



# **Rapid Food Security Assessment in Western Area, Sierra Leone**

**December 2008**

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## Acronyms

CFW: Cash for Work  
DACO: Development Assistance Coordinating Office  
DFID: Department for International Development  
DHS: Demographic and Health Survey  
EIU: Economists Intelligence Unit  
EU: European Union  
FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization  
FFW: Food for Work  
FUPAP: Freetown Urban and Peri Urban Agriculture Program  
GAM: Global Acute Malnutrition  
GDP: Gross Domestic Product  
MAFFS: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security  
NARP : National Agricultural Response Programme  
NRA: National Revenue Authority  
P4P: Purchase for Progress  
PRSP: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper  
NaCSA: National Commission for Social Action  
NGO: Non Governmental Organization  
PRSP: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper  
PUCAFS: Peri-Urban Community Action for Food Security  
RUAF : Resource Centers on Urban Agriculture and Food Security  
SSL: Statistics Sierra Leone  
UNCT: United Nations Country Team  
UNICEF: United Nations Children Fund  
USAID: United States Agency for International Development  
USD: United States Dollar  
VAM: Vulnerability Analysis and Monitoring  
WB: World Bank  
WHO: World Health Organization  
WFP: World Food Programme

## Executive Brief

Sierra Leone is a low income food deficit country ranked 179 of 179 countries in the 2008 Human Development Index. The country is recovering from a conflict that lasted from 1991 to 2002. Some 70 percent of the population lives under the national poverty line. According to provisional results from the 2008 Demography and Health Survey, global acute malnutrition in Sierra Leone remains at or above emergency thresholds, including in urban areas. Per capita rice consumption is 76kg per year. Imports account for approximately one third of rice consumption. Sierra Leone's underlying socio-economic vulnerability and market dependence are risk factors in a context of higher international food prices.

In October 2008, real prices for imported rice were 46 percent above a year earlier. In terms of imported rice, terms of trade for a variety of unskilled and semi-skilled urban occupations have deteriorated during the year. To mitigate the impact of higher prices, the Government has reduced tax for imports of food and fuel, restricted food exports, launched agricultural and safety net programs. Partners including the World Bank and the European Union are funding cash for work and urban food security programs. UN agencies, including FAO and UNICEF, have taken measures to respond to the effects of higher food prices. The World Food Programme (WFP) will increase its interventions for 300,000 beneficiaries in urban and peri-urban areas through a USD 17m budget increase that provides for school feeding, support to food and cash for work, and mother and child health programs.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFFS) and WFP launched the present study to guide the process of targeting imminent urban and peri-urban food security interventions. The study consisted in a literature review, interviews with key informants, and primary data collection in Western Area that included a survey of 10 retailers, and 5 focus group discussions in the slum community of Susan's Bay, and in peri-urban Regent Village. Focus group discussions took place with men, women and youth to discuss the impact of higher prices on their livelihoods, expenditure and coping strategies. The methods used in this survey imply that conclusions be considered as interim guidance for priority actions until a representative household survey is carried out.

Price increases in 2008 have reduced demand and increased costs, squeezing trader margins. Retailers report that customers purchase smaller quantities compared to last year. Increased demand for cassava and unsatisfactory supply for imported rice is reported. To cope with price increases, slum dwellers are reducing the quality and quantity of food consumed in the home, with meals including more cassava flour and less rice. Reliance on petty trade and on wood trading has increased compared to 2007. A cash-for-work strategy to build or rehabilitate community assets, coupled with livelihood support, would be appropriate in such settings. In peri-urban areas, activities have changed less due to the crisis, but food accounts for an increasing share of expenses compared to a year ago. In such areas, reforestation and erosion control schemes, coupled with skills training and market access programs, could reduce medium term vulnerability to land erosion. In non-mountain peri-urban areas, feeder roads and inland valley swamp rehabilitation could be pursued.

Based on information available, urban food security programs in Western Area should in priority target identified seaside slums home to a deprived population dependent on casual labor. Priority target groups should be slum dwellers, the youth and women. School feeding activities should target the most vulnerable wards, and then only public schools. Food for work interventions could take place in peri-urban areas where markets are less functional. In Western Area Urban, flexibility with the envisaged cash-food mix is recommended, as markets function well. Coordination must be sought with ongoing cash-for-work initiatives. Nutrition programs can target on the basis of the criteria set out in the national nutrition protocol, coupled with a community outreach strategy. An analysis of the operational environment leads to the following recommendations:

- **Link urban food security interventions to a national strategy on social safety nets.** As safety nets policy embraces issues that go beyond food security and nutrition, the UN Country Team may wish to take up the issue with the Government and donors.
- **Strengthen the knowledge base on food security in urban areas – including markets, livelihoods and nutrition.** Stakeholders are encouraged to strengthen the market monitoring system at MAFFS. Methodological support for the above could come from the recently-constituted Mano River Food Security Hub. A national Emergency Food Security Assessment, with an urban component, should take place in 2009.
- **Follow a 'learning approach' for the implementation of urban cash-for-work pilots** that would feed into shared knowledge on such programs in Sierra Leone and within the region. Coordination of new urban food security programs should continue through ward councils, and existing coordination fora such as the 'Food Security and Livelihoods Group', and the 'Multi-stakeholder Forum on Urban Agriculture'.
- **Identify, list and map out all public facilities through which assistance can be delivered (schools, health centers).** Information could be stored and kept up to date at the Development Assistance Coordinating Office (DACO). This will provide a common reference for institutions involved with urban safety net programs.
- **Capacity to implement nutrition programs should be strengthened,** given the structural nature of the problem and in view of ambitious plans to increase coverage.

Recommendation	Expected benefit	Cost	Parties involved
Support strategic thinking on social safety net policy	Urban food security interventions linked to broader strategy. National capacity for social safety net provision enhanced.	To be determined	UNCT, DFID.
Enhance the knowledge base on urban and peri-urban food security, including a strong urban component in a 2009 Emergency Food Security and Assessment	Baseline data available for urban areas, including markets, nutrition and livelihoods.	USD 100,000 – to be refined	MAFFS, Ministry of Health, FAO, Concern, UNICEF, WFP.
Adopt a 'learning approach' to urban food security interventions	Intervention's results known, evaluated and shared  Lessons learned incorporated into safety net strategy	USD 20,000	NaCSA, MAFFS, Concern, Coopi, WFP
Develop a geo-referenced list of public facilities through which assistance can be delivered	Exclusion of unregistered schools and health centers is avoided. Targeting improved.	USD 20,000	Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, DACO, WFP, UNICEF
Strengthen food price monitoring system, starting with major urban markets	Better knowledge of food price trends to inform urban food security programs and P4P	USD 10,000 per annum	MAFFS, FAO, FEWS-NET, World Vision, WFP.
Continue building absorptive capacity for nutrition interventions	Feeding programs perform up to benchmarks as programs are rolled out	To be determined	MoH, UNICEF, WFP
Lift restrictions the export ban on rice and palm oil	Better producer prices for Sierra Leone, increased market share in neighbouring countries.	None	Ministry of Trade

## 1. Introduction

Sierra Leone is a less developed country ranked 179 of 179 countries in the 2007 UN Human Development Index. The country's population was 5.6 million in 2004.<sup>1</sup> Some 40 percent of Sierra Leoneans live in urban areas. It is estimated that 19 to 25 percent of the population lives in the Freetown area. According to the 2005 PRSP, 70 percent of the population lives below the national poverty line. By the same measure, poverty affects 15 percent of the population of Western Area Urban (Freetown). The country is recovering from 11 years of civil conflict between 1991 and 2002.

Imports accounted for approximately one third of national rice needs. Most of this imported rice is thought to be consumed in urban areas. The spike in international food prices of the second quarter of 2008 led to an increase in local food prices, leading to concern over the socio economic impacts of the trend. For instance, the World Bank has estimated that an additional 150,000 people in Sierra Leone have been pushed into poverty as a result of the recent increases in food prices<sup>2</sup>.

In response, the Government in collaboration with WFP, FAO, UNICEF, and other partners have designed interventions aimed at mitigating the impact of high food prices on vulnerable households in urban and peri-urban areas. Actions include re-introduction of school feeding in Western Area, expansion of nutrition interventions as well as cash and food for work programs for vulnerable youths in urban and peri-urban areas. For the purposes of this study, 'urban' refers to the 'Western Area Urban' district that includes central Freetown and immediate environs. The term 'peri-urban' refers to the 'Western Area Rural' district abutting central Freetown, and which combines urban and rural characteristics.

In order to inform targeting decisions for the implementation of these urban and peri-urban interventions, WFP in partnership with the Government, and in coordination with other development partners have decided to undertake a rapid assessment of food security.

### Objectives

The specific objectives of the rapid assessment are to:

- Analyze likely future trends for food prices in urban Freetown, and their implications for urban livelihoods.
- Analyze immediate, mid-term and longer-term response options in urban and peri-urban areas;
- Identify clear targeting mechanisms to reach vulnerable groups such as children and female headed households in urban and peri-urban areas through school feeding, nutrition programs, food for training as well as cash and food for work.

### Methodology and process

Data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was collected from traders through a checklist, and through focus group interviews with men, women and youth. Focus groups discussions took place on December 5 2008 in Susan's Bay (urban slum, Western Area Urban, with separate discussions with men, women and youth) and on December 6 2008 in Regent Village (peri-urban settlement, Western Area Rural, separate sessions for women and youth). Each focus group included five members. The youth focus groups included both men and women. In order to reduce bias, women led the focus group discussions involving women. The focus group participants were selected to ensure that a variety of activities were represented in the focus group. Only persons living in the area for at least two years were asked to participate, as the questions were of comparative nature. The

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<sup>1</sup> UNDP (2008) Human Development Report [http://hdrstats.undp.org/countries/data\\_sheets/cty\\_ds\\_SLE.html](http://hdrstats.undp.org/countries/data_sheets/cty_ds_SLE.html)

<sup>2</sup> World Bank (2008) Food Price Crisis Response Trust Fund Program Document.

focus group discussions focused on economic and livelihood activities, food consumption, expenditure, shocks and coping mechanisms. The focus group discussion guide is provided in Annex 1.

Market data was collected through a trader questionnaire. Ten retailers were interviewed, six in central Freetown's Dove Cot market, and four in peri-urban Regent Village. Retailers were purposefully selected in order to have different types of traders in the sample. The information from the trader served to triangulate information provided by other sources on the performance of urban and peri-urban markets. The trader questionnaire is made available in Annex 2.

The secondary data sources include a range of agencies and institutions including Statistics Sierra Leone (SSL), Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Food Security (MAFFS), Ministry of Health, Ministry of Trade, the National Revenue Authority (NRA), UNICEF, FAO, donors and Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) including Concern and Coopi, USAID and the European Union, with whom bilateral discussions took place. These discussions allowed exchange on opportunities and constraints to the implementation of urban and peri-urban food security programs in the context of Sierra Leone. The response section of the present document draws heavily on this process.

The approach to household impact assessment adopted in this study is qualitative and of too limited scope to representatively reflect the diversity of urban livelihoods of Western Area. As such the content of the present report is best thought of as interim guidance on targeting urgent interventions, as preparations are made to implement a representative survey of household vulnerability to food security and nutrition in urban areas in 2009. That survey could include strata within urban areas that would allow precise quantification of vulnerability in the most deprived urban neighborhoods.

## 2. Country Context and Socio Economic Impact of Price rises

Sierra Leone is a less developed country ranked 179 of 179 countries in the 2007 UN Human Development Index. The country's population was 5.6 million in 2004. Some 40 percent of Sierra Leoneans live in urban areas. Sierra Leone shows poor socio-economic indicators, with a life expectancy at birth of 41.8 years, a 34.8 percent adult literacy rate and an under-5 mortality rate of 282 per 1000 live births. According to provisional results from the 2008 DHS, some 36.4 and 10.2 percent of children are respectively stunted or wasted, both of which exceed the World Health Organization's emergency thresholds. According to the draft 2007 WFP Vulnerability Assessment and Monitoring Report, 2.1 percent and 25.1 percent of the surveyed population respectively had 'poor' food and 'borderline' food consumption.

Map 1 below outlines Sierra Leone's administrative divisions. Western Area; where Freetown is located, is home to approximately 1 million inhabitants. In 2004 19 percent of the country's total population lived in Western Area, according to SSL<sup>3</sup>. The World Bank has claimed in 2008 that up to a quarter of the country's population lives in the Freetown area<sup>4</sup>. The population of Freetown grew by 504 percent between 1963 and 2004. The overall population of the country as a whole has 'only' grown by 128 percent in the same interval

**Map 1: Administrative Divisions in Sierra Leone.**



Freetown itself is a port city located on a mountainous peninsula bounded by the Rokel River estuary to the north and the Atlantic Ocean to the West. The city has expanded onto the slopes of a mountain range that culminates at 888m above sea level. The area receives some 3639 mm of rain per year<sup>5</sup>. Topography and rainfall combine to make the area vulnerable to

<sup>3</sup> SSL : 2004 Housing and Population Census

<sup>4</sup> World Bank, *ibid* p7

<sup>5</sup> RAMSAR , undated. Sierra Leone. [http://ramsar.wetlands.org/Portals/15/SIERRA\\_LEONE.pdf](http://ramsar.wetlands.org/Portals/15/SIERRA_LEONE.pdf)

flash flooding during the May to October rainy season, such as that which occurred in September 2008.

In 2004, Western Area included 4 rural and 8 urban wards. According to SSL, this has increased to 20 rural and 49 urban wards, perhaps due to the ongoing process of decentralization. Freetown is governed by a City Council. Local councils exist in each district, with responsibility for 'public health, roads, sanitation, electricity and agriculture'<sup>6</sup>. Ward Councils exist in each of the wards.

## 2.1 Recent macro-economic performance

In the past three years Sierra Leone's economic performance has been strong, with GDP growth above the average for sub Saharan Africa as the country continues its post conflict recovery.

According to the International Monetary Fund, (IMF) consumer price inflation has in recent years been elevated and has accelerated since 2007, due to increased food and fuel prices. High money supply growth prior to 2007 is attributed to Government borrowing from the banking system to cover the deficit<sup>7</sup>. According to the EIU, the exchange rate has been 'unusually stable' over the past three years, perhaps an indication of Central Bank intervention to limit imported inflation. There are expectations that the Leone will devalue against the US dollar in the next two years due to strong demand for imports.

**Table 1: Selected economic indicators for Sierra Leone**

Sources: SSL, EIU.

Indicator	2006	2007	2008 (est.)	2009 (est.)
Real GDP growth (%)	7.4	6.4	6	4.8
Consumer price inflation (av., %)	9.7	11.7	14	12.5
Foreign reserves excl. gold (USD million, end period)	183.9	216.6	250	n/a
Exchange rate USD: Le, average.	2,962	2,985	3,050	3,420

According to SSL, year-on-year inflation reached 15.75 percent in September 2008. The increase of the consumer price index this year is primarily due to increases in 'housing, water electricity and gas' (21.55 percent) and 'food and non-alcoholic beverages' (18.91 percent) - categories that account for sixty percent of the weight of the overall index. Year on year inflation in 2007 was 11.7 percent.

These price increases have led the Government to act to mitigate the phenomenon's impact. A National Agricultural Response Programme (NARP) was launched, providing for a food supply response. Tariffs on imported rice were reduced from 15 percent to 10 percent, and the reference for duty calculation went from USD 260 to USD 375 per ton (which was lower than FOB prices for Thai rice earlier this year). Sales tax on sugar was reduced from 38 to 26.5 percent. Import duty and sales tax on wheat was reduced from 20.75 percent to 2.5 percent. Import and excise duty for petroleum products were reduced. The Government has restricted exports of rice and palm oil to ensure local supply. These restrictions remain in force.

The National Revenue Authority estimates that these tax measures led to a cost of USD 3.4 million in terms of foregone revenue in the first semester 2008, causing it to miss targets for tax receipts. The cost is equivalent to some 0.15 percent of 2008 GDP. Although official reserves of hard currency are declining, they remain at a comfortable level, covering approximately 9 months of imports. The limited cost of these temporary measures indicates that their existence does not endanger the solvability of the Government. At the moment, it is

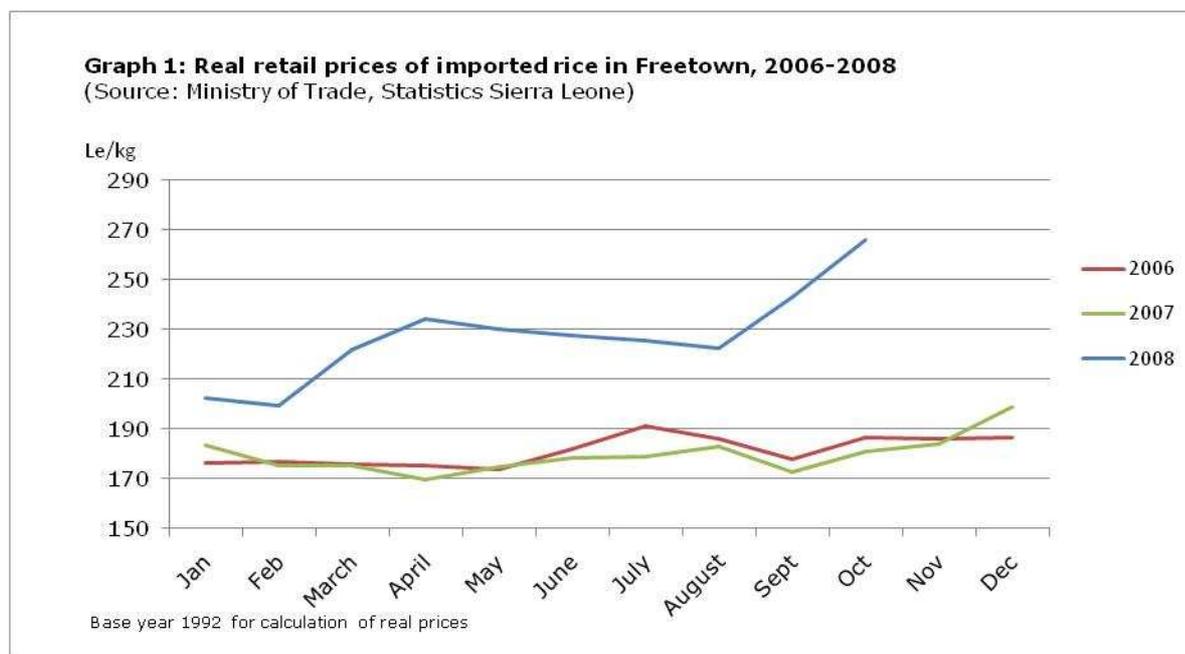
<sup>6</sup> United Nations: Sierra Leone Human Development Report 2007 pXV

<sup>7</sup> International Monetary Fund 2008. Sierra Leone: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper Progress Report. IMF Country Report 05/250.

not thought that higher prices threaten the country's macroeconomic position, nor is it likely that latent macroeconomic instability could somehow exacerbate the effect of higher prices.

## 2.2 Magnitude of domestic food price changes

Rice is the staple commodity in Sierra Leone. Per capita consumption of rice was 76kg per year in 2003, according to FAO<sup>8</sup>. One third of rice needs are covered by imports. It is thought that 90 percent of rice consumed in Freetown is imported. As graph1 below illustrates, by October 2008, the real retail price of imported rice in Freetown was 47 percent above October 2007, and 44 percent above the three-year average.



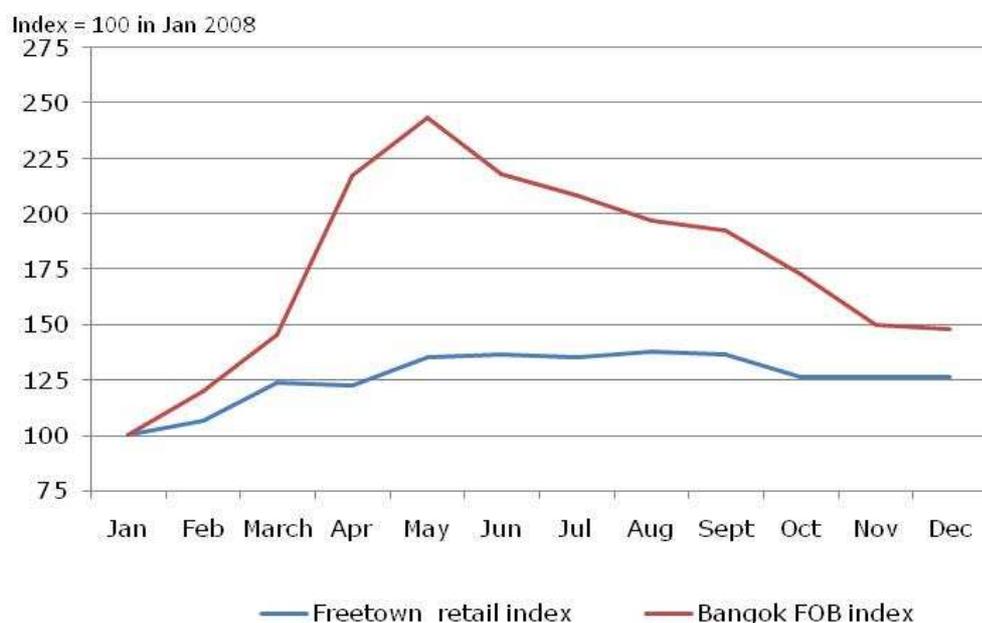
Rice prices in the international rice market have been dropping since June 2008. The continued rise in the price of imported rice in Freetown reflects a lag of months in the transmission of international prices to the Sierra Leonean market. It can be hypothesized that old in-country stocks and long lead times to ship rice from Asia to Sierra Leone could be explanatory factors. According to the Ministry of Trade, there are 5 active importers in the rice market. Rice imports mainly originate from East Asia. The rice market in Freetown is integrated with the international market. January to October 2008 monthly real price series for the Freetown and Bangkok show a 0,82 correlation coefficient. A comparison of real price trends, expressed as an index based at 100 in January 2008, shows that prices in Sierra Leone have increased much less than on the international market and still remain below international levels<sup>9</sup>

As graph2 below suggests, it is possible that prices in Freetown will not drop much from their comparatively low current level. A recent drop in sea freight rates (or of other costs reflected in the retail price of rice in Freetown) could benefit the consumer as new rice consignments arrive.

<sup>8</sup> FAOSTAT - faostat.fao.org.

<sup>9</sup> Real prices calculated using the Consumer Price Index of Freetown provided by SSL.

**Graph2: Real price trends for imported rice in 2008 - FOB Bangkok, retail Freetown.**  
(Sources: FAO, Ministry of Trade, SSL, US Bureau of Labor Statistics)



### 2.3 Socio economic impacts

Sierra Leone's high underlying poverty rate is of concern in a context of high food prices. As Table 2 shows, 70 percent of the population of Sierra Leone lives below the poverty line. The severity of poverty is highest in rural areas, as made explicit in the table below. Urban areas other than Freetown show rates of poverty that are close to the national average. 15 percent of Freetown's population lives in poverty. The PRSP estimates that 26 percent of Sierra Leoneans are 'food poor', meaning that they cannot afford adequate caloric intake. The proportion of 'food poor' in Freetown is, at 2 percent, well below the national average of 26 percent.

**Table 2: Poverty in urban and rural Sierra Leone**

Source: Sierra Leone 2005 PRSP

Areas	Share of Sample (percent)	Food Poor (percent)	Total Poor (percent)	Poverty Severity Index (percent)	Proportion of Sierra Leone's Poor (percent)
Freetown	10.4	2.0	15.0	4.0	2.2
Rural Areas	64.4	33.0	79.0	19.0	72.8
Other Urban Areas	25.1	20.0	70.0	14.0	25.1
National	100.0	26.0	70.0	16.0	100.0

The World Bank has evaluated that higher prices could cause an increase of 150,000 in the poverty headcount in Sierra Leone, reflecting the strong distributional impact of rice prices<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> World Bank, Ibid.

## 2.4 Impacts on markets and traders:

Overall, the trader survey shows that retailers perceive themselves as operating in a context of higher costs, lower demand, and unreliable supply, especially for imported rice. Nonetheless retailers' ability to respond to demand is helped by their physical proximity to the major wholesale markets of Freetown. Structural difficulties, such as undercapitalization, were mentioned.

All interviewed traders attribute the increase in food prices to higher costs from their suppliers, 80 percent of traders also attribute the rise to higher transportation costs and to higher taxes. Higher prices have had an impact on demand: 57 percent of traders report decreased demand, a trend which is especially widespread for imported rice. All of the traders actively selling rice report that demand has dropped for the commodity compared to 2007. Of the traders selling gari (cassava flour), 67 percent report decreased demand for that commodity in the past year. 60 percent of the traders witnessed changes in buying behavior. Of these traders, 83 percent indicate that their customers are buying smaller quantities than last year and half claimed that customers are buying cheaper and lower quality foods. This decreased demand is attributed to the high price of commodities, in a context where consumers have low purchasing power.

Three quarters of the retailers selling imported rice report that supply has worsened for that commodity. Interestingly, 57 percent of traders carrying gari perceive that supply has improved or stayed stable for the commodity compared to last year, due to increased production. The interviewed retailers can renew their supplies in two to three days, suggesting that traders should be able to respond to increased demand driven by pilot cash-for-work programs.

The surveyed traders operate apart from formal banking sector: 40 percent of traders claim they are exclusively self-financed. For those that borrow to purchase the food items they sell, the most common source of credit is a family member (for half of the traders using credit) and their suppliers (for 20 percent of the traders using credit). Credits are short term and interest-free. Only one trader reported having a bank account. The retail trading system's highly informal nature should be taken into account and further explored should WFP or another organisation ever wish to consider implementing a voucher-based food security program. All traders would be ready to increase their product range should demand increase.

As outlined in table3, retailers' main difficulties pertain to recovering debt from customers. Some 63 percent of credit-providing retailers report that demand for credit has increased compared to 2007. Inadequate supply is a problem perceived by most Dove Cot retailers, perhaps reflecting disrupted supply for imported rice in 2008. This issue was not mentioned at all by Regent Village retailers. Higher food prices, transportation rates and low demand are reducing margins, a problem reported by a third of Dove Cot retailer and a quarter of Regent Village retailers.

**Table 3: Most reported difficulties for traders.**

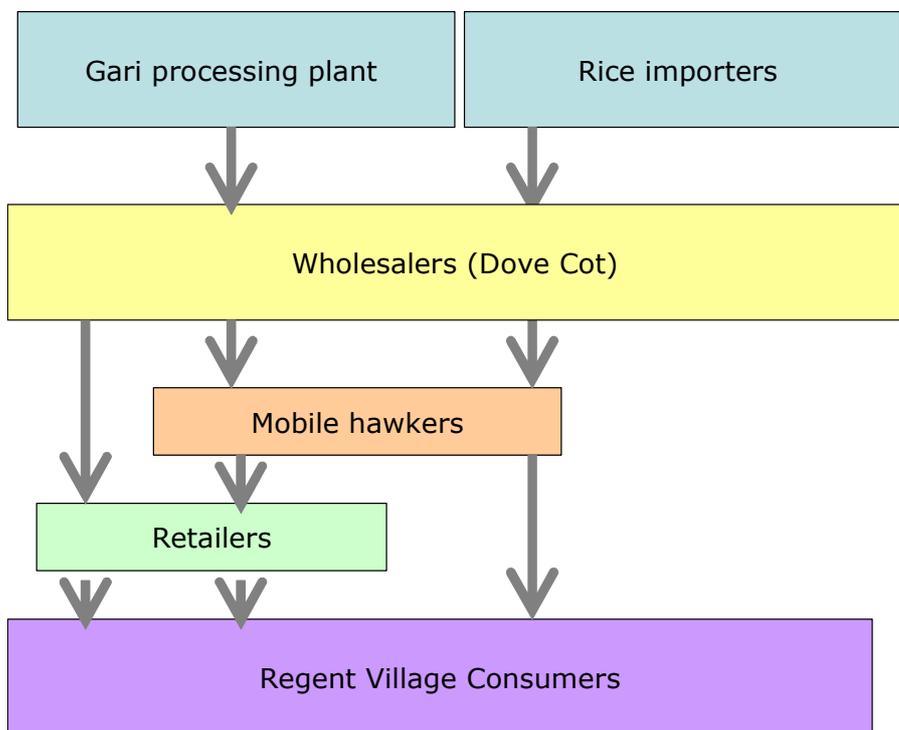
Source: Trader Survey (Dove Cot and Regent Village)

Difficulty	Dove Cot retailers	Regent Village retailers	All retailers
Recovering debt	50%	50%	50%
Inadequate supply	66%	Not mentioned	40%
Cost of commodity	17%	50%	30%
Lack of capital	33%	25%	30%
Low profits	33%	25%	30%

The market chain to reach Western Area Rural is illustrated in chart 1. Rice importers and gari producers sell to bulk-breaking Guinean wholesalers at Dove Cot market in central Freetown. These wholesalers pass on the products to hawkers, who in turn take on head loads for resale. These small head loads are sold on to retailers in Western Area Rural. Retailers sell to the final consumer, sometimes in very small packages. This fairly extended marketing chain exists to surmount the difficulty of supplying food to the isolated and mountainous rural parts of Western Area that are ill-served by public transportation. As a result, retailers in Western Area Rural tend to store small quantities (less than 50kg), and costs for both rice and gari are higher than in nearby central Freetown. The area lacks a marketplace. The construction of a functional marketplace in Regent Village could shorten the market chain by allowing consumers to bypass hawkers.

**Chart 1 Simplified market chain for Western Area Rural – Gari and Rice**

Source: Trader survey, Regent Village



## 3. Impacts on Household Food Security and Profile of People most affected

### 3.1 Household food consumption and nutrition:

The 2005 PRSP notes that in Western Area Urban and Western Area Rural, 2 and 15 percent of the population respectively are 'food poor', unable to afford adequate caloric intake. The 2007 draft VAM report indicates that 4.5 percent of households in Western Area Rural have 'poor' food consumption and 37.6 percent 'borderline' food consumption<sup>11</sup>. Comparable information was not collected for Western Area Urban. Although the prevalence of 'food poverty' in Freetown is lower than for Sierra Leone as a whole, the prevalence of households with 'poor' and 'borderline' food consumption is higher in Western Area Rural was above the national average in 2007. This elevated level of food insecurity can be taken to reflect a high degree of vulnerability to shocks to food security in Western Area Rural.

According to Concern, who carried out a household survey of 400 households of Western Area (rural and urban) in August 2008<sup>12</sup>, 32 percent of households were consuming one meal per day, and 42 percent were consuming two meals per day. This reflects the quantitative poverty of food consumption in Western Area at the time of the survey. Concern also notes that the months of July and August – which are the peak of the rainy season – were identified as periods of low income. This is probably due to the fact that income earning opportunities (such as casual labor or petty trading) are made more difficult by the high rainfall totals in Freetown at that time of year. In the absence of comparable data, it not entirely clear whether the poor food consumption pattern is a seasonal factor or one that has been influenced by price rises. By comparison, the dry season March 2005 WFP VAM report indicates that only 5 percent of surveyed households in Western Area Rural consumed one meal a day<sup>13</sup>. The 2007 draft VAM report shows that the average number of daily meals in Western Area Rural was 1.7 for adults and 1.7 for children (compared to 1.7 and 1.8 respectively for these same groups for all districts). Data for the 2007 VAM was collected in May, at the start of the lean season.

According to provisional results from the Sierra Leone 2008 DHS<sup>14</sup>, the prevalence of global acute malnutrition (GAM) is 9.9 percent in Western Area, just below the 10 percent World Health Organization emergency threshold. Interestingly, at the national level, GAM rates are higher in urban (11.2 percent) than in rural areas (9.8 percent). Data was collected in May, prior to the peak of the lean season when GAM rates are thought to be higher. The issue of causality of malnutrition is unresolved. Data collection for the DHS took place after food prices started rising. It is likely that elevated levels of global acute malnutrition in urban areas are related to structural issues such as overcrowding<sup>15</sup>, poor access to health, water and sanitation.

### 3.2 Household food access:

Secondary information suggests that the 'food poor' in urban areas live in large, polygamous families with high dependency ratios. According to the PRSP, 'food poor' households in Freetown live in very crowded conditions, with an average of 12.5 persons per household, against a national average of 6.2. In Freetown, such households have 9.5 persons per room,

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<sup>11</sup> WFP Unpublished draft. Sierra Leone Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping Survey. Data collected May 2007.

<sup>12</sup> Concern (2008) Rapid Assessment of Household Livelihood Systems in Selected Urban and Peri Urban Settlements of Freetown, Sierra Leone.

<sup>13</sup> WFP (2005) Sierra Leone Food Security and Nutrition Survey. p41

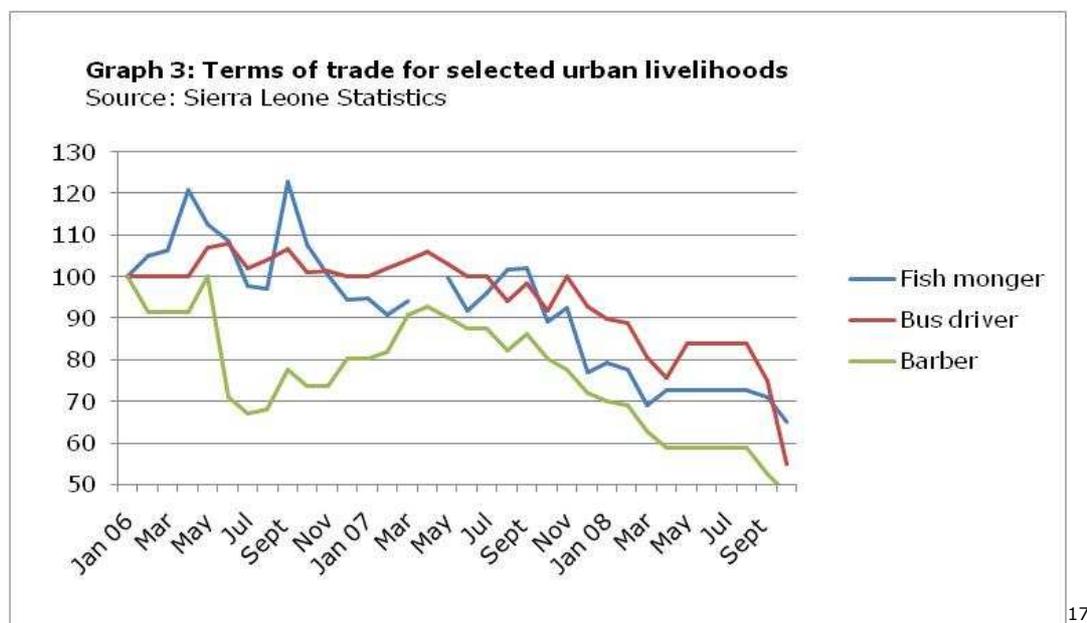
<sup>14</sup> Sierra Leone (2008) Preliminary findings presented by the Ministry of Health and UNICEF in Freetown on Dec 6 2008.

<sup>15</sup> Overcrowding is defined as three or more people per room (UN Habitat (-[http://www.unhabitat-rolac.org/default.asp?pag=questions\\_habitat.asp&id\\_secao=147&id\\_idioma=3](http://www.unhabitat-rolac.org/default.asp?pag=questions_habitat.asp&id_secao=147&id_idioma=3)))

of which 7 are dependent. The PRSP section on extreme poverty in Freetown adds that 'labour is the main asset of the poor, but they are likely to be poorly educated, and their labour low-valued. Hence it is likely that in poor households, women and even children are forced to enter the informal sector and are likely to face competitive, dead-end occupations with low pay and long hours.<sup>16</sup> Again, according to the PRSP, 74 percent of polygamous households were classified as 'poor', which is above the poverty rate for all households.

WFP's 2005 VAM indicates that half of household expense in Western Area Rural was devoted to food. One quarter of total household expense went to purchase rice. This illustrates the high degree of pre-existing market dependence for households in Western Area Rural. The most frequently reported sources of income in Western Area Rural were petty trading (27.2 percent of households, remittances (8.5 percent) and the sale of fish (8.1 percent). For households practicing agriculture, the most commonly grown crops include cassava (one-third of households), sweet potatoes (22 percent), upland and swamp rice (15 percent each), groundnuts (20 percent) and peppers (18 percent).

Higher prices for imported rice have affected food access, as expressed in terms of trade for many of the semi-skilled urban livelihoods that exist in Western Area. The graph below shows trends for terms of trade (wage or product in terms of rice), indexed at value 100 in January 2006.



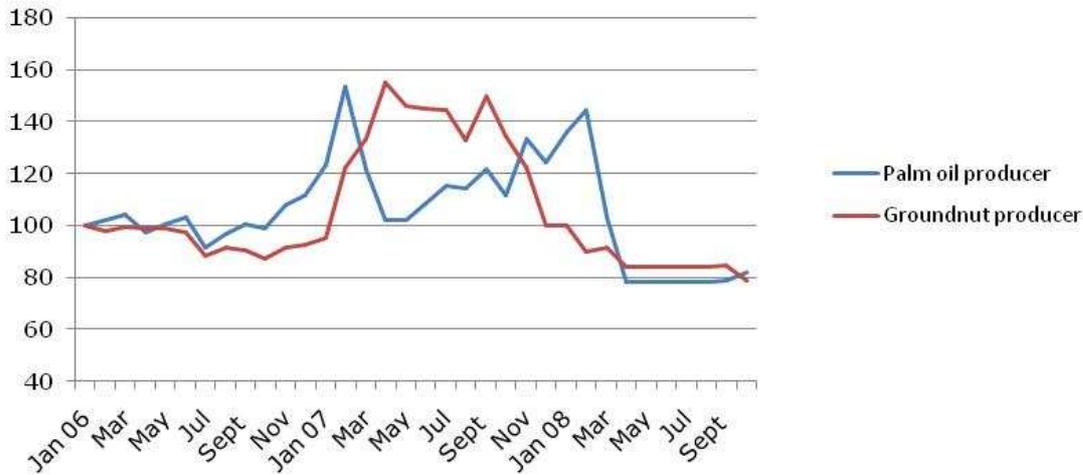
This indicates that terms of trade have been declining in terms of rice since 2006 with acceleration of the decline in 2008. As a result; by September 2008 a barber could only purchase half as much rice as in January 2006 with the price of a haircut. To varying degrees the trend holds for fish mongers and workers in the transportation sector. In the latter case the reduction of the regulated fare that accompanied the drop in fuel prices announced in October 2008 contributed to worsen that group's terms of trade, as rice prices were still high at the time. An analysis of rural terms of trade, plotted on gaph 4, shows that terms of trade for groundnut producers (who are represented in Western Area Rural) are 20 percent below what they were a year ago.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid p63.

<sup>17</sup> One outlier deleted for 'fish monger' data series. (price of snapper in March 2007)

**Graph 4 Terms of trade. Palm oil and groundnuts vs. imported rice**

Source: Sierra Leone Statistics

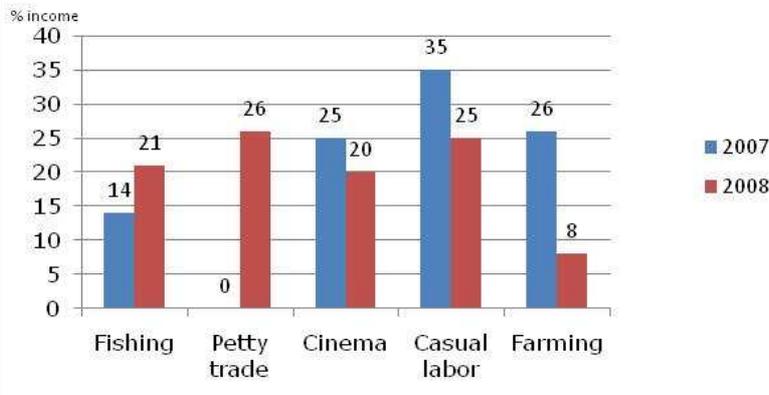


In order to capture the impact of higher prices on urban livelihoods, focus group discussions were held in Susan’s Bay (Western Area Urban) and Regent Village (Western Area Rural). They focused on comparing income sources and expenditure in 2007 and 2008. Discussion on the reasons for these trends and coping strategies followed.

*Susan’s Bay – Slum community in Western Area Urban*

**Graph 5. Income sources: 2007 vs. 2008. Susan’s Bay**

Source: Youth focus group .

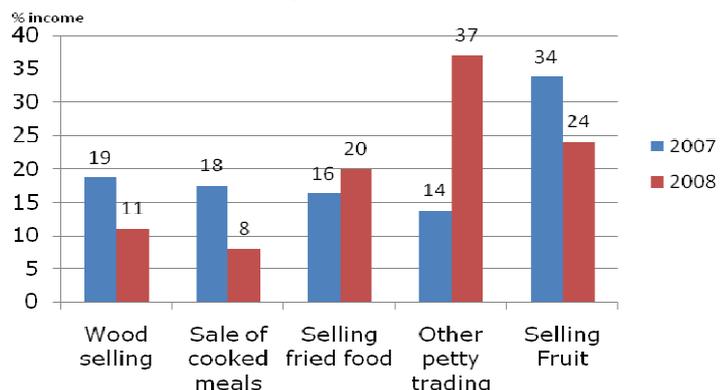


According to the focus group discussions held in Susan’s Bay, income sources have changed in the past year. As graph 5 to the left shows, the youth have relied less on casual labor in 2008 than last year. Focus group members mentioned that this is due to the fact that is less demand for casual labor on the market. They have adapted by increasing their involvement in petty trading, a category not mentioned in 2008 by the youth.

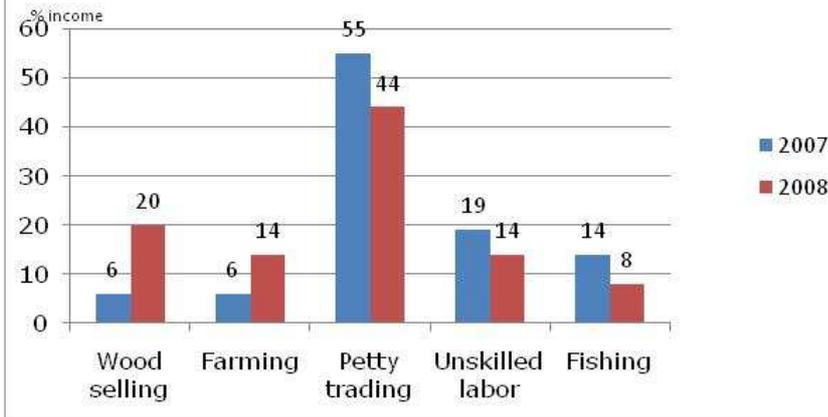
For women, activities have also changed, as shown on graph 6 to the right. Increasing prices have made selling prepared meals less attractive, prompting a switch to petty trading – similar to the youth – , and selling fried street food that is meant to be carried home. By and large, women have adapted to higher prices by increasing their dependence on selling fruits and vegetables bought at the nearby Dove Cot market, with seasonal variations imposed by the availability of produce.

**Graph 6. Income sources: 2007 vs. 2008. Susan’s Bay**

Source: Female focus group .



**Graph 7. Income sources, 2007 vs. 2008. Susan's Bay.**  
Source: Men's focus group



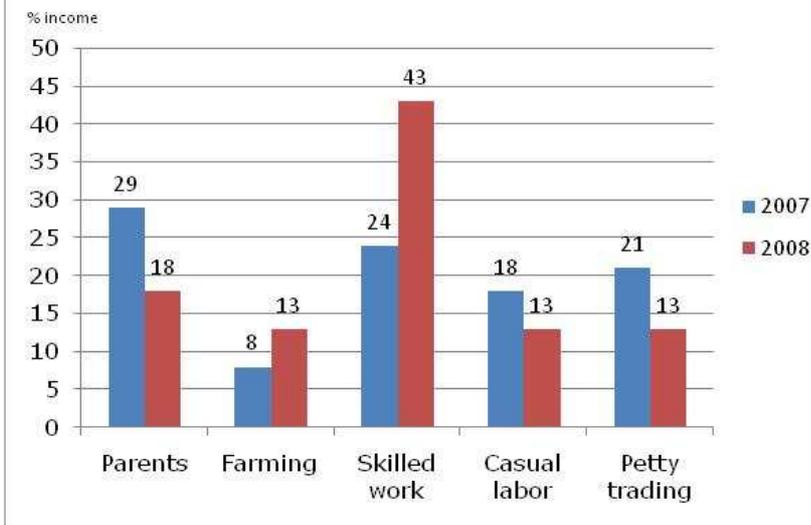
The men's focus group reported an increasing reliance on wood trading compared to 2007, shown on graph 7. The wood comes from the mangrove near Freetown and sold within Susan's Bay, where it is the main cooking fuel. An increase in farming is also noted. The men's focus group explained that they farm fields located far from their residence, as the overcrowded conditions of Susan's Bay make farming there impossible. Fishing has become less profitable due to the higher cost of fishing equipment and fuel.

The focus groups in Susan's Bay reported that the breakdown of expenditures has remained stable with little variation between 2007 and 2008, as the price of school fees, education and health have all increased in the past year. The proportion of income spent on food is lower than in rural areas, as urban households must pay for services such as rent, water and sanitation that are low or free in rural areas. The women reported spending more on remittances in 2008 compared to 2007 due to the poor health of relatives living in the provinces.

In terms of coping with specific reference to food consumption, the women's focus group of Susan's Bay reported that the number of meals is reduced and that a switch to less preferred foods has taken place. For example, families are mixing gari and rice, whereas rice was consumed as the main starch of a meal before the price rise. Women are buying more street food and preparing fewer meals. The other focus groups confirmed that the quality and quantity of food prepared at home was declining. As was the case for other seaside slums of Freetown, Susan's Bay was affected by flooding in September 2008, which again illustrates the multi-faceted nature of risk and vulnerability in these locations.

*Regent Village – peri urban community in Western Area Rural*

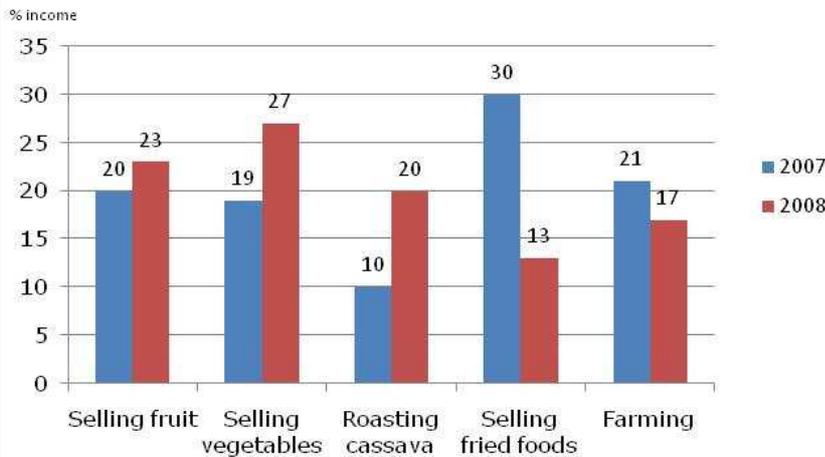
**Graph 8. Income sources: 2007 vs. 2008. Regent Village**  
Source: Youth focus group .



The impact of higher food prices in peri-urban Regent Village (Western Area Rural) is different, again analyzed in terms of income, activities and coping. The youth focus group reported a decrease in income received as an allowance from parents. The youth have reported less income from casual labor and from petty trading, as shown on graph8. The youth explained that casual labor wage had increased from 7,000 leones per day in 2007 to 10,000 leones per day in 2008. Nonetheless this increase is not commensurate with the increase in the price of rice,

which doubled from 60,000 leones per 50kg bag to 120,000 leones per bag. The youth increasingly rely on income from semi-skilled work (such as hairdressing, driving vehicles), and farming.

**Graph 9. Income sources: 2007 vs. 2008. Regent Village.**  
Source: Female focus group .

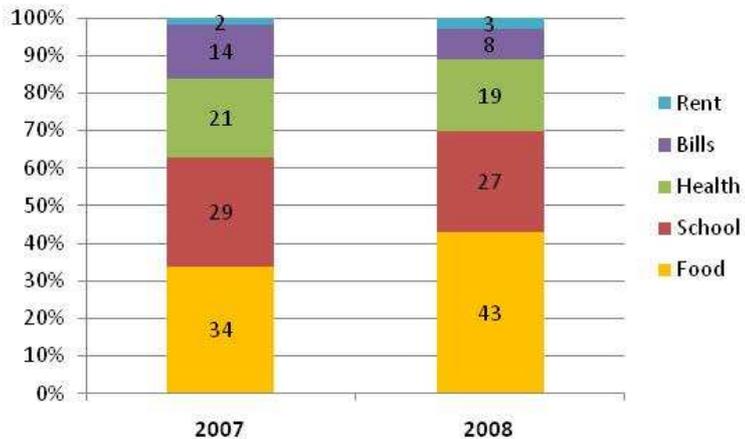


As shown on graph 9 to the left, the women’s focus group reported making less income from the sale of fried foods and farming compared to 2007. Income from sales of both fruit/vegetables and selling roasted cassava increased in 2008. The women combine petty trading and farming, this has not changed due to higher prices. Nonetheless the women complained that profits were lower this year due to lower demand for the

vegetables they grow and the food they sell.

The women’s focus group reported an increase in the share of expenditure devoted to food in 2008 compared to 2007, this is illustrated in Graph 10. The increase in food expenses has come at the expense of paying ‘bills’ for water, electricity, and transportation. The youth focus group have increased their expenditure on education, food and clothing at the expense of paying rent.

**Graph 10. Expenditure categories, Regent Village (Peri urban)**  
Source: Female focus group



In terms of coping the youth mentioned that they are now walking to schools in central Freetown instead of using public transportation as they did in the past, due to the fact that fares have increased and to the unreliability of bus service. Youth will cut trees and sell them to earn money. Perhaps due to the widespread nature of this practice; erosion is evident and farming is becoming less viable. Sedimentation is decreasing the fertility of the valleys where vegetables are grown, threatening one the community’s livelihoods.

Both focus groups mentioned a decline in the quality and quantity of food consumption. The focus groups both mentioned that compared to 2007, portions of food prepared at home are smaller. Rice portions have diminished due to the commodity’s rising cost. The women claimed that sauce is not prepared every day, the quantity that was in the past used for a day is now being stretched over a period of two or three days. Meals are prepared at home once a day. The draft 2007 VAM indicates that under ‘normal’ conditions adults in Western Area Rural consume 1.7 meals per day. To a degree that is difficult to quantify, this reduction in food preparation at home is compensated by meals taken outside the household.

### 3.3 People in need of assistance:

The limited nature of available data does not allow the present study to go beyond provisional targeting recommendations for priority and urgent interventions in the coming months. A representative household food security and nutrition survey that should be implemented in Freetown in 2009 would provide a sounder basis for the targeting of the future stages of food security programs in urban and peri-urban areas.

With the caveat above in mind, groups to target in priority are those with the less diversified livelihoods that have been affected by higher prices. Secondary data and primary data converge on certain criteria. The people in need of assistance are the extreme poor in Western Area, whose characteristics are described in the 2005 PRSP. Their characteristics are

- very large families
- high dependency ratios
- dependence on unskilled labor

Urban food security programs should at first focus slum dwellers, and specifically women and youth. The focus group interviews show that the youth and women in slum areas have attempted to adapt to the crisis by increasing their reliance on petty trade as well as environmentally unsustainable activities. In addition to the socio-economic criteria set out above, vulnerability to flooding and landslides is an additional characteristic of people in need of assistance. Indeed, the most crowded areas of town, where food insecurity is thought to be highest are seaside slums that were built on mud flats located near ports or markets, where casual labor could be easily accessed. These slums were affected by flooding in September 2008.

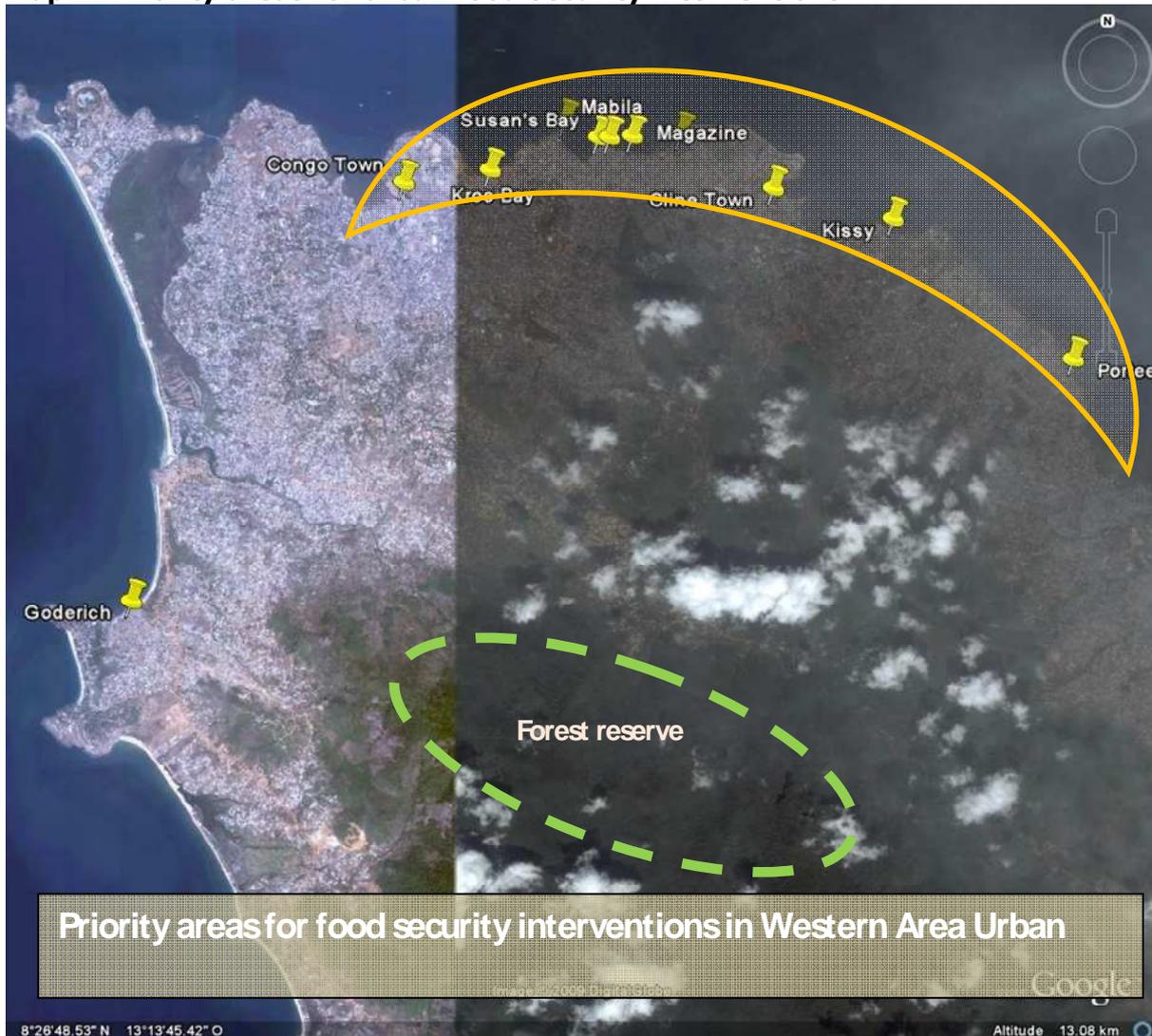
According to UN Habitat, a slum is defined by lack of access to improved water, lack of access to sanitation, non-durable housing, insufficient living area, and security of tenure. By this definition there are 27 slums in Freetown<sup>18</sup>. Sierra Leone's slum population is growing by 4 percent a year, which is above the overall population growth rate. Slums in Freetown are specifically vulnerable to hazards such as flooding, landslides in view of their geographic location on hillsides and in reclaimed mangrove on the seaside. The combination of socio-economic vulnerability (including weak coping ability) and exposure to risk argue for targeting these areas and groups in priority.

On the basis of external appearance (roofing material, existence of access roads, size of building, construction pattern) it is possible to identify slum concentrations from satellite photography. These concentrations, shown on map 2, occur mainly in a belt of precarious settlements along the shore in Northern and Eastern parts of the peninsular area. These concentrations share common characteristics such as lack of access roads, poor health and sanitation, overcrowded living conditions.

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<sup>18</sup> UN Habitat (2006) '[Slums and Informal Settlements in Freetown](#)'

**Map 2: Priority areas for urban food security interventions**



These areas include slums also mentioned in Concern's assessment:

**Western Area Urban:**

- Kroo bay
- Susan's Bay
- Mabella
- Ropoti
- Portee
- Old Wharf

**Western Area Rural**

- Regent
- Bathurst
- Charlotte

In terms of administrative divisions, the local councils that include these slum areas are:

- Central 2
- Central 1
- East 1
- East 2
- East 3
- West 2

It should be mentioned that smaller pockets of slums exist outside these boundaries. The identification of slum areas is undertaken to provide an idea of the spatial distribution of the vulnerable areas. This approach is less suited to the dispersed habitat in peri-urban or rural areas. Operational targeting will not be based on geographic targeting alone.

The population of Freetown is estimated at about 1 million. According to UN Habitat, of this population, 58 percent are rental occupiers 64 percent of households have fewer than 2 rooms to live in. 63 percent of Western Area residents live within a half mile of a health center, 80 percent within a half mile of a primary school This indicates that a targeting strategy based on delivery of assistance through schools and/or health centers should be accessible to most of the population. Although as much as a quarter of school age children are not enrolled in school. Poverty affects school attendance: according to the PRSP, school attendance is 50 percent for boys and 33 percent for girls from poor households.<sup>19</sup> Even a public school-based strategy to deliver food assistance will have to be complemented by other components including outreach, communication and capacity building due to foreseeable exclusion error. Furthermore the generally poor state of the public school and health systems suggest that capacity of health and education systems should be reinforced to cope with increasing demand.

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<sup>19</sup> PRSP Ibid p40.

## 4. Ongoing Responses to Price Rises

### Government

In order to mitigate the impact of high food prices the government has implemented a series of measures that include adjustments to taxes to ensure complete pass through of international prices, as referred to earlier in this document. An export ban on rice and palm oil was decided to protect local supply and remains in place. The government has also formulated a National Agricultural Response Programme (NARP) that aims to support agricultural production. The NARP will strengthen Agricultural Business Units and Farmer field schools to increase cultivation and improve linkages to the market. The national response to higher food prices also includes a safety net component that includes. To date it is unclear whether there is an intention to make such a system durable, especially as international price rises have abated. At the time of writing the Department for International Development (DFID - United Kingdom) is supporting the government in developing a strategy on social safety nets.

NaCSA has received World Bank support for the implementation of a USD 4 million Cash for Work (CFW) program. CFW programs are now underway in Freetown; the current phase of NaCSA's interventions will last into 2009. The program is implemented in Bo, Bombali, Kono, Moyamba, Port Loko, Western Urban and Western Rural districts. The wage rate will be below the prevailing rate for casual labor to avoid distorting markets. For example in Freetown, NaCSA pays 7,000 leones per day, against a prevailing wage rate of some 10,000 leones per day. In urban areas NaCSA CFW supports street cleaning and waste collection, grass cutting, road repairs; cleaning drains and other unspecified modalities. Projects cost from USD 10,000 to USD 15,000 and have a 60 percent labor content to maximize benefits to workers. The project aims to have at least 30 percent women participants.

NaCSA's experience with urban CFW shows that one of the main challenges has been coordination with Freetown City Council and Ward Councils to avoid duplication of interventions; This is a clear invitation to other parties involved in urban food security projects to pay close attention to coordination issues, for example by working through ward authorities for project selection. Furthermore new CFW interventions would be well advised to mirror the modalities applied by NaCSA for wage levels to avoid foreseeable misunderstandings with beneficiaries and representatives.

The EU is funding a EUR 3.6 million Peri Urban Community Action for Food Security(PUCAFS) program that will be implemented by the NGOs Concern and Coopi. The project duration is 5 years, starting in 2009. Activities will involve support to urban agriculture, vocational training, nutrition education and capacity building to promote community risk reduction. The project targets the youth, women and migrants who are also targeted in under WFP programs. Interventions will target the slum areas of Mabella, Susan's Bay, Kroo Bay, Grey Bush, Kuntoloh and Portee Wharf, the suburban areas of Lumley, Allentown, Kingtom, and peri-urban areas of Western Area rural of Goderich, Waterloo, Hastings and Kossoh Town. These interventions will support some 5,000 households or approximately 45,000 people. Again, the intervention areas and modalities will need to be closely coordinated between the ward councils, NaCSA, WFP to avoid potentially damaging overlaps. WFP Sierra Leone and the EU have discussed targeting modalities that reduce this risk.

In 2006 the Ministry of Agriculture launched the Freetown Urban and Peri Urban Agriculture Program (FUPAP) whose aim is to bolster marketing, storage and linking farmers and the market. The initiative involves the Dutch NGO ETC, the International Water Management Institute and the Resource Centers on Urban Agriculture and Food Security (RUAF). The FUPAP has been active in promoting vegetable production in Freetown. The project is being implemented in Western Area.

## United Nations

UNICEF is currently implementing therapeutic feeding programs in 5 public health centers in Western Area. UNICEF is promoting the use of locally produced blended food 'Benimix' as an alternative to imported products through social marketing. UNICEF plans to increase coverage of malnourished children by increasing the number of target facilities for therapeutic feeding. One of UNICEF's main concerns will be doing so in a way that allows synergies between therapeutic and supplementary feeding programs.

WFP has approved a USD 17m budget increase to its project that will serve to increase coverage in urban and peri urban areas. School feeding will be provided to 116,000 children in Western Area. Mother and child health (MCH) interventions will be expanded to 55,000 children and 73,700 women. Food and food plus cash for work will be implemented for 60,000 and 20,000 beneficiaries respectively. Some 8,000 additional beneficiaries will receive vocational or life skills training. The school feeding and cash for work components will be implemented in Western Area. Some additional MCH and food for work activities will take place in rural areas in Northern parts of Sierra Leone.

## **5. Response Analysis**

### **5.1 Scenario on foreseen impacts:**

The scenarios for the medium terms for impacts on food security are as follows

**Worst case:** Effect of global economic crisis causes remittances to collapse and a drop in cash crop prices. Government revenue is affected by a drop in royalties from the mining sector, causing a reduction in expense in the social sector. Social tensions rise. Anarchic urbanization continues in a context of poor social service provision. These trends weaken urban and rural livelihoods, prolonging the effects of the high food prices on vulnerable households who continue consuming very poor diets. Malnutrition rates increase in both urban and rural areas. Food insecurity continues to affect chronic caseloads as well as those made vulnerable by food price increases.

**Best case:** Local food prices ease off their highs but remain above levels seen in past years. Increased local production of rice and gari reduce Sierra Leone's import dependency and its vulnerability to global food market volatility. Fiscal capacity of the government is strengthened, allowing some continuity in social service provision and a degree of national leadership in rolling out national safety nets. The implementation of urban food security programs improves and eases livelihood stress. Global acute malnutrition remains high in spite of the implementation of programs to increase and to promote local blended foods. Vulnerability to food insecurity remains an issue for the chronically poor, marginal unskilled populations of rural and urban areas. This scenario is considered the most likely

### **5.2 Type of assistance appropriate and feasible**

The table below identified the main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats as a response to urban and peri-urban food insecurity are rolled out. The response will have to be implemented such as to build on strengths, avoid weaknesses, seize opportunities and limit exposure to threats.

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prior experience with school feeding in Freetown.</li> <li>• Food security projects are active in urban areas (FUPAP, PUCAFS, Kroo Bay notably)</li> <li>• Decentralization process has increased capacity at the local level to coordinate interventions</li> <li>• Strong donor support for urban food security interventions</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weak capacity in public and private sectors</li> <li>• Lack of coordination within health/education sectors</li> <li>• Limited opportunities for FFW/CFW activities in urban settings</li> <li>• Quality health facilities</li> <li>• Poor baseline information on urban food insecurity</li> <li>• Limited experience in cash and food for work interventions in urban areas.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existence of a national framework for response (NARP)</li> <li>• NaCSA has gained some experience with urban cash for work</li> <li>• Existing coordination structures (through MAFFS, the 'Food Security and Livelihoods Group', and the 'Multi-stakeholder Forum on Urban Agriculture')</li> <li>• PRSP process underway</li> <li>• Mano River Union food security hub set up in May 2008</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High inflation</li> <li>• Poor governance (ranks near the bottom of Transparency International's corruption perception index)</li> <li>• Exclusion error</li> </ul>

### 5.3 Targeting food security interventions

The following targeting framework is proposed for the interventions envisaged by WFP and partners in Western Area.

Targeting Criteria	Food for work	Cash for work	School Feeding	Nutrition
Geographic	Rural settings where markets are functional (Western Area Rural)	Urban or rural with less functional markets (Western Area Urban)	Vulnerable districts	Not necessary, but should be physically accessible
Social	Largely self targeted, some degree of community involvement required in practice.	Largely self targeted, some degree of community involvement required in practice.	Public schools only	Community outreach necessary
Age/health status	Able bodied adults	Able bodied adults	School age	As per Sierra Leone Nutrition Protocol
Seasonal	Pre- Lean season	Year round, but monitor interaction with livelihoods	Term time	Year-round

The application of a variety of targeting 'screens' allow the incorporation of geographic, social, age and health criteria in the envisaged interventions.

**Nutrition:** given the high prevalence of acute malnutrition in Western Area, targeting can proceed exclusively on the basis of nutritional status identified in the National Nutrition Protocol, as geographic and social criteria are not relevant in the decision to admit a child or a pregnant/lactating woman into supplementary feeding programs. WFP's plans to expand its current program from 5 to 35 Public Health Units in Western Area are ambitious and should be closely coordinated with UNICEF to ensure that necessary synergies exist between therapeutic and supplementary feeding activities. Outreach and communication directed to the areas identified as at risk for malnutrition may be needed as there is a known tendency for the poorest to solicit health services very late.

Assuming a caseload of 100 children per center, the capacity would be up to 3,500 children in Western Area at any one time. As 55,000 additional children are planned under the PRRO budget revision (90 days each, or a caseload of 13,750 children at any one time), it would seem that the bulk of the new caseload will be outside Western Area. Key informants have mentioned that community based approaches should be adopted where possible to improve program outcomes.

**School Feeding:** according to DACO there were in 2006 some 132,058 school children enrolled in primary schools in Western Area urban, and 56,544 in Western Area rural. WFP plans to provide rations for 116,000 pupils in Western Area, which represents roughly half of all schoolchildren in primary schools. As all schools in Western Area rural are already targeted, WFP will only be able to cover one-third of schoolchildren in Western Area urban. The Ministry of Education and WFP have taken the important step of jointly developing a document outlining selection criteria schools that would be brought into the school feeding program. The Ministry and WFP have agreed that private schools will not be targeted and that schools should have adequate infrastructure for a school feeding program. Although the document mentions geographic criteria, they are not explicitly spelled out. A list of schools to target has been developed, and it includes public schools in areas well known for their relative deprivation. Nonetheless the link between the selection criteria and the list of schools could be clearer. The last inventory of schools in Western Area is at least two years old and Ministry of Education officials acknowledge that there are many schools in operation that have not been registered with the Ministry, raising the possibility of exclusion error in targeting.

As this list of selected schools is refined, the mission suggests that the approach follow a 'public school in vulnerable ward' approach to targeting, i.e. that either all schools in a ward are targeted, or that none are. As it has already been decided that all Western Area Rural wards will be targeted, the refining of the targeting will focus on Western Area Urban, where wards home to deprived slums identified on Map2 should receive priority. Inevitably, it is to be expected that some children from non-targeted areas would attempt to enroll in targeted schools, but this phenomenon would to some extent compensate for the exclusion errors that geographic targeting entails. Exception to the 'public school in vulnerable ward' approach could be made for institutions catering exclusively to children that are disabled or with clearly identified protection needs. The application of clear, transparent and perhaps publicly known criteria would help manage expectations for the roll out of this program. The Ministry of Education is advised to carry out, as soon as possible, an inventory of schools in Western Area that will produce a comprehensive list of schools (including GPS coordinates), without which a serious targeting exercise is not possible.

**Food for Work/Cash for Work.** Pilot activities should focus on the construction of community assets in slums. The challenge will be identifying these activities, and setting appropriate work norms beforehand (in the spirit of a 'food for assets' rather than 'food for work'). In urban slums this could include food/cash for training. Food/cash for work in urban slums could include rehabilitating drainage systems, building raised walkways, community laundry facilities, community latrines and perhaps semi-skilled work to rehabilitate buildings such as marketplaces and the landing areas used by fishermen and fish processors, depending on feasibility. These activities imply a significant non-food/non-wage cost component that will

have to be funded, perhaps at NaCSA or by partnering with NGOs involved in urban food security projects such as Coopi or Concern. In peri-urban Western Area rural, cash/food-for-work could be implemented for reforestation programs and anti-erosion works that will serve to protect the viability of farming activities in the mountain valleys. Feeder roads and swamp rehabilitation could be considered in lowland areas. Coopi, a potential WFP implementing partner for cash for work has previous experience organizing 'cash for training' for urban youths in Freetown, who received cash transfers during apprenticeships. Coopi also has experience in delivering training in business skills. In order to avoid mistakes, an incremental approach to launching cash for work programs could be practical, especially to deal with worker selection issues in an urban context where the community safeguards relied upon in rural food for work may not exist

It is possible that workers could come from central Freetown to participate in reforestation schemes in the city's periphery. Some may stay for days near peri-urban worksites instead of commuting – if this considered likely, care will have to be taken to avoid protection issues, and transportation of workers (specifically women) could be looked into. The participation of women in food for work schemes could offer the opportunity to detect cases of malnutrition and communication on nutrition-related themes. Some flexibility may be required to allocate working days per targeted neighborhood (in the same way that food-for-work schemes operate). An engineer would have to estimate working days. NaCSA's experience in the matter of worker registration would be a model to follow.

It is not obvious that a food component is required in Western Area urban, as food markets function well, and an in-kind food transfer could have negative effects on the market. Some slums where cash-for-work is envisaged are located within a stone's throw of major food markets. Flexibility in implementing the envisaged cash-food mix for urban public works schemes is encouraged. A food component is more justified in Western Area rural where transportation links are irregular and markets are distant. Implementing a cash program in Western Area rural will also imply that beneficiaries will walk long distances to banks in central Freetown or, that an arrangement for mobile banking facilities be possible. Contact with the major banks in Freetown would help assess the best options.

#### **5.4 Coordination and information sharing**

Coordination issues will deserve the attention of all parties involved in urban food security programs. Various fora whose mandates are pertinent to the implementation of urban food security programs exist, the challenge will be ensuring that activities are coordinated to avoid potentially negative interactions and build synergies. These bodies include Freetown City Council, the Ward Councils, the NGO learning alliance, the 'Food Security and Livelihoods Group', and the 'Multi-stakeholder Forum on Urban Agriculture'. In keeping with the devolution process in Sierra Leone, it is recommended that partners aim to coordinate activities with the Ward Councils. It is to be expected that capacity to coordinate may not always be sufficient at these entities, and that NaCSA, the NGOs and WFP will have to develop an independent procedure to keep each other regularly informed of ongoing activities.

There is currently little shared information on food security in Western Area available to decision makers. It would be to the advantage of parties involved in food security programs to have a system producing market, livelihoods and nutrition information pertaining to urban areas in order to inform policy making.

#### **Urban Food Security Monitoring in Conakry (Republic of Guinea)**

In Conakry the Ministry of Health and the NGO Helen Keller International support an urban food security monitoring system called 'Monitoring Children, Women and Families in Food and Nutrition' (French acronym 'SEFFAN').

Data is collected on a monthly basis from 200 households in 5 of the most deprived neighborhoods of Conakry. The system produces information on household income, expenditure, food consumption, shocks and anthropometry.

Although information is not representative at the level of Conakry, it does provide early warning information to food and nutrition policy partners. In view of the challenges of food security in the urban environment in Sierra Leone, such a system could contribute to decision making.

## 6. Recommendations

On the basis of the information gathered by the mission, the following recommendations are submitted to parties involved in urban food security in Sierra Leone. They encourage partners to think strategically about safety nets, build and share knowledge, strengthen capacity and adapting food policies.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Expected benefit</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Parties involved</b>
Support strategic thinking on social safety net policy	Urban food security interventions linked to broader strategy. National capacity for social safety net provision enhanced.	To be determined	UNCT, DFID.
Enhance the knowledge base on urban and peri-urban food security, including a strong urban component in a 2009 Emergency Food Security and Assessment	Baseline data available for urban areas, including markets, nutrition and livelihoods.	USD 100,000 – to be refined	MAFFS, Ministry of Health, FAO, Concern, UNICEF, WFP.
Adopt a ‘learning approach’ to urban food security interventions	Intervention’s results known, evaluated and shared  Lessons learned incorporated into safety net strategy	USD 20,000	NaCSA, MAFFS, Concern, Coopi, WFP
Develop a geo-referenced list of public facilities through which assistance can be delivered	Exclusion of unregistered schools and health centers is avoided. Targeting improved.	USD 20,000	Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, DACO, WFP, UNICEF
Strengthen food price monitoring system, starting with major urban markets	Better knowledge of food price trends to inform urban food security programs and P4P	USD 10,000 per annum	MAFFS, FAO, FEWS-NET, World Vision, WFP.
Continue building absorptive capacity for nutrition interventions	Feeding programs perform up to benchmarks as programs are rolled out	To be determined	MoH, UNICEF, WFP
Lift restrictions the export ban on rice and palm oil	Better producer prices for Sierra Leone, increased market share in neighbouring countries.	None	Ministry of Trade

## Annexes

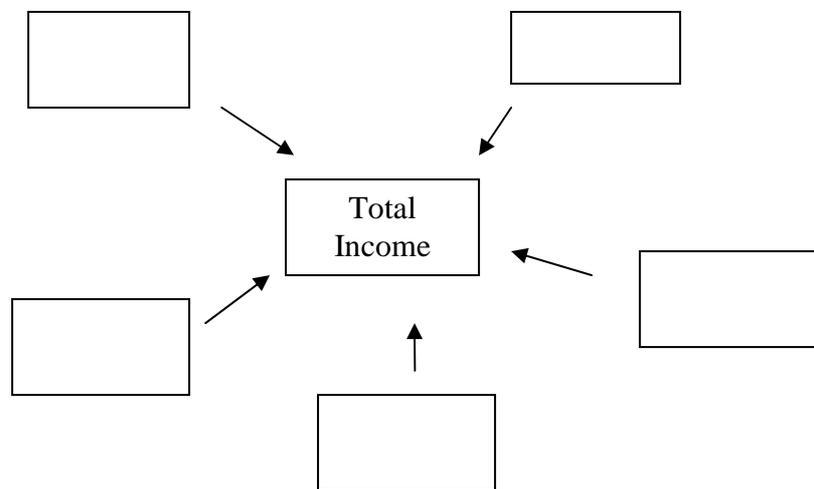
### Annex 1: Focus group interview guide

**Objective:** Per neighborhood (3 focus groups (1 male, 1 female, 1 youth) with approx. 5 people in each group. A key informant can tell you where to find group members.

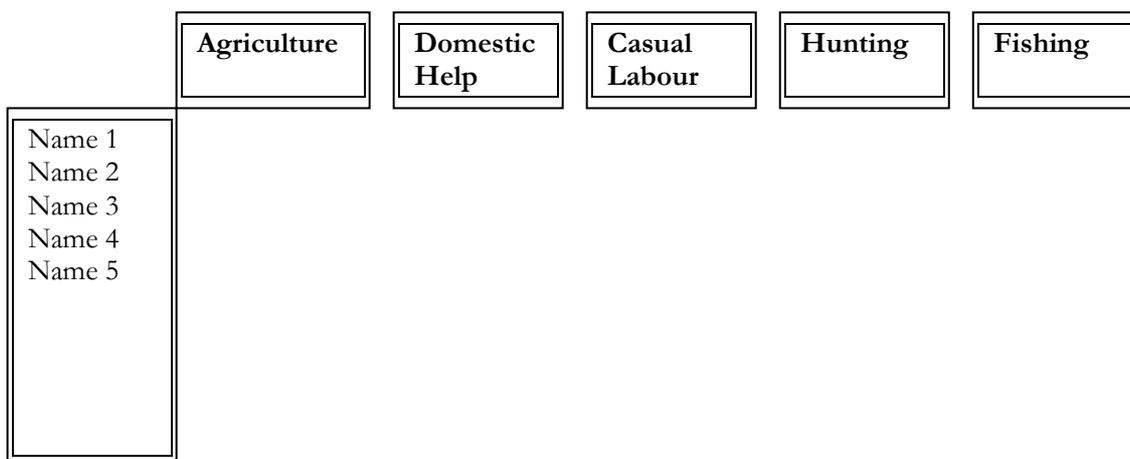
**Materials:** Paper, markers, beans/counters (20 x 5 for each facilitation team)

**Procedure:** Inform the focus group that you are seeking to compare their current livelihood to last year.

Draw the following:



1. Write down each of the income sources on cards and place horizontally on the ground (or table) and place the names of each of the focus group participants vertically as in the following example:



- Ask all participants to think about how each income source contributed to their **total income this year**.

- Give each of the participants 20 beans/counters
- Explain that all of the beans/counters represent their total income (100%) in the last year. Their task is to divide the total number of beans into piles and then place them under each income source category. All the beans must be used.
- Demonstrate the exercise yourself as a way of getting the process started. Explain that the number of beans placed under each category represents the contribution of each income source to total income.
- For example, if 3 beans are placed under casual labor, then this means that 15% of total income came from this activity.
- **Ask each participant, one by one, to undertake the exercise.** Check answers for quality (e.g. participants doing the same as the person before, being too quick etc.). As each participant responds, read out the cards with the expenditure category names to make sure each focus group participant understands where to place his/her beans.
- At the end of the exercise, you should have something that looks like the following

	Agriculture	Domestic Help	Casual Labour	Hunting	Fishing
Name 1	10beans	2 beans	3 beans	3beans	2 beans
Name 2	3 beans	13 beans	2 beans	1 beans	1 bean
Name N					

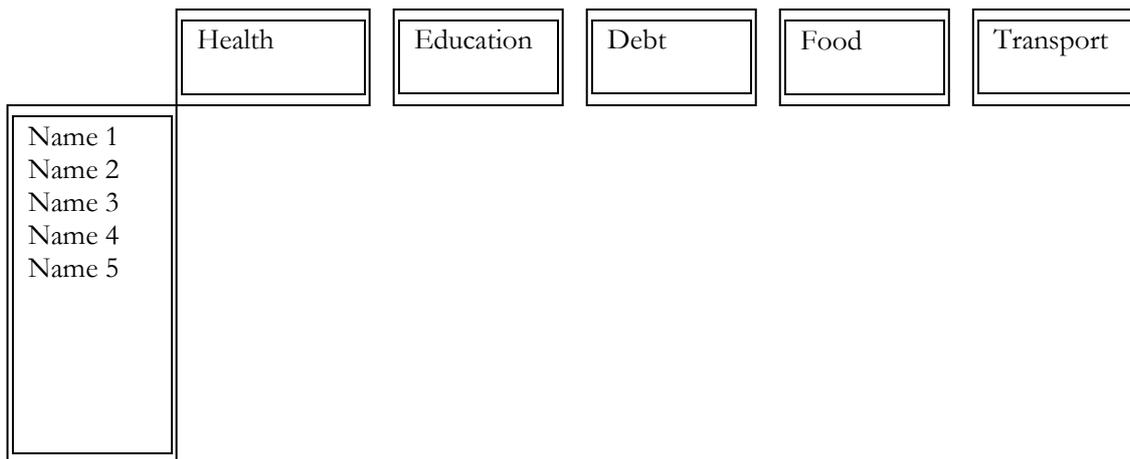
Then repeat the exercise, with 'last year' as the reference, for the same income sources. Discuss the reasons behind any changes (change in price of cash crop, transportation, more demand, return of refugees etc.)

**2. Ask all of the participants to think about how they are using their total income in the last year.**

- List all of the expenditures mentioned by the participants.
- Have the participants pick 5 major expenditures and rank them according to priority. Record these discussions into the following table

Expenditure	Ranking
Health	3
Education	4
Debt repayment	1
Food	2
Transport	5

- Write down each of the **expenditure items** on cards paper and place horizontally on the ground (or table). Place the names of each of the focus group participants vertically as in the following example:



- Explain that you would like them to repeat the bean/counter piling exercise. Ask **each participant** to place a number of beans under each expenditure column. Explain that this is intended to show the proportion (%) of total income that is spent on a particular expenditure item. Demonstrate this exercise yourself if necessary.
- Again, you should end up with the following "picture":

	Health	Education	Debt	Food	Transport
Name 1	5beans	1 beans	2 beans	10 beans	2 beans
Name 2	10 beans	5 beans	1 beans	1 beans	3beans
Name N					

Then repeat the exercise, with 'last year' as the reference, for the same expenditure categories. Discuss the reasons behind any changes (increase in staple food cost, higher fuel cost, etc. ). Use this as an opening to discuss coping strategies.

#### 4. Open ended.

- Possibly stimulate discussion about the following topics and collect useful information:
  - Positive: Income increase due to higher labor opportunities; increase in income due to higher sale price of agricultural products (and more land for cereals)
  - Negative: Less employment opportunities/lower wages due to more people on the job market looking for secondary income sources (who else in the family is entering the job market); Salary not adjusted to food price increases.
- Try to discuss the reason for abandoned activities or new activities.
- Try to determine the prices of the wage and/or cash crops in 2007 and in 2008. Try to determine the price of the staple food in 2007 and 2008. For Western Area Urban, focus on casual/unskilled labor instead of crops.
- Ask about the major changes in expenditure patterns: percentage spent on food, less money for important expenditures (find out which ones have been cut), level of indebtedness, debt nonpayment and so forth. Give the five main changes stated by participants.
- Possible stimulate discussion about the following topics and collect useful information:

- Increased costs: prices of inputs to subsistence farmers (buying poorer seeds, lesser fertilizer, lower irrigation levels, lower labor input, etc.), fuels for urban families
- Ask about the major changes in consumption (food and non food) due to the price increases:
  - Reduction in major non-food consumption for food purposes – be as specific as possible – medical, transport, clothes, footwear, education of child/books/supplies
  - Reduction in food consumption (get as much detail as possible – size of rice portions, switch to other less preferred cereals, vegetables, fruits, meat, fish, chicken, etc.). Quality food?
- Ask about the main coping mechanisms triggered due to higher food prices. Be as open as possible in the discussion with the participants. Give the five main responses agreed on by the group.
  - Differentiate long-term (irreversible) adjustments (migration to cities, asset sales) from short-term/temporary ones (greater debt, borrowing/begging), apart from seasonal (common) ones.
- 5. Check as detailed as possible: govt. response mechanisms and other agencies work (NGOs, church based organizations, etc.) to help the poor due to the food price increase.

Do people/businesses have access to banking services? If so explain.

## Annex 2 : Sierra Leone questionnaire for traders

City/town/community name : _____	
District : _____	
Date :  _ _  /  _ _  /  _ _ _ _ _	Team number :  _ _
<small>day                      month                      year</small>	
Enumerator names : _____ / _____	

### I. General Background Information

#### 1. Type of business:

wholesaler  retailer  (choose wholesaler if a business deals with both wholesale and retail)

2. Coverage (tick the highest level): Local  District  County/Regional  National

### II. Commodities sold and causality of price rises

<b>What type of food items are you selling?</b>	1= Yes / 2= No	3.1	Imported rice
		3.2	Country rice
		3.3	Bulgur wheat
		3.4	Gari
		3.6	Palm oil
		3.7	Vegetable oil
		3.8	Beans

<b>4 – In case of price increases - - What are the main causes of price increases for your commodities?</b>	1= Yes / 2= No	4.1	Price at the source of the food (e.g. wholesaler, other trader, producer)	_ _
		4.2	Price of transportation	_ _
		4.3	Taxes	_ _
		4.4	Credit interest rate	_ _
		4.5	Other reason (specify) _____	_ _

### III. Sales

5.1	<b>Do you have stocks?</b>	1= Yes / 2= No	_ _	<i>If No, go to 6.1</i>
5.2	<b>How many weeks will your stocks last?</b>		_ _	
5.3	<b>How many days does it take you to resupply?</b>		_ _	

### IV. Supply, demand and buyer behaviour

6.1	<b>Compared to last year at this time, how has demand changed?</b>	1= Increased / 2= Decreased/ 3=No change/	Imported rice			_ _	_ _
			Country rice			_ _	_ _
			Gari			_ _	_ _
If there has been an <b>increase</b> in demand, what were the two main reasons for this?	1=Stock building by consumers 2=Government/NGO/UN purchases 3=Increased trade flows out of area, including cross border 4=Price drop 5= increase of population 6=Other reason (specify)  99=No 2 <sup>nd</sup> reason mentioned	<b>Imported rice</b>		<b>Country rice</b>		<b>Gari</b>	
		6.2	1  _ _  2  _ _	6.3	1  _ _  2  _ _	6.4	1  _ _  2  _ _

6.1	<b>Compared to last year at this time, how has demand changed?</b>	1= Increased / 2= Decreased/ 3=No change/	Imported rice			—	
			Country rice			—	
			Gari			—	
If there has been a <b>decrease</b> in demand, what were the two main reasons for this?	1= Increased household production 2= Price rise 3= Population outflow 4= Food distribution 5= Other reason (specify)  99=No 2 <sup>nd</sup> reason mentioned	<b>Imported rice</b>		<b>Country rice</b>		<b>Gari</b>	
		<b>Imported rice</b>		<b>Country rice</b>		<b>Gari</b>	
		6.5	1  —  2  —	6.6	1  —  2  —	6.7	1  —  2  —

<b>7</b>	<b>Compared to last year at this time - Have you observed changes in the buying behaviour of your customers? (Circle those that apply)</b>
	7.1 People buy more expensive/higher quality foods
	7.2 People buy higher quantities
	7.3 People buy cheaper/lower quality foods
	7.4 People buy smaller quantities
	7.5 Other reason (specify) _____

8.1	<b>Compared to last year at this time - has supply for the following commodities increased or decreased?</b>	1= Increased / 2= Decreased/ 3=No change	Imported rice			—	
			Country rice			—	
			Cassava			—	
If there has been an <b>increase</b> in supply, what were the two main reasons for this?	1= Increased production 2= Food aid distribution 3= Arrival of the new harvest 4= Price rise 5=Other reason (specify)  99=No 2 <sup>nd</sup> reason mentioned	<b>Imported rice</b>		<b>Country rice</b>		<b>Gari</b>	
		8.2	—	8.3	—	8.4	—
If there has been an <b>decrease</b> in supply, what were the two main reasons for this?	1=Stockbuilding by consumers 2=Government/NGO/WFP purchases 3=Traders from other regions have come to buy, which _____ 4=Price drop 5=Other reason (specify)  99=No 2 <sup>nd</sup> reason mentioned	<b>Imported rice</b>		<b>Country rice</b>		<b>Gari</b>	
		8.5	—	8.6	—	8.7	—

**V. Credit**

9.1	<b>Do you usually borrow to purchase the commodities you are selling?</b>	1= Yes / 2= No	—	<i>If No, go to 9.6</i>
9.2	<b>If yes, who is your main source of credit?</b>	1= Other traders providing the commodities 2= Money lenders 3= Bank, credit union, cooperative 4= NGO programme 5= Relatives 6='Susu' club (group savings) 7=Other (specify)		—

9.3	Compared to last year, is it as easier or more difficult to get credit when you need it?	1= Easier 2= More difficult 3 = About the same 4= No need for to credit.	__
9.4	How much interest do you pay on loans, per month?	__  % per month	
9.5	Has the interest rate changed compared to last year?	1= Same 2= Lower this year 3 = Higher this year	__
9.6	Do you give credit to people who are buying from you?	1= Yes / 2= No	__  <i>If No, go to 9.9</i>
9.7	Have there been changes in the number of people requesting to buy on credit now compared to last year?	1= Same 2= Less are asking credit 3 =More are asking credit	__
9.8	Have there been changes in the size of credit requested by customers as compared to last year?	1= Same 2= Smaller size 3 =Bigger size	__
9.9	Do you have a bank account?	1 = yes 2 = no	__
9.10	Would you be willing to increase your product range?	1 = yes 2 = no	__

**VI. Difficulties for trading**

<b>10 What are your main difficulties with trade at the moment?</b> <i>Do NOT list, leave the trader answer spontaneously.</i> <i>Once done, ask the trader to rank the 3 most important ones</i>	1= Cost of fuel 2= Cost of commodities to purchase for sale 3= Decreased/lack of credit / higher interest rates 4= Increased credit interest rates 5=Difficulties with recovering debts from customers 6= Decreased / low demand from people to buy commodities 7= Lack of storage facilities 8= Lack of transportation 9= Taxes 10= Poor roads 11= Food aid distributions 12= exchanging Le to USD 13= inadequate supply 12= Other: _____ 99= No 2 <sup>nd</sup> or no 3 <sup>rd</sup> difficulty mentioned	<b>1<sup>st</sup> difficulty</b>		<b>2<sup>nd</sup> difficulty</b>		<b>3<sup>rd</sup> difficulty</b>	
		10.1	__	10.2	__	10.3	__