

One World Link visit to Bo – January / February 2019

Report of visit

Introduction

This is a report of the visit to Bo by Mair Evans and Philip Clarke between January and February 2019. The main purpose and focus of the visit was to deliver some further training and support in urban planning for Bo City Council (BCC) as part of the One World Link's support for the wider work being undertaken on behalf of the Prince's Foundation "Rapid Urbanisation Toolkit". Whilst in Sierra Leone we also took the opportunity to meet with other friends and partners and establish some new contacts in Bo, Freetown and elsewhere.

The broad itinerary was as follows:-

Date	Location	Meetings
31 st January 2019	Travel to Sierra Leone	
1 st – 2 nd February	Freetown	Department for International Development Meeting up with Doris and Saidu Bah and Barmmy Boy ¹ .
3 rd February	Travel to Bo	Visit to Home Leone "Destiny Village"
4 th – 6 th February	Bo	Urban Planning workshop Meeting with Edward Alpha (Chief Administrator, BCC)
7 th February	Bo	School visits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UBC Upper & Lower • RC Model • St Peter's No. 2 • Sewa Road St. Paul's School for the Blind
8 th February	Bo	Joseph Bindi, Bo District Council
9 th – 10 th February	Bo	Preparing for arrival of teacher's group
11 th February	Bo	Yemoh Town Clinic Bo Children's Hospital
12 th – 13 th February	River No. 2	Visit to St. Mary's Fatima Interim Care Centre
14 th - 15 th February	Freetown – travel home	

¹ For information Lansana Mansaray (aka Barmmy Boy)/We Own TV's documentary film *Survivors* is now screening internationally. It had its European Premiere at the International Documentary Festival of Amsterdam in November 2018 (having been nominated for the Amsterdam Human Rights Award) and is showing in the UK at Hull Truck Theatre on 28 March 2019. The film follows the lives of a group of emergency workers during the ebola crisis, documenting the courageous contribution of Sierra Leoneans to the crisis and exploring both how the epidemic ravaged communities & the relationship (& misunderstandings) between NGOs & the communities they serve. www.survivorsfilm.com

Meeting with Department for International Development, Freetown Friday 1st February

We met Bobby Stansfield (Economic Growth Team Leader) for DFID Sierra Leone. Unsurprisingly (and inevitably) Bobby is coming to the end of his time in DfID (a three year posting) but is happy to direct any enquiries to colleagues if there are issues that OWL wishes to follow up.

Key issues to emerge from the meeting were as follows:-

1. DfID is reducing its level of support/investment in Sierra Leone from the immediate post-Ebola period back to “normal” levels of expenditure. Nevertheless, Sierra Leone continues to benefit from the highest expenditure per capita of any country that DfID supports.
2. DfID priorities moving forward are likely to be split between two areas:-
 - Education: this is the priority of the new President and he has requested DfID support, particularly in view of the rollout of his “Free Quality Education” programme. His focus is on teacher training, text books and school building.
 - Power supply: this is a DfID priority and will, in time, benefit areas like Bo. There are two key projects. Firstly, there is the rehabilitation of electricity supply in both Bo and Kenema. Hopefully this could see more stable supply (fewer outages) within the next 2-3 years. Secondly there is the “CLSG (Cote d’Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea) line” which is a longer term project to develop a trans-national power line linking the four countries. This would allow a temporary shortage in one country to be met by any oversupply in another, thereby improving resilience and reliability of power supply. This project is being funded by DfID and the African Development Bank.
3. DfID is pleased with the progress of the Bo, Kenema, Makeni WHH Waste programme. As with all projects, concerns about the long terms sustainability remain. Moving forward, waste will continue to be a priority but the focus will shift to Freetown where the new mayor has an active programme to increase levels of waste collection from 2% (currently) to 60%.² There is also a programme to deal with the major landfill sites across Freetown.
4. There is also a health programme being supported by DfID. Titled “Saving Lives” it is focussing on improving the quality, availability and accessibility of (reproductive, maternal, new born and child health (RMNCH) services). Bobby Stansfield did not know much more about this but can put OWL in contact with a colleague if we wish to know more. (See also: <https://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk/projects/GB-GOV-1-300036>)

² On this issues, we witnessed at first hand “Clearing Saturday”. On the first Saturday of every month, everybody across Sierra Leone has to stay at home and clean their homes and communal areas between 6am and 12 noon. The rubbish is piled up in the streets and collected later that day by refuse vehicles. This is a new initiative by the President and from those we spoke to across Sierra Leone, it is being well received and followed. (See photo in appendix)

5. On environmental matters, there is also a priority to reduce plastic usage and pollution including pollution of oceans. The African Development Bank is developing a large water sanitation programme.

Visit to Home Leone project “Destiny Village”

Sunday 3rd February

On the way to Bo on Sunday, we paid a visit to “Destiny Village”, a project run by the UK-based charity Home Leone in Newton. (See also photos in appendix.)

Home Leone’s vision is of a sustainable movement that sees the end of slum living in Sierra Leone. Its first pilot “Destiny” Village is seeking to develop a new community, relocating over 2,000 people from across Freetown’s 62 slums, to new secure low cost homes.

As its website states: *“Home Leone adopts a holistic approach, providing jobs, education, social infrastructure, community utilities and health facilities. Its community design and layout, environmental considerations, social justice initiatives and skills training ensure this innovative, community-led relocation model provides a great opportunity for resident’s life change.”*

Destiny Village is built on 25 acres of land in Newton and, when complete, will be a new community of 344 homes where each resettled family has a job and an opportunity to own their own home in 7-20 years. 2,000 people will form a new community with a business park, primary and senior schools, health centre, and other community and social infrastructure. A key principle in the village is that one job is offered to each household, thereby providing a stable income such that they can afford the rent on their property.

We were given a guided tour of this impressive development (albeit at an early stage of construction) by the Chief Executive Nigel Hyde. Bob May, who has been delivering the urban planning training with OWL, is a trustee of the charity and has been heavily involved with the project since 2015.

Urban planning workshop with Bo City Council

Monday 4th – Wednesday 6th February

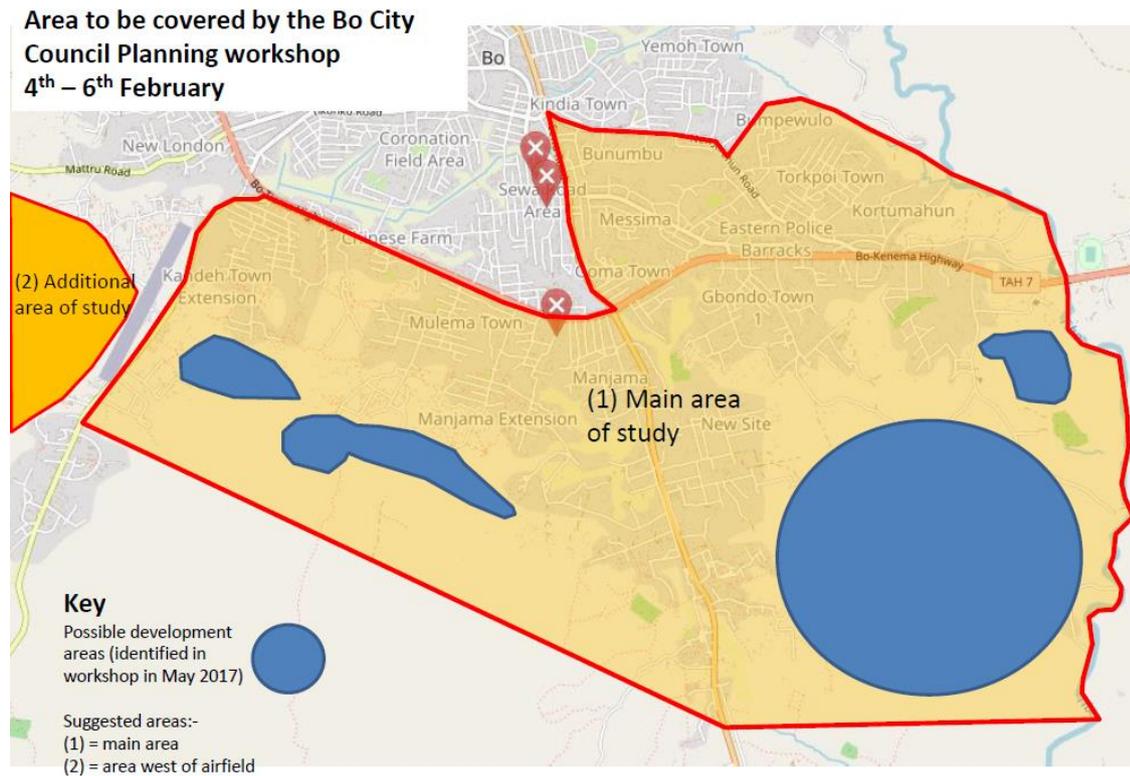
This three-day workshop was seeking to build on the previous workshops undertaken in May and December 2017. The springboard for this was the Prince’s Foundations “Rapid Urbanisation Toolkit” and the selection of Bo as a pilot city. The previous workshops had sought to identify areas for new growth in Bo and consider how these should be masterplanned.

This workshop took a different approach, and instead focussed on five existing wards in the southern part of the city, mostly to the south of the Bo-Kenema Highway. The aim of the three-day workshop was to:-

1. Review the SE cluster “consistency” of five Wards in Bo including the Eastern Police barracks and the town expansion area.

2. Understand and bring together the planned interventions and identification of land for community uses:-
 - (A) Within built-up areas and
 - (B) On land for possible future expansion.
3. Identify both short term objectives (quick wins) and longer term strategic objectives for the development of this area.
4. Map out and prepare action plans to safeguard land for development

The area under consideration is as shown on the map below.



The workshop was attended by the following.

Monday 4th

- BCC officers
- Development Planning Officer
- Assistant DPO
- Monitoring & Evaluation Officer
- Valuation Officer
- Gender Officer
- Engineer
- 5 x ward councillors

PLUS facilitators: Bob May,
Mair Evans, Philip Clarke

Tuesday 5th

- As Monday plus:-
- 2 x Section Chiefs
- 3 x landholding families
- 2 x Civil Society reps

Wednesday 6th

As Monday

One World Link hosted and funded the event.

The key tasks that we undertook were as follows:-

- Day 1**
- Mapping and agreeing ward boundaries across the five wards
 - Scoping out known local priorities within the wards. These could be either existing problems that needed to be addressed (eg: road and footpath improvements, flood alleviation) or new facilities that need to be provided (eg: schools, public health units).
 - Agree three priority areas for attention.
 - Site visit to these three areas to review local priorities.
- Day 2**
- Meeting with landowner families to feedback findings from yesterday.
 - Mapping areas controlled by main landowning families.
 - Reviewing local priorities identified on Day 2 with landowning families and considering whether/how these could be delivered.
- Day 3**
- Mapping workshop – basic mapping techniques
 - Reviewing Bo City Development Plan (2019-2022) to establish key strategic development priorities identified as being required across the city
 - Reviewing these strategic priorities against the local priorities identified on days 1 & 2 and revising local priorities accordingly.
 - Site visit to review key priority areas and consider further how best these can be supported.

At the end of the workshop, Bob May took the hand drawn maps back to the graphics team at his office and they will now turn these into publishable plans which they will then send to BCC (and OWL).

Overall the workshop can be considered a great success. In particular:-

1. There was excellent support throughout from BCC, both from officers and councillors. The enthusiasm and commitment of councillors was particularly welcome. They added a huge amount of local knowledge which give an added dimension and “grounding” to the workshop.
2. The workshop was able (for the first time as far as we are aware), to produce maps of ward boundaries. Previously these have been written descriptions only. With the support of the landowning families we were also able to produce maps showing the approximate area of their landholdings which could be linked with the ward maps.
3. The workshop provided an opportunity for BCC to think spatially about some of the issues and objectives identified in their “development plan”. Previously this has identified priorities, but not identified specific locations where these could be delivered.
4. The site visits gave an opportunity for everyone to better understand the practical application of ideas generated in workshop sessions.
5. The workshops showed the officers how this exercise - which covered about a quarter of the city area – could be repeated across the city. There is no reason why future workshops covering other parts of the city could not be led by BCC officers. The only real limitation to this would be the ability to produce the base maps that formed the starting point to the workshop. (These had been generated by One World Link using Open Street Mapping and then printed out at A3 and brought to the workshop).

It is hoped that the ideas generated by the workshop will be included in the BCC Development Plan as it is updated and reviewed. OWL will continue to keep in touch with BCC (and in particular their Development Planning Officer Haja Lukay) to review progress and how OWL and the Prince's Foundation may be able to assist going forward.

See appendix for photos of the workshop.

Meeting with Joseph Bindi (Chair of Bo District Council Friday 8th February

Although the planning workshop was focussed very much on Bo City Council, we were keen to maintain the link with Bo District Council and in particular their Chair, Cllr Joseph Bindi. (Joseph has been a friend of OWL for several years and was part of the delegation in 2016 that visited Leamington.) Since we last met Joseph he has been appointed – in addition to his duties in Bo District – as the President of LoCASL (the Local Councils Association of Sierra Leone). This is a prestigious and influential role within local government in Sierra Leone. It is a two-year appointment and Chair Bindi was appointed in September 2018.

Much of our discussion with Chair Bindi was about his role in LoCASL and in particular an initiative to support local government across Sierra Leone. This has received €300,000 in grant funding from the European Union. This initiative is aiming to build capacity in local government across Sierra Leone through measures such as:-

- Supporting improved logistics and management
- Opening an office for LoCASL in Freetown
- Lobbying Parliament and ministers in advance of an anticipated review of the 2004 Local Government Act.
- Improve relationships between central and local government officers
- Lobby on matters such as salaries and payments.

The President has publicly endorsed moves towards greater decentralisation and so it can be hoped that this intervention, and the support from the EU, is timely and productive.

Health link meetings Monday 11th February

We had a couple of meetings in support of the emerging health link. In providing these notes, we are conscious that Helena and other have had much more detailed discussions about these matters.

a) Yemoh Town Clinic

Together with Paul Atkins, we met with Lansana Deen to get an update on work at the Clinic following the more extensive visit by Helena and the team of midwives in October/November.

1. The clinic is doing well. New staff have been employed in the last few months and there have been improvements in the referral system and the supply of drugs.
2. The extension to the clinic has been completed however cannot operate until water can be supplied to the building. Two options are available; (1) to purchase a submersible pump and tank to supply water from the well or (2) to establish a piped supply from the mains water. Given the location of the clinic and distance from mains water supply, option (1) is favoured as a more deliverable shorter term solution. Option (2) will be pursued in the longer term, however is assessed as too complex and costly at the present time. The cost of option (1) is estimated at 6,500,000 SLL. The clinic would wish to undertake this work as part of a wider programme of essential improvements including the installation of a placenta pit. The total cost for all improvements (including the water supply) is estimated as 20,000,000 SLL.
3. Yemoh Town is working closely with other clinics across the Chiefdom. There are 36 in total and Mr Deen has a supervisory role over these. This includes supporting training.
4. The introduction of free health care has led to significant increase in demand on the clinic – estimated at 50%.
5. The Government has made additional ambulances available and now there is one for each Chiefdom. Ambulances are now able to get patients to the clinic within 15 minutes of being called.
6. There remains an acute problem with many staff being unpaid. Approximately 50% of the staff are unpaid “volunteers”, who have not been able to be formally registered by the government. Salaried staff have, however, seen significant salary increases (suggested as being as much as 80-90%).
7. Advances in training at Yemoh Town Clinic, which Mr Deen cited as being a consequence of the involvement and support of One World Link, have been recognised in a visit in January by the District Medical Officer (DMO). A direct consequence of this visit has been a promise by the DMO to provide additional beds to the clinic once the extension is ready for operation. Three new delivery beds and 5 new patient’s beds have been promised. The clinic is now disseminating the training from OWL to other clinics in the Chiefdom.

We were given a tour of the clinic and in particular the new extension. (See photos in appendix.) It was good to see the progress that has been made since Phil was last there in December 2017. All rooms have been plastered and painted and toilets / showers fitted. Once the water supply is sorted, there are promises of some furniture (see above) to enable this additional space to start to operate.

b) Bo Children’s Hospital (BCH)

We met with Wusu Sannoh and Dr Sombie and discussed a number of matters.

1. X-ray machine: This is being explored by David Sellu (based in the UK). He has undertaken a review of the hospital and established that a digital x-ray machine (where images can be emailed

rather than requiring to be printed) would be of considerable benefit to the BCH. The machines are easy to ship and install. The expense comes in purchasing in the first place and then training staff on-site on how to use (which Dr Sellu is willing and able to do).

2. Health link: Both Wusu and Dr Sombie welcomed the idea of broadening the health link and suggested that the District Medical officer should be included in this. Some networking between health providers already takes place.
 - There is already a hierarchy of Public Health Units (PHUs) across Bo with networking taking place between them.
 - BCH belongs to a Health forum with other hospitals across the city.
3. Reforms by the government has resulted in a new pay scale for nurses (see also notes above from Yemoh Town). This has had the effect of doubling the wage budget at BCH. BCH still relies on a number of unpaid “voluntary” nurses, in common with other clinics and hospitals.
4. BCH is actively seeking Government assistance to meet its rising costs. BCH continues to charge for its services and is seeking to operate on a full cost-recovery basis.
5. BCH has seen improvements in service following the introduction of new ambulances however an ambulance for BCH is seen as now a priority.
6. BCH now has an operating theatre, however lacks a proper operating table suitable for children. There is an existing old operating table, however this is no longer fit for purpose.
7. Other current BCH ambitions include acquiring an incinerator to safely process waste & hazardous materials and a children’s playground to support children’s recovery.

Other visits and meetings in Bo

In addition to the above, during the visit we:-

- attended the OWL Teachers’ Committee to help plan for the UK Teachers’ visit,
- Visited Alfred Kanneh’s widow to pay our respects.
- visited five linked schools on Thursday 7th February. This was to share some of the visits that would otherwise be undertaken by Paul Atkins the following week as part of the Teachers’ visit. The schools visited were URB (Upper & Lower, RC Model, St. Peter’s No. 2 and Sewa Road). We saw examples of Eco Bricks under construction! (See photo in appendix.)
- visited the St. Paul’s School for the Blind at the invitation of the head teacher Mohamed Conteh.

Joseph Bindi also offered to try to arrange a meeting for us with the Minister for Sport in Freetown following Warwick District Council’s letter inviting the Sierra Leone Commonwealth Games team to attend a pre-games training camp prior to the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham. Unfortunately, it was not possible for the Minister to meet with us however Warwick District Council received a letter from the Sierra Leone Government shortly after we returned to the UK. It may be possible – if appropriate – to arrange a meeting on a future visit to Sierra Leone.

St. Mary's Fatima Interim Care Centre, River No. 2, Western Peninsula
Tuesday 12th – Thursday 14th February

To end our visit, we stayed at St Mary's Interim Care Centre and were warmly hosted by Rev. Fr Peter Konteh (Executive Director of Caritas Freetown). (See photo in appendix.) Fr Peter is also an old friend of OWL's who has previously visited Leamington. He established St Mary's ICC in 2014 (in partnership with the Healey International Relief Foundation), having previously run the St Mary's Children's Home in Bo. The Care Centre (close to No. 2 River beach) is home to orphan and vulnerable children who are lovingly looked after by Catholic Sisters (Agatha, Bernadette & Felicia). St Mary's ICC also provides medical and other resources for the community at No. 2 River. Fr Peter has recently been awarded a 2019 Sierra Ovation Award for his humanitarian work.³

Mair Evans and Philip Clarke
One World Link
March 2019

³ Founded in 2015 the Sierra Ovation Awards seek to recognise influential, outstanding men and women dedicated to contributing to Sierra Leone's political, social & economic development. The award is given annually to the top 100 most outstanding and influential Sierra Leoneans from Sierra Leone & the diaspora, with honourees coming from backgrounds including public service, entertainment, politics, media, business, sports, civil society, academia and religion.

Appendix: Photos from the visit



“Cleaning Saturday” in operation in Freetown



Destiny Village, Newton



New homes at Destiny Village



Educational Garden, Destiny Village



Planning Workshop, Bo





On the Planning Workshop site visit (4th February). We came across a family building a wall across a public footpath which was crossing a swamp. An excellent example of the problems with not having a planning system in place.





Yemoh Town Clinic, recent extension (outside and inside)





School visit: Eco bricks in the making

Fr Peter Konteh and children at St. Mary's Fatima Interim Care Centre, River No. 2

