilities as the settlement is located on sandy land.

4.5.6 Schools

There are no primary or secondary schools within the settlement. Government schools and facilities are however located about 30 minutes away which the local children use.

4.5.7 Markets

There is not a market within the settlement, however there is one about 15 minutes away that the residents of Randell Street are able to use.

There is no micro-credit facility within Randell Street.

4.5.8 Healthcare

There is no health centre within the community. The clinic in Sonewein, which is about 20 minutes away, is mainly used by the residents to access medical assistance.

4.5.9 Recreational Facilities

None within the settlement the children either play along the beach or on the main road.

4.5.10 Current / Past Interventions

There do not seem to have been any NGO or INGO interventions in this settlement.

The residents have suggested that about four years ago government officials knocked down about 200 housing units as a means of destroying the illegal occupation of the land which is mainly owned by the government. This also explains why the settlement is so small.

4.6 Qualitative Indicators as to the Size of the Problem

Informal settlements are urban areas that grow constantly, that do not offer to their residents the minimum acceptable life conditions (basic human needs), in spite of which there are attractive aspects which draw residents; above all else what concerns them are suitable, low-cost locations in relation to jobs and service centers. Conditions in slums involve a complex of different matters and should be studied and solved with a combination of different strategies.

The most obvious aspects requiring attention and corrective measures are:

- The occupation of inappropriate sites with the risk of flooding and mudslides;
- Weak integration into the city's urban structure, road system or the topography of the land;
- Lack of basic infrastructure (water, sanitation, electricity and public lighting, solid waste removal, communications, roads and an adequate road network, drainage);
- High population occupation density;
- Poor quality construction;
- Limited social integration that denies the residents their rights of citizenship;
- Absence of organized public spaces and insufficient social services: schools, medical services, markets, organized trade, public administration, police, leisure equipment, adequate and dignified religious buildings, no sporting and cultural equipment etc.

- No security with regard to occupation of the land;
- Ignorance of the inhabitants of their legal rights and the mechanisms they can use to defend their rights;
- No access to credit;
- Distance (psychological and physical) from the municipal authorities;
- Lack of community spirit and motivation for community initiatives;
- Crime and illegal activities that very little or control is exercised over.

Although not all these conditions exist in all informal settlements nor to the same extent and incidence, they are problems that must be taken into account when conceiving an intervention strategy for slum upgrading.

5. Interventions

5.1 By the Government of Liberia

Liberia, like many developing countries, has ceased to be involved in the direct provision of low income housing units. Rather than being a direct provider, the government now sees itself as a facilitator in this area. Liberia does not have a ministerial Department of Housing. There are a number of agencies responsible for housing-related services and it is sometimes difficult to see exactly who does what, also some roles tend to overlap.

Chapter Nine of The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper details the Government of Liberia's future plans on the rehabilitation of infrastructure and the delivering of essential services, including housing. This in turn would lead to growth and the reduction of poverty in the country as a whole. It is estimated that around 80% of the pre-war housing stock was destroyed during the war or still remains in a serious state of disrepair (PRSP).

The government of Liberia has never been very active in the direct provision of low-income housing. At its peak, Liberia had social housing units of around 1,700 constructed on four estates. The housing units of three of the four estates have been sold to existing tenants under the Right to Buy scheme. This has produced capital receipts for the government and has also discharged the government of its obligation to repair which was proving to be very expensive.

The National Housing and Savings Bank, which was the main institution with the primary function of providing housing finance, collapsed about 5 years ago. The government has indicated the use of alternatives such as the use of micro-finance - one of the sources by which those in housing needs can access housing finance. Other initiatives mentioned in the PRSP to facilitate the housing market are;

- The development of mortgage finance, including the reform of the foreclosure laws and practices.
- The compulsory registration of properties on a centrally managed property register.
- The establishment of a credit reference agency
- The introduction of legislation and codes of practice that deter land speculation.

- The formulation of a National Housing Policy and a Shelter Implementation Strategy.

It is fair to say that the above policies are much needed to boost the housing economy in Liberia. However, it is difficult to see how these policies can be useful in addressing the housing needs of current and future slum dwellers. Some of these policies would create further barriers to the urban poor in accessing housing finance, for example: the use of credit reference agencies. The result of such policies may lead to the further development of slum settlements in and around Monrovia.

Table 1 : Key Players in Housing Related Services in Liberia

Ministry/Agency	Main Urban Functions
Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs	The coordination of formulation, preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the National Development Plan, promotes regional development planning. Accredits NGOs and serves as the national statistics centre.
Ministry of Internal Affairs	The supervision of the management of all governmental structures, in terms of budget allocation, policies, appointments and training.
Ministry of Public Works	The construction and maintenance of all primary and secondary roads, the coordination of civil works, zoning and physical planning.
The National Housing Authority	Deals with urban planning issues, the development of site and services, the building and management of estates.
Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy	Conducting surveys, development of land and natural resources policies and the provision of management and administrative services to the land, mining and energy sector.
Environmental Protection Agency	Promulgates environmental laws, formulation and implementation of policies and regulations for urban and rural areas.
Ministry of Youths and Sports	The development, coordination and implementation of programmes and the development of national youth policies.
Liberia Institute of Public Administration	The development of training modules and conduct of public sector training.

5.2 By the Public

The general public has responded in a number of ways in trying to solve the housing need of those on low income in urban areas. Some people, who can afford to, make housing provisions for friends and extended family members.

Some employers in the domestic sector continue to provide tied accommodation for low income staff members and their families, including security and domestic staff. The provision of such housing is a way of subsidising their very low income.

Perhaps, the development and growth in slum settlement is the most obvious way in which the poor have tried to address their housing need in Monrovia. Unless the government of Liberia embarks on a clear and concerted policy agenda aimed at addressing the housing needs of the urban poor, slum settlements will continue to increase.

5.3 By Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) & International NGOs

There are hardly any NGOs or INGOs operating in Liberia engaged in the direct provision of low income housing. There are a number of reasons for this policy, the main one being the fact that housing is a capital-intensive exercise requiring a high amount of investment that is not usually recoverable in the prevailing circumstances.

There are, however, a number of NGOs and INGOs operating in Monrovia that provide funding for housing-related essential services in low-income communities. These include; The World Bank, UNDP, EC, Concern, Right to Play, UNICEF, Tear Fund, ADB, MSF, JICA, Oxfam, Goal ZOA, DFID and GTZ. The type of services funded by the above organisations include: water and sanitation, health facilities, community development initiatives, micro-finance and solid waste. These go a long way to alleviate the conditions and it is hard to imagine what life in these low income communities would be like without the intervention of these organisations. It should also be noted that these organisations do not work on their own, they often work in partnership with the government or its agencies and rely on the support and assistance they receive from the government in being able to successfully implement their programs.

5.3.1 Future NGO/INGO Interventions

In deciding the most cost effective way in which the recommendations of this report can be implemented a number of organisations have been consulted. One of the reasons for such consultation is to find out their future programs with a view of assessing how this fits in with any or some of the recommendations.

5.4 The Private Sector

In assessing the intervention of the private sector in housing, one must look at this from both the upper and lower end of the market.

The main players at the upper end of the market are the banks, finance institutions, property developers and estate agents. The above groups have been rather successful in addressing the housing needs of high-income earners. High-income earners possess the necessary collateral needed to secure loans from the banks which low-income earners do not have. High-income earners are also in a position to be able to afford the costs of buying or renting decent homes, with the availability of all the necessary essential homes in the private market.

Slum landlords, or “Slumlords”, are the most significant figures as far as intervention in the lower end of the market is concerned. Most of the houses in slum settlements are occupied by tenants paying monthly rent in US dollars to slumlords. These slumlords themselves in most cases have no legal claim to the land; such lands have usually been acquired through squatting. In some cases the slumlords bank land along the swampy areas and then lease them out to prospective tenants. It is true to say that this group has been the most active group in addressing the housing needs of the urban poor. However this group is allowed to operate without any regulation or control.

6 Reasons for the Development of Slums in Monrovia

The development and growth of slums in Monrovia is a very complex issue. There are a number of underlying factors that have contributed to this. These include political, legal, social and economic issues. It is unlikely that any solutions to this challenge would work unless each of the factors is examined in some detail.

6.1 Political Factors

6.1.1 Lack of Investment in the Provision of Low Income Housing

One of the key political reasons that has given rise to the development and growth of slums in Monrovia is the low level of investment in low income housing by the government. In the 1970s and 1980s the government of Liberia did embark on a policy of addressing the housing need of low income earners in the city by the direct provision of low-income housing estates. As mentioned earlier in this report most of these housing units have since been sold off to existing tenants who are now owner occupiers. These units were sold off to the tenants at a discount, taking into account the length of time they have lived at the properties. Some of the tenants have moved onwards since acquiring these properties and have either sold off or rent these properties at market value.

At the peak of its development activities, there were 1,659 low income housing units in Monrovia; these were in four estates namely Cabral Estate, Stephen Tolbert Estate, Goodridge Estate and New Georgia Estate Only the housing units at Old Natali and New Natali estates have not been sold to the existing tenants.

Table 2: Low Income Housing Estates in Monrovia and the Number of Units

Estate	Number of Housing Units
New Kru Town	25
Cabral Estate	72
Stephen Tolbert Estate	442
Goodridge Estate	604
New Georgia Estate	253
Old Natadi	191
New Natadi	72

55 new housing units were added to the existing figures in the early 1980s. It can be easily seen that the number of housing units in quantitative terms was very low. The demand for these houses by the urban poor far outweighed the supply. This situation is not going to improve as the National Housing Authority currently does not have a budget for the construction of low-income housing.

It should be noted that the site and service estate in New Georgia West has not been included in the above statistics. Under this scheme, those who can afford to build their own homes are provided with land and access to basic services. They usually then use their own savings or secure loans to finance their building project.

6.1.2 Low Level of Service Delivery of Housing Related Services

The poor provision and maintenance of housing-related infrastructure has contributed to the development and growth of slums in Monrovia. The percentage of infrastructure that is still in use since the initial installation has gradually declined over the years. This is particularly the case in relation to water. Most of the initial pipes that were installed have since corroded and are no longer in use. It is a similar story in relation to the drains; most of the drains are either blocked or simply unable to cope with the current level of use. The state of both the primary and secondary roads is another example that springs to mind. Most of the roads in Monrovia are in a very poor state of disrepair; littered with potholes, they are particularly bad in the rainy season and in some cases inaccessible during the rains.

6.2 Economic Factors

6.2.1 Low Wages and Unemployment

The average wage in Liberia is 70 US dollars per month. Most of the urban poor do not even earn up to this amount, they are therefore unable to afford decent homes in the city. In Monrovia rents are particularly high. The prices of houses are normally quoted in US dollars. A decent two bedroom apartment with access to water, adequate sanitation and electricity costs at least 60.00 US dollars per calendar month. As with other commodities the price is determined by supply and demand. There are far too many people chasing too few decent homes in Monrovia, landlords are therefore able to charge very high rents and find it relatively easy to find people who are willing to pay such prices.

It is clear from the above figures that those on low wages and the unemployed living in Monrovia are unable to afford decent homes and therefore have to revert to living in slum settlements or in slum conditions in Monrovia.

6.3 Social Factors

6.3.1 The Civil War

The civil war in Liberia lasted for almost 15 years and caused widespread destruction in terms of infrastructure within the country, including Monrovia. Apart from the destruction there was also stagnation in terms of maintenance of existing infrastructure and an increase in the use of these due to the internal migration into Monrovia. The main sewage system, initially built for a population of 400, was destroyed during the war. (Liberia Settlement and Shelter Rehabilitation Programme 2006 – 2010).

6.3.2 Trend to Move to Cities

The attraction into cities of those from rural communities is a general world wide trend. Liberians from the rural area would like to move into cities in search of perceived better living conditions. In reality this might not be the case. Unemployment is already high in Monrovia. The jobs that the unskilled from the rural areas are able to find, once in Monrovia, are usually low paid manual jobs in the informal sector. Working in the informal sector means no access to medical facilities, no paid holidays and a high risk of losing their jobs after being off work for a few days due to illness or family matters.

6.4 Legal Factors

6.4.1 Land Tenure in Liberia

Liberia, like most countries in Africa, has a system of multiple land tenures. In Monrovia, which has the most valuable land, the land is regulated by the state. The land ownership system in the rural areas is mainly governed by customary law. Under customary law, land is mainly communally owned. However customary law cannot currently be registered for this reason. There have been renewed calls for lands owned customarily to be registered as private property. This means that the owners of such property are entitled to full compensation if such land is compulsorily acquired by the government.

Land in and around Monrovia is mainly governed by statutory tenure. Historically this was established following the arrival of settlers from America about two hundred years ago.

6.4.2 Land Dispute Enforcement

The current procedure of enforcing land dispute in Liberia is outdated. Land disputes are notorious for clogging the civil legal system. It is reported that 90% of the cases in Liberia's civil courts are land-related.

6.4.3 Lack of Access to Land by the Poor

The poor can only access land for cultivation, commerce or housing through inheritance, gifting, rent, and - to a much lesser extent - by purchase. Therefore the functioning of these land delivery systems, particularly in terms of mitigating inequality in land-ownership and increasing access to land by the poor, is critical to poverty reduction and economic growth. The operation of customary law, with regard to succession, marriage and other family law matters are of critical importance. Under the prevailing customary family law, women have less access to land than men have through these delivery systems. Younger male siblings also seem to have few opportunities to acquire rights in land by these means.

Descendants of village founders form elites within villages throughout the country, sitting above subsequent settlers in the local social hierarchy. The question of why social ranking should be determined by the order of arrival is under challenge as the population becomes more mobile (Richards et al 2004: i). The inheritance of land under customary law subjugates women to men and outsiders to first settlers. Such are the social relations that indisputably guide the politics of land in Liberia. It is therefore not an easy task to identify the internal forces that could be championed to displace these forces.

Just as there is greater possibility for land ownership by women in Monrovia under revised land laws, these other reforms may be possible within the same bubble. While economic activity and growth continues to be restricted to Monrovia, however, it is unlikely that the social relations which underpin land tenure elsewhere in Liberia are likely to change soon.

7 Strategies for the Prevention of Slums in Monrovia

Dealing with the very reasons already identified above is the easiest starting point as far as preventing the further development and growth of slums is concerned. The following are a number of preventative measures that can be adopted by both the central and local government in the prevention of the growth and development of new slum and informal settlements in and around Monrovia.

- There should be a greater understanding and willingness to embark on strategies aimed at tackling urban poverty issues. Measures such as the introduction of a minimum wage and the setting of minimum housing standards of the City of Monrovia would be very useful.
- The Government of Liberia should make sure that it has a well defined plan in addressing the challenges of urban growth. Such a strategy would ensure that provisions are made for the resulting housing need that comes with urban growth. Urban centres are likely to be the tool of long term development and economic growth.

- The acknowledgement and adoption of remedial action aimed at reducing the level of vulnerability experienced by the urban poor as a result of natural hazards and insecurity of tenure.
- The support of slum upgrading and improvement strategies/initiatives by both the Government of Liberia and the international community.
- The recognition and support of the role of local government in the delivering of urban services and the implementation of equitable land use and allocation policies. Local government should also be provided with access to central budgetary and aid resources for this purpose.
- The Government of Liberia should develop a national land registration system that will provide the basis for the legal transfer and development of land. There should be a legislative framework that supports security of tenure and alternate ways of dealing with low income settlements instead of the use of forced evictions.

The Government of Liberia should develop new forms of capital financing for urban development, exploring with donors the use of debt relief strategies to capitalise local funds, which are accessible to local government and non-governmental or community-based organizations and can be used to support slum upgrading, the negotiation of new well planned low income settlement and provision of infrastructure.

8. Strategies for Slum Upgrading in Monrovia

8.1 Lessons Learnt from Previous Upgrading in Monrovia

As mentioned earlier several upgrading projects were carried out in a number of slum settlements in the 1970s and 1980s prior to the civil war. A number of lessons can be learnt from these projects that should be used as guidance for future upgrading and improvement programmes. These are as follows:

- Upgrading / Improvement initiatives much be driven by the people. From discussions with those who lived through these upgrading initiatives it seems that they were not adequately consulted with regards to their priorities. For this reason they were not able to take full ownership of the programmes. Experience suggests such projects are very likely to succeed if the end-users are allowed to drive the initiative.
- The budget for cost recovery and for the maintenance of the various improvements was not a realistic one. This is one of the reasons why the benefits of the various infrastructure projects were so short lived.
- Improvement and upgrading projects should be seen as an opportunity to up-skill the local residents. This would have enhanced their chances of being able to secure

employment - that would in turn enable them to improve their own living conditions or to afford the cost of using the improved facilities.

- Those empowered to manage the improved facilities must be adequately trained prior to them embarking on the carrying out of such duties. This explains why in some areas a large percentage of the residents do not use the facilities - as such facilities are not properly managed in their opinion.
- Local labour, skills and expertise should be used as much as possible. In some cases in which this has not been done some residents have resorted to boycotting the services, for example: the garbage collection service at Logan Town. In the consultative meeting a number of the participants mentioned their dissatisfaction with the fact that the contract was not given to a local company.
- Developmental agencies should work together to enable the impact of the improvements and upgrading to be successful and not be duplicated.

8.2 Ways of Addressing the Problem

- All parties involved could do nothing in the hope that the problem presented by slums would one day go away.
- Attempts could be made at concealing the problem. A controversial project in Rio de Janeiro is building a wall around a number of slums at a cost of \$17 million.
- Clearing the land and rezoning slum areas with new buildings. This would also involve the moving of slum dwellers elsewhere. This is very much a “not in my backyard” approach.
- Clearance and rehabilitation/reconstruction specifically destined for slum dwellers.
- Creation of general infrastructure, preventive zoning in expansion areas and the occasional reorganisation of some slum areas.
- Recognition that the problem does exist: gradual integration/regularization through regular planning interventions: progressive and prospective rezoning including expansion areas to resettle people in very extreme cases and the improvement of living conditions in slum/low income settlements. It should be noted that this is the most viable and well-developed solution.

9 Conditions to Consider in Upgrading Activities

9.1 Principles Guiding Intervention

Slums are the result of a combination of global, national and local problems. Their origins lie in a complex web of social, economic, political and cultural causes and circumstances that cannot be resolved without integrated efforts on various fronts. It is therefore very important that the full extent of the problem is understood by all those defining and implementing strategies. The following conditions must guide any upgrading or rehabilitation activities:

- An accurate definition of the housing problem in slum areas, based on the delivery of services and infrastructures - aimed at providing those concerned with a decent standard of life.
- The creation of a strong will, capacity and motivation to improve the quality of life and housing in informal settlements, that is based on a solid action programme that the residents consider to be realistic and plausible, and most importantly, their own.
- Residents should play a key role and be involved in prioritising what sort of improvements and up-grading activities to be undertaken. In this way they are able to take ownership of the programme from a very early stage.
- The programme of development, and its subsequent projects, most always consider the indigenous residents as a labour reserve that should be used in preference to “outsiders” wherever possible (subject to a reservoir of suitable skills existing – a community-based programme for acquiring the necessary skills may be needed).
- A clear definition of land use and occupation rights is an essential precondition for active and unconditional participation of residents in the upgrading programme. The use and occupancy of every family must be established and recorded in a registry system. Such a record will be particularly useful in cases where homes have to be destroyed to make way for the improved infrastructure. Such affected families would be entitled to another piece of registered land or some other form of compensation.
- At the end of the programme all areas of land must have a defined use policy.

9.2 The Establishment of a Planning Team

The rehabilitation or upgrading of slums requires the permanent presence of a planning team, and a relationship with the communities built with care and on mutual trust. The elimination of slums therefore requires an operational structure that is able to acquire detailed knowledge of the field conditions and not just the physical characteristics of the area. The community’s social composition, its internal dynamics and its real local political structure must be fully understood.

There must be full understanding of relationships with neighbours and their integration into the network of urban infrastructure.

Participation is a key ingredient for the success of an upgrading programme; this can only be fully achieved through regular contact and the building of relations. It should also very important to note that any upgrading or rehabilitation programme involves the lives and livelihood of others. Respect should be given to the end user and they should be made to feel very important participators in the programme rather the hand me down approach which will definitely cause any such programme to fail.

9.3 Main Components of Intervention Strategy

9.3.1 Preventive Measures

Serious attention must be paid to the slum problem and it should be seen as one of the most important problems faced by the government of Liberia in its management of urban areas.

A system must be put in place that avoids the further growth and development of slums and informal settlements. This can be achieved through policies and resources aimed at promoting new urbanised areas with the clear aim of making such areas accessible to the majority, especially those on middle to low incomes.

The government of Liberia must embark on a policy and secure resources aimed at the opening of new urbanised areas accessible to the lower economic strata of the urban population. This should be able to absorb the population growth in urban areas that give rise to the development and growth of slums in the first place. Mere upgrading would not deal with the problem; it actually runs the risk of attracting more people to the improved areas following completion of the upgrading projects.

Intervention should therefore be combined with the following preventative measures

- The creation and maintenance of a supply of plots that is accessible to most people without resources; combining action by the government of Liberia with action by the Monrovia City Corporation and the traditional sector that controls land in the peri-urban areas. The supply of land is not viable without the combined efforts of all of these sectors.
- An effective system of controlling and inspecting the use of land must be created and maintained. This should involve the residents themselves and be combined with education, persuasion and the taking of enforcement actions when necessary. However this is only possible if there is alternative land available to families.
- Create and maintain a system for monitoring and persuading residents that excessive density must be avoided; start with clear subdivision of plots and their cadastral registration, defining conditions of use and division. However, these measures are useless if new, alternative expansion areas are not created.
- Provide more structured forms of organization that provide employment and enable people to learn new skills, and the indigenous capacity to develop economic initiatives.

9.4 Possible Challenges

Possibly, the most significant challenges to the improvement of slums in Monrovia relate to the institutional, administrative and technical capacity of the Monrovia City Corporation, to manage and take a lead role in the intervention. The following are areas to which special attention should be paid in considering how to best build the capacity of MCC in tackling the challenges and successful implementation of the next stages:

- The current land law has no regulation with specific reference to urban areas.
- Lack of detailed understanding of the perceptions and characteristics of slums.
- Financial constraints.

- Administrative and technical limitations.
- Inadequate territorial definition of the various slums.
- A shortage of skilled staff in this area at MCC.
- Inadequate decentralisation of powers from central government to MCC.

9.5 Building the Capacity of the Monrovia City Corporation

The capacity building of the Monrovia City Corporation prior to any intervention is of paramount importance, to ensure the success of the programme. The slum upgrading and improvement should be used as an opportunity for building the capacity of the MCC thereby ensuring that they acquire the necessary experience, administrative and techniques for the smooth running of Monrovia, thereby ensuring that the development and growth of slums are avoided. Currently it is very difficult to obtain technical and logistic information for MCC. MCC does not have the capacity to control the investigations, registration and creation of database for the archives, consultation and for updating data.

It is also very important that MCC has a presence in the field, this is an invaluable means of collecting data that can be used as part of the exercise and in future. The envisaged long lasting effect of the proposed improvements/upgrading will not be fully realised if the MCC's capacity is not fully developed in the area of the management and supervision of such programmes.

10 Next Steps



Plate 6 MCC’s Director of Community Services and the Chairman of Westpoint Community.

This section describes how the recommendations of the report are implemented. It is often the case that a number of further studies have to be done in preparation of the actual upgrading process. Having completed the 1st phase, the next phase should be focused on the identification of the directions in which Monrovia City Corporation should be moving, in successfully implementing the recommendations of this report. The following needs to be prioritized by the City:

- One of the key ingredients that should be worked on at the onset is the quality of the working relations between the Monrovia City Corporation and the slum communities. The latter should be engaged in regular dialogue and allowed to take a lead role in the implementation of any strategies or policies relating to low income housing settlements in Monrovia.
- Monrovia City Corporation should have a clear, recognized and detailed strategy for slums and informal settlements. Slum dwellers should be seen as active partners in the design and development of this strategy. They should not only be consulted but also encouraged and enabled to participate.
- The relationship between the City of Monrovia Corporation and inhabitants of slums and informal settlement in Monrovia should be formalized. There is some evidence that this is being done, but on an *ad hoc* basis. For example: settlements such as WestPoint have been given a formal license agreement from the Monrovia City Corporation for the occupation of the settlement. Though not an ideal solution, this should be seen as a starting point that can be used in the

negotiations of future security of tenure for inhabitants of slums and informal settlements.

- The Monrovia City Corporation should encourage and provide capacity-building training activities for those members of staff responsible for the management of slums and informal settlements. Where possible such training facilities should be extended to community leaders of slums and informal settlements.
- Slum Dwellers Association should be encouraged to join other similar forums / organizations. They can benefit from such experience-sharing exercises.
- The Monrovia City Corporation should devise a strategy for the recording of information relating to slums and informal settlements. A good amount of this can be extracted from the Population and Household Census 2008. Such data will be very useful, not only in the upgrading process, but also in the improvement of other slum settlements.
- The Monrovia City Corporation should embark on the creation of a slum register. This register should include information such as names, how long the family has lived at the address, and this information should be witnessed by neighbours. This would be very useful if, for example, relocation in that particular case is considered to be the most viable option - in which case the family would need to be entitled to some form of compensation.
- Monrovia City Corporation should work closely with central government and parastatal agencies to see which aspects of a possible upgrading program can be successfully incorporated into existing development programs in Monrovia. The current roads program, water and sewage program and the reconstruction of the old bridge are a few examples that can be used as starting points.
- The City of Monrovia Corporation should start considering what possible contributions it can make towards a future upgrading program. This does not have to be in cash, but can be in kind, as was the case for this study.
- Monrovia City Corporation should engage in the use of strategies that helps it to maximize the level of income it generates. They should also work with central government in exploring how local tax collected by the Corporation can be used by the Corporation in addressing local demands.

The implementation of the steps highlighted above will ensure that Monrovia City Corporation is well equipped in taking a lead role in the conduct and implementation of a future slum upgrading program. Such a program, apart from being successful in its own right, will also have a further- reaching effect in alleviating the conditions in Monrovia's slums and informal settlements.

11 Recommendations

11.1 Introduction

It has to be said at the very outset that slums are not homogeneous in all aspects. In trying to see how best the lives of slum dwellers can be improved a one-size-fits-all approach should not be adopted. Each of the five settlements that have been the focus of this study does not have the same pressing needs - as can be seen from Section 4 on the

needs assessments of the individual settlements. The residents of all slums and informal settlements in Monrovia are heterogeneous and therefore have different needs and priorities. Individual recommendations have already been made as to how the individual settlements can be improved as part of the needs assessment, this section however now makes broad recommendations for the improvement of informal settlements and slums in Monrovia under the following headings:

- Strategic
- Social
- Economic
- Physical

11.2 Strategic Recommendations

Funding should be secured for an NGO with considerable experience in the delivery of essential services within slums settlements such as UNICEF and Concern to champion the programme. In order to facilitate their work, the following factors need to be considered and addressed:

- The exact boundaries of each of the five settlements should be determined; this would be useful in planning the individual projects and also in the prevention and monitoring of further growth of these settlements.
- The ownership of all the land that the slum settlements occupy should be established. It is likely that most of the land is owned by the government of Liberia, but some of the residents have suggested that some of the land is privately owned. In such cases the issue of the land being acquired by compulsory purchase orders must be explored.
- A risk assessment of all the five slums and informal settlements should be carried out by an independent consultant. The purpose of this exercise is to determine whether the sites are safe, if any are unsafe then steps should be taken to secure the sites and in exceptional circumstances where this is not possible then a relocation package should be considered for those affected.
- Residents should be offered security of tenure as part of the improvement programme. The urban poor should not have to live in constant fear of being evicted.
- Starter home programmes, such as shared ownership schemes, whereby housing units are part owned and part rented, should be offered to those who can afford, and are interested in, taking up such initiatives. This would be in line with the government's new role of that of a facilitator/enabler in relation to housing.
- Private organisations should be encouraged to invest in social housing. The government should be prepared to offer "trade-off incentives" in return for this. This is usually in the form of tax exemptions or the provision of prime sites to such organisations in return for them providing a percentage of low income housing units.
- A report on the needs assessment of all the other slum settlements in Monrovia should be commissioned. From a snapshot, there are slums and

informal settlements in which the conditions are worse in comparison to those covered in this report.

- The capacity of the NGO *Slum Dwellers Association* should be built so that it can be truly representative of the interest of all slum dwellers and become a focal point for information on this issue. SDA should be able to provide advice sessions on housing rights issues.
- The engagement of a consultant with the necessary skills, to lead and support slum dwellers in forming a national organisation aimed at improving the lives of residents of slums and informal settlements. The size of such an organisation would give it more influence than individual organisations trying to influence policies at local level. Examples of such organisations are:
 - (a) The National Slum Dwellers Federation in India. This organisation has over 700,000 members. They work on upgrading projects in India and also manage toilet blocks involving millions.
 - (b) The Kenyan federation has 137 savings groups in over 60 settlements with over 25,000 members. It is engaged in many upgrading projects.
 - (c) The Shack Dwellers federation of Namibia has over 300 savings groups with 12,350 member households. The federation has helped 2,300 member households acquire land for housing.
- The formation and recognition of such organisations have a number of advantages. Firstly, they form partnerships with governments, especially local governments. This is mutually beneficial as large scale programmes are not possible without their support and without getting secure tenure. Secondly, such organisations provide governments who are committed to reducing poverty and meeting the MDGs, with representative organisations of the urban poor with whom they can work. Thirdly such federations are able to influence government policies relating to the urban poor due to their membership size.

11.3 Social Recommendations

The following social interventions are recommended:

- The canvassing of women's organisations to make sure that the views of women are fully taken on board as part of the improvement programme.
- Prevailing customs and practices within the tribes from which a high proportion of the residents belong to must be taken on board.
- The very high concentration of Christians within the settlements should be taken on board as part of the improvement programme. Religious leaders should be consulted and their views concerning the design and form of the religious facilities taken into account.
- An improvement programme as opposed to a relocation programme should be proposed to the residents. This option would present residents with the least disruption, especially as most of the residents have lived there for over 10 years. Relocation would result in a loss of social contacts by the residents. The level of

- support such social networks provide within African societies should not be underestimated.
- The large number of social organisations that exist within the slum settlements can be used as a platform for canvassing opinions about the improvement programme. A reassessment of the level of benefits such memberships provide can be done as part of the improvement. If well managed, this could lead to an increase in rating of the level of benefit membership of such organisations provide. Such groups can be used to rally support for the improvement programme. Such empowerment can address the issue of misgivings and at the same time improve the capacity of such social groups.
 - The lack of availability of social amenities is an issue that should be fully addressed as part of the improvement programme. The new design should include the provision of amenities such as: government offices, technical training facilities, well laid out roads and paths, decent sanitation and drainage facilities, access to clean water within 100 yards and health care facilities as a basic list of the social amenities that are currently lacking. The management and maintenance of such facilities should also be provided for as part of the improvement programme.
 - Provision should also be made for a health promotion programme which should also be part of the improvement programme. Residents should be offered advice on issues such as how to prepare a balanced diet, the importance of living in a healthy environment and the link between improper sanitation and illnesses such as malaria and typhoid.

11.4 Economic Recommendations

- A detailed survey involving the collection and analysis of sources of income of the individual slum settlements should be done prior to embarking on the programme. This would be very helpful in determining a realistic figure that the residents can afford to pay for the use of the improved services. This can also be used to determine what should be done to ensure that the economic situation of slum residents is improved.
- The expansion of income-generating business activities should be incorporated into the improvement programme, a number of residents are already engaged in business and a significant number of the women indicated during the consultative meetings that they would like to start their own businesses – if given access to the necessary capital.
- The government can also support employer's schemes that provide work experience opportunities for the urban poor. This would enable them to acquire the relevant skills that they can later use to secure paid employment.
- Steps should be taken to ensure that the disruption caused to local businesses as a result of the improvement programme is kept to a minimum. The markets should

be preserved at all costs as a large proportion of the residents depend on the markets for their livelihood.

- There is scope for the nature of business activities currently undertaken by the residents to be improved. The capacity of residents to be engaged in businesses that produce a lot more income can be addressed as part of the improvement programme. This would be very beneficial if successful as a large number of the residents do not only have to provide financial support to household dependents but also to dependents living away from home. It is also hoped that this would result in residents being able to purchase other essential services such as healthcare and housing.
- The issue of lack of access to credit from the formal institutions should be addressed as part of the improvement programme. Informal forms of credit such as micro-finance initiatives should be encouraged to operate within low income settlements in urban areas. Such organisations offer credit at very low interest rates and do not require any of the usual collaterals often demanded by formal institutions such as banks. Such initiatives provide some degree of economic stability and also promote community cohesion.
- The establishment of a housing micro-credit finance facility should be considered. Such a facility would be very useful for the provision of housing improvement loans to slum inhabitants.

11.5 Physical Recommendations

The information already obtained as part of the needs assessment can be used as a starting point for the planning of infrastructure improvements within the individual communities, as follows:

- The quality of roads and availability of clean water, access to decent toilet facilities, less polluted forms of home lighting and adequate recreational facilities should all be included as part of the improvement programme.
 - o Though not aware of the full extent of pollution, the residents are aware of the various forms of pollution. To deal with this problem, the following solutions that have been suggested by the residents should be incorporated into the improvement programme.
 - o Residents have suggested that alternate disposal methods of waste should be considered. For example the burning of waste away from the residents should be taken up to deal with the current high level of air pollution within the settlement.
 - o Roads should be paved to reduce the current high level of dust pollution. This should also be done in relation to any other open air facilities e.g. playground, done as part of the improvement programme.
 - o The construction of proper drainage systems and toilet facilities are essential in dealing with the problems of pollution and disease.
 - o Water pipes should be made of a more durable material to help with their current problem of water pollution.

- Trenches should be constructed to prevent further land degradation though “run-off”.
- Plans and all new initiatives should be publicised, not only in print, but by word of mouth as this is the most reliable source of information within the settlement. There should be a systematic method of information distribution and an outlet for feedback to ensure that the content of the intended information is not modified or the wrong message is not conveyed in the process.

12 Conclusion

In conclusion, it has to be emphasised that the problem of slums and illegal settlements in Monrovia is one of the most pressing issues that the Monrovia City Corporation and the government of Liberia currently faces. Though a challenge, it is one that can be successfully dealt with through the support of all interested parties, i.e the state, the private sector, the international community and the local residents whose views must be given much attention as part of the process. The improvement of the lives of those living in slum conditions is one of the major targets of The Milenium Development Goals. The government of Liberia has already produced a Poverty Reduction Strategy Report which covers some of the issues raised in this report.

Both national and international NGOs engaged in urban development activities should pool and structure their resources together to ensure that projects are not duplicated - thereby causing the waste of much needed resources. It is unlikely that a single organisation working in isolation will be able to successfully identify, implement and manage the process of slum improvement in Monrovia.

Lastly, it should be noted that slum dwellers are forced to live in such deplorable conditions by a variety of complex circumstances over which they have little or no control. These circumstances and causes should form the “guiding lights” in the quest to curtail the development and growth of slums and informal settlements in Monrovia.

Annex 1 Guiding Questions used at Consultative Meetings

Date:

Slum Settlement:

Community Organisation:

Attendee List (Should be attached) Names and capacity of those answering questions and raising issues should also be stated.

- Estimate of the population of the settlement?
- If there is a great discrepancy between this answer and the recent population survey result this should be raised and try to solicit a possible explanation.
- Ethnic composition and religious affiliation of the population of the settlement in general.
- General feel of the community in general?
- Any standing water pipes, if so how many?
- If no standing water pipes, how do they access clean drinking water? How far do they have to travel to get this?
- How else water is obtained within the community? For example, any water wells? If so, how many and what is the water used for?
- Types of toilet facilities that are available in the community. How many toilets and washrooms are there in the community?
- Are these sufficient in their opinion?
- General condition of these facilities?
- Who manages them and what are the views on how well these are managed?
- What types of recreational facilities are available within the community?
- What is needed in terms of recreational facilities?
- If there are no recreational facilities, then how far do they have to go to access these?
- Main source of electricity/lighting?

- Are there any street lights? If so, how adequate are these?
- How is solid waste disposed of?
- General comments on the adequacy and efficiency of these.
- General condition of the roads and alleyways
- Different types of tenures within the community both in relation to the land and the houses?
- Ownership of neighbouring land?
- General discussion in relation to drainage system in the community?
- Types of economic activities of the inhabitants?
- Sources of credit both formal and informal?
- Any saving schemes in operation?
- How long has the settlement been in existence and whether the general trend is for people to move out after a number of years or do people tend to stay there for over 10 years?
- Details of the different types of community organisations in the settlement?
- Number of primary and secondary schools?
- Any recycling activities?
- Community assessment of priorities for improvement?
 - Water
 - Sanitation
 - Drainage
 - Schools
 - Recreational facilities
 - Community facilities
 - Healthcare facilities

Annex 2 1st Workshop - Attendance List

List of Participants Slum Upgrading Workshop October 16, 2008

NO	Name	Organization	Contact	E-Mail	Initial
1.	Hon. Rev. Demore W. Moore	Township of WestPoint	077829133/06-521466		DWM
2.	Andrew D. Jeejuah	FIND	06-571363	ajeejuah@yahoo.com	ADJ
3.	Emmanuel H. Jones	FIND	06-535475	emman902000@yahoo.com	EHJ
4.	David L. Jacobs	Clara Town Community	06-455079		DLJ
5.	Bestman Toe	Slum dwellers Assoc, of Liberia	05-982507	slumdwellers@yahoo.com	BT
6.	Godrich Zodehgar	Sonwein Community	06-439982		GZ
7.	Clay Saydee	Sonwein Community	05-894142	csaydee@yahoo.com	CS
8.	Lee Moses Marlee	JICA	06-896170	Moseslelly29@yahoo.com	LMM
9.	Fole Sherman	UN-Habitat			FL
10.	Augustine Sammy	Jamaica Road	077-400719		AS
11.	S. Elvis Marshall	City Plumbing/MCC	04-720665		SEM
12.	S. Benedict Weah	Slum Dwellers	05-458251		SBW
13.	K. Felix Nimene	Jamaica Road	06-693699		KFN
14.	Sampson Toby	Blamoh Town Community	06-818120		ST
15.	Andrew A Roberts	MCC	07-7014138		AAR
16.	Varney M. Kiahen	Garworlor Township Community	07-7058006		VMK
17.	Mr. Jones	National Housing Authority	06-511425		
18.	Calvin Brooks	King FM	077-100936		CB
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31.	Mardia Chea	MCC	06-914834		MC
32.	David Morwu	MCC	06-492227		DM
33. C	C. Kaye Winter	MCC	06-563664		CKW
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Annex 3 Second Workshop - Attendance List

SLUM INITIATIVE

2nd Workshop

Monrovia City Corporation

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Annex 4 Points to Note Re 1st Workshop

- All attendees were very positive about this project and feel there is a desperate need for a program that seeks to improve conditions and services in slum communities. They also pointed out that Monrovia as a whole stands to gain from such a program.
- Ms Cole, the International Consultant, pointed out that it would be unfair to raise their expectations at this point. This was only the initial stage and that any future improvements or upgrading will be subject to funding that is not available at present.
- Mr Krah, the Director of Habitat for Humanity gave an update on the distinction between upgrading and improvement and highlighted all such programs that had been done in the various slum settlements in the past.
- The long years of civil war were seen as a catalyst in the development of slums and informal settlements in Monrovia. Other contributing factors that were noted are: the high cost of decent housing, no access to housing loans in the formal banking sector for those on low income, and lack of a low income housing strategy for Monrovia.
- The effectiveness of community led projects was mentioned by the representative of FIND and the Logan Town community was commended for its role in the success of the current solid waste awareness program.
- JICA is soon to commence a Restoration of Urban Facilities Program in Monrovia.
- Residents of slums and informal residents present at the meeting drew attention to the fact that all the various communities were different in terms of their composition and need. Existing facilities vary from one community to the other.
- The UNHABITAT Country Representative Mr Fola Sherman pointed out a number of initiatives that can be used in preventing the development of slums and informal settlements. These include proper zoning laws and the design and implementation of a plan for the city.
- The Director of the National Housing Federation mentioned that the Government of Liberia was no longer engaged in the direct provision of low income housing units.
- The Chairman of Monrovia City Corporation, Mr Daniel Johnson publicly expressed the Corporation's support for the project and thanked the World Bank for helping the Corporation secure the necessary funding for the initial study.

Group 1

The above group had 22 members and Mr Frank Krah from The Monrovia City Corporation acted as the group's facilitator. The group wanted to adopt a local definition of a slum as they considered the international definition not too well suited to the situation in Liberia. The definition the group decided upon was "undeveloped settlement". The group went on to list the following characteristics of slum settlements: poor housing, densely populated, lack of access to basic facilities and services.

The group agreed that there should be a local slum strategy aimed at "removing slum conditions and improving the living conditions of slum dwellers". The group noted that the government should include the following in its slum strategy:

1. Measures aimed at preventing the spread of marginalised, spontaneous, unplanned settlements.
2. The development or facilitation of low income planned estates. Public/private partnerships should be fostered.
3. Slum upgrading should be the improvement rather than demolition of existing slum communities. They went on to highlight the socio – economic consequences of resettling.
4. In cases where it is not possible to improve *in situ* then resettlement should be negotiated and adequate compensation offered. The government should be able to reach compromises with those affected rather than impose conditions on them.
5. There should be a register of all slum dwellers in the existing slums and they should be granted long term leases to enable them to improve their properties.
6. Whatever surplus resources are left following any up-grading exercise should be used for community development.
7. User fees collected following scaling-up should be reinvested for future scaling-up programs.
8. The group noted that close working relations between the service users, the local government and donor organisation is the best way forward in terms of improvement or scaling-up.
9. They would like to see the provision of basic services such as well laid roads, health centres, water and sanitation facilities and recreational facilities as part of the overall strategy.
10. One of the key things they would like to see is the government embarking on the prevention and removal of spontaneous informal settlements. Planned low-income housing estates should be encouraged to develop.

On the issue of urban governance, the group discussed options on how the city can increase its revenue. These include the following:

- Issuing of fines

- Collection of local taxes
- They also stressed they would like to be able to hold elected officials to account.

Group 2

The two topics covered by this group were:

- Resources Mobilization
- Next Steps

Under the mobilization of resources the following points were discussed:

1. In supporting the next stage of the program both internal and external sources of finance should be explored.
2. Internally, both the communities and the Government of Liberia should contribute and in cases where they are unable to make financial contribution then contribution should be made in kind.
3. International NGOs were seen as the main source of external finance.
4. The group agreed that there is a need for strengthening the capacity of the various institutions such as the Slum Dwellers Association, The Monrovia City Corporation and the management committees within the various slums. In their opinion this would be very useful in building their skills for future initiatives. They would also like a study tour to another West African city faced with similar problems to share their experiences in dealing with such issues.
5. They would also like the individual communities to be used as a first port of call for the provision of labour during the improvement or scaling-up process.
6. They would also like to see the development of the various communities in the following ways:
 - Decentralisation of power / authority.
 - Accountability.
 - Rules and recognition of community leaders.
 - Periodic training of community leaders

In terms of next steps / ways forward, the whole group agreed that conducting the following studies/surveys would be very useful:

- Basic information about slum communities for example, social, economic, physical, educational and political indicators.
- The creation of an urban observatory for the City of Monrovia, this would be a useful source of resource for future urban studies.
- Conduct of an income survey for slum communities, would be useful in determining affordability.
- Large scale sensitization in slum communities on health and sanitation issues.
- The setting up of a minimum housing standard for the City of Monrovia.

- The creation and enforcement of city ordinances.
- The formulation of a Charter for slum dwellers signed by central government, local government and community based organisations.
- The setting up of micro finance initiatives within the various communities.
- The improvement of slums and their prevention should be seen as an integral component of any developmental plan of the city of Monrovia.

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