

## Cities Alliance Management Response and Action Plan

Evaluation Title: Comic Relief Final Evaluation Report, Cities Alliance Liberia Country Programme

### Overall Response to Evaluation Report

The Cities Alliance conducted a final evaluation of the Comic Relief funded Liberia Country Programme to;

1. Engage stakeholders and programme participants in a participatory and empowering process (using a complexity aware approach such as Outcome Harvesting or Most Significant Change), to identify and document outcomes (intended and unintended), feedback and lessons learned, (to include adaptive capacity to a changing implementation environment).
2. Verify the results achieved (specifically relating to the measurement of log frame outcome indicators through household surveys and other methodologies, how the programme objectives and activities had changed since initial design due to Covid-19), and make conclusions and recommendations relating to performance during the 5 years of implementation.
3. Support the Cities Alliance Country Programme model by generating evidence-based recommendations relating to the design and implementation process, and specific recommendations to guide the strategic direction of the LCP moving forward.

Overall, the independent evaluator hired to undertake the evaluation had experience working in Liberia specifically conducting similar assignments in Liberia and East Africa, working with informal traders and slum dwellers. The consultant adhered to the reporting structure recommended by the Cities Alliance and his understanding of the country programme enhanced the quality of the report.

The results and findings of the evaluation were validated by stakeholders to ensure all inputs were fully incorporated in the report. The final draft was disseminated and was highly welcomed and accepted by the stakeholders in the country (Monrovia City Corporation, Paynesville City Corporation, WASH Commission, Environmental Protection Agency, Ministry of Internal Affairs, National Housing Authority, Liberia Water and Sewer Corporation and the Ministry of Public Works among others) including the implementing partners (HFHI, WIEGO, SDI, I.H.S and UN-H).

In order to sustain the programme initiatives, the government of Liberia through the Ministry of Internal Affairs agreed to chair the Programme Steering Committee to support follow-up activities including hosting of city and national forums to enhance active citizenry and participation in planning and governance. At the community level, the sustainability of projects was hinged around the slum dweller and petty trader federations trained by the programme to monitor and supervise programme initiatives.

The final evaluation reached out to a cross section of stakeholders and gathered detailed information and identified results from 472 household heads, 470 petty traders, 5

commissioners, and 7 national government officials, 20 local government officials over 50 federation members (FEPTIWUL and FOLUPS).

The evaluation was designed to combine qualitative and quantitative approaches and adopted a cross-sectional descriptive design. In addition, a participatory and empowering approach (outcome harvesting) was adopted in collection and analysis of Most Significant Change (MSC) stories to assess how the LCP impacted individual beneficiaries and communities within informal settlements. MSC stories were collected through a series of sequenced Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). The quantitative component collected data through Surveys from Households and Petty Traders, and conducted Longitudinal analysis of Baseline, Mid-Term and End-line data to assess the overall programme impact.

The considerable efforts made during the evaluation to engage programme participants and partners in both quantitative and qualitative data collection and feedback were greatly appreciated and provided the Programme with valuable information and independent insight for future programmes. Cities Alliance therefore welcomes this substantive evaluation of the Comic Relief funded Liberia Country Programme.

Cities Alliance is pleased to note that the evaluation confirmed that despite the challenges of delivering a complex programme in a complex environment, the Comic Relief funded Liberia Country Programme delivered transformative change in Greater Monrovia and delivered lasting impact for the urban poor. This key finding supports the Cities Alliance Country Programme model, which includes coordinated multi-level interventions from the national to settlement level, including capacity enhancement, participation and inclusion in the delivery of developmental results. Key evaluations conclusions include:

- The five-Year journey of the LCP transformed Greater Monrovia into an area characterised by active citizenship, inclusive governance, and resilient municipal service delivery drawing on an effective partnership between slum dwellers and pro poor local governments.
- The development of four key policy frameworks i.e., NUP diagnosis note and discussion paper, Greater Monrovia Urban Development Strategy, Slum Upgrading and Affordable Housing Framework, and the Voluntary Gender Responsive Relocation Policy Guidelines, has helped to counter the culture of eviction and exploitation of the urban poor.
- There is improved provision of slum upgrading and incremental housing solutions for the urban poor. The shift in the National Housing Authority's (NHA) approach towards addressing issues of people within the low-income pyramid triggered the development of the framework which has since been adopted by the authority.
- Adopting a multi-sectoral and multi-partner approach ensured long term Programme sustainability and brought greater coherence of effort.

- Prior to the outbreak of COVID-19, up to 66 Water kiosks had been installed in 25 communities. These were highly impactful in improving access to quality water during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This management response to the evaluation results, conclusion and recommendations, which Cities Alliance overall accepts, will support the design of future programmes. This evaluation identified learning and key recommendations which are seen as critical to Programme impact including:

- The need for partners to have in-country presence with well-structured offices capacitated with adequate human resource to provide implementation support to their local affiliates.
- The need for a comprehensive approach to slum upgrading to focus on the entire Greater Monrovia, and deal with the systemic failures that gave rise to existing slums.
- Institutionalising participatory planning within local government structures.
- The need for Greater Monrovia to move towards a system of functional multi-level governance, which is a foundational element to advancing urbanisation.
- The need for national budget allocations to the LGA's to fund operations because they are not included in the Liberia National Budget.

Cities Alliance values this pause for reflection and invited the Programme partners to undertake a similar process to respond to their specific recommendations.

## Response to Recommendations and Action Plan

<b>Overall Recommendations<sup>1</sup></b> <b>Cities Alliance</b>	<b>Accepted or Rejected</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Actions</b>
<b>Formulation of the National Urban Policy:</b> It is therefore imperative that formulation and implementation of the NUP phases are completed and capacity is built to ensure the NUP is implemented with a methodology that is clearly defined and understood by all stakeholders.	Partially accepted	This recommendation is partially accepted. Cities Alliance committed to funding two phases of the National Urban Policy (Feasibility and Diagnostic phases) however the UN-Habitat as a member of Cities Alliance secured additional funding to formulate the policy document.	1. Cities Alliance will continue to provide technical support in the formulation of the policy document.
<b>Land use planning, cadastral surveying, land registration and legalisation processes and procedures is a critical emerging urban planning tool directly linked to community level development.</b> There is a need for future programming to support land regularisation initiatives. Cities Alliance should leverage the platforms and buy-in established with the government to propel current land regularisation guidelines to pilot a project but also elevate the guidelines to the legislature for policy endorsement.	Rejected	Cities Alliance rejects this recommendation as it was not part of the original programme design. However, we agree that land regularisation is critical to enhance planning and governance. Provided resources are available to finance land regularisation initiatives, Cities Alliance is ready to provide this support.	1. For future programming the Cities Alliance will engage with national land agencies to understand available land policies and guidelines.
<b>Little attention has been paid to the Greater Monrovia Urban Development Strategy by Cities Alliance to ensure investments and initiatives identified in the strategy are financed</b> including assessing domestic revenue collection. Only two (2) transformative projects identified had been financed for implementation. Government of Liberia and Cities Alliance should lobby for financial resources to fund some of the projects to ensure the Strategy attains its intended purpose	Partially accepted	Cities Alliance partially accepts this recommendation. However, this recommendation is better directed to the cities and the national governments than the Cities Alliance. The implementation of the Urban Development Strategy in Greater Monrovia by the Cities Alliance is hinged on the availability of resources; however the cities and the townships have limited budgets to finance the strategies. To Support the implementation of the strategy document, Cities Alliance implemented two projects (Solid Waste Management and Capacity building) which were identified by the document.	2. Cities Alliance will engage the Programme Steering Committee chaired by the Ministry of Internal Affairs to lobby for funding and ensure that the cities have budgets from the national government.

<sup>1</sup> Recommendation for Cities Alliance from the Report Executive Summary.

<p><b>Future Programmes should consider supporting Health Services through construction, renovating, tooling and equipping health facilities.</b> In addition, despite the community infrastructure projects implemented, community needs still remain. With only 27% of the slum dwellers able to assess sanitation facilities, there is need for more community infrastructure projects to further enhance access to basic services</p>	<p>Partially accept</p>	<p>Cities Alliance implemented infrastructure projects based on the needs prioritised by communities. Submitted projects undergo a vetting process and once they meet the safeguard criteria, they are approved and implemented. The Programme would have considered support for community-based health infrastructure, however there were no proposals submitted by communities on this. As a point to note, community needs are immense, and a single project may not be in position to address all community needs.</p>	<p>3. For future programming a review of the community needs can be assessed to ascertain if there are changes in community needs.</p>
<p><b>The LCP should explore providing enterprise kits to Saving Groups to support</b> community-based enterprising by training slum dwellers in interventions that boost livelihoods but also work to avert the spread of COVID-19. These include liquid soap to meet the essential hygiene needs of families, but also quantities sufficient to earn some profit.</p>	<p>Partially accepted</p>	<p>The programme did not budget for start-up kits however start-up merchandise worth \$120 was provided to water kiosk attendants. A total of 104 water kiosk attendants benefited from the initiative. Whilst street traders did not directly benefit from enterprise kits, the evaluation concluded that the initiatives around petty traders did enhance their livelihoods.</p>	<p>4. For future programming, Cities Alliance will consider initiatives to enhance livelihoods across programme components.</p>
<p><b>Cities Alliance should ensure that for all future Programmes, Partners should have in-country presence</b> with well-structured offices capacitated with adequate human resource to provide implementation support to their local affiliates. This would ensure timely support to the local affiliates, build capacity, improve supervision, monitoring and accountability</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>Cities Alliance fully accepts this recommendation. Some implementing partners of the Liberia Country Programme did not have in-country presence; however, they worked directly with National institutions with an objective of strengthening in-country capacities.</p>	<p>5. Cities Alliance will ensure the in-country presence of implementing partners in future programmes.</p>
<p><b>There is a need to support the firms to mechanise production processes.</b> The current production capacity products cannot meet the ever-growing demand for their products, mechanising production will address this challenge. There is a need to further support the firms to market their products particularly among slum dwellers and urban poor, which is the target market for the firms.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>This recommendation refers to the producers of alternative and quality low-cost housing construction materials. Cities Alliance agrees with this recommendation however the devaluation of the pound sterling affected the programme.</p>	<p>6. For future programming Cities Alliance will budget for the mechanised production of alternative construction materials.</p>

**Partners**

<p>Development of Incremental Slum Upgrading Policy and Guidelines to provide guidance on how incremental slum upgrading should be approached by the Government. Once endorsed by government, the policy will streamline investments efforts towards slum upgrading</p>	<p>Partially Accepted</p>	<p>Cities Alliance and its partners partially accept this recommendation. The Slum Upgrading and Affordable Housing framework was successfully developed under the Programme, however the National Housing Authority needs to present the document at the senate for legislation into a policy document.</p>	<p>1. Legislation of the framework document by the senate</p>
<p>Sustainability plans for CUF Projects by YMCA are yet to be completed. There is a need to fast track this process for communities to start using these facilities.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>Cities Alliance and its partners accepted this recommendation and by the close of the programme all the sustainability plans were completed.</p>	<p>2. Local partners YMCA and FOLUPS will continue monitoring of the CUF projects with support from the CUF board</p>
<p>Replicating the Peace Island Model in other informal settlements in Greater Monrovia: While there was interest and desire for HFHI to replicate the works in Peace Island in other informal communities, this could not be done due to resource limitations. However, the impact this has had in Peace Island requires replication in other informal settlements.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>Cities Alliance and the partners accept this recommendation however this works when multiple projects are being implemented in a community for example in Peace Island the programme implemented community hall, water kiosks, biofil toilets and other partners including the EU funded the electrification project, while the government funded the road construction.</p>	<p>3. Cities Alliance will seek opportunities to replicate this model for successful multi-intervention approaches through future programming</p>
<p>Capacity building: Change of office for the FEPTIWUL created a vacuum in terms of skills and capacity as the trained incumbent executive committee handover office with minimal mentorship to the incoming leaders. This created a skills gap, therefore the need for capacity building for newly appointed leaders.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>Cities Alliance and its partners fully accept this recommendation</p>	<p>4. For future programming, community based institutional strengthening will be incorporated into the programme design.</p>
<p>The Housing Microfinance institution relied on resources provided by the Country Programme to pilot the housing loan product, however, the capital fund from the Programme was small, and only eight (8) slum dwellers have been advanced loans by Evaluation time. There is a need for additional support to FFW to increase the size of</p>	<p>Partially accepted</p>	<p>Cities Alliance partially accepts this recommendation. The programme was aimed at establishing a micro housing loan facility through existing microfinance intuitions. It was thought that this was a new product that the financial institutions would include in their portfolio however the COVID-19 pandemic affected the financial capacity of</p>	<p>5. Future programming will incorporate pilot loan products to targeted beneficiaries.</p>

<p>the loan fund to ensure current demand for housing loan products is met to support incremental housing initiatives.</p>		<p>Foundation for Women. The programme therefore provided some start-up capital to initiate the housing loan product.</p>	
<p>The COVID-19 pandemic affected the business of many traders. Some traders consumed their capital during the COVID-19 lockdown, while other businesses collapsed. There is a need to strengthen “Cash Round Groups” commonly known as SUSU to enhance access to finance and credit for the traders to re-capitalize their businesses.</p>	<p>Partially Accepted</p>	<p>The programme was not mandated to provide funds to established financial groups, however the groups were strengthened through capacity building training in financial management.</p>	