

# DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING IN AFRICAN CITIES: EXPLORING THEORIES, POLICIES AND PRACTICES FROM SIERRA LEONE

## WEEK 1 Introduction to development and planning

### STEP 1.2 Learning with us (ARTICLE)

If this is your first course, please review the 'Using FutureLearn' for an introduction to learning with FutureLearn.

#### How will we learn?

Throughout our four weeks together we will use articles, mini-lectures, interviews with experts, and video case studies to highlight some of the key issues and thinking around development and planning in African cities. Each issue will generally first be introduced at the Africa-wide level, and then as it manifests in the city of Freetown. This means the city of Freetown will become our case study to understand how key issues and dilemmas manifest in practice. You will hear issues from the perspective of different urban actors.

We encourage you to share your experiences and views through discussion with fellow learners and the course team. We have included some optional picture galleries, maps, and materials to help you familiarise yourself with Freetown. Some steps include reference lists, supplementary readings, and links to other videos and materials that you may find useful for further study. Where you find a link to an external resource, we suggest you press CTRL (or CMD/⌘ on a mac) to click on the link. This will open the link in a new tab so that you will be able to continue with the course more easily.

African cities are very diverse and we acknowledge that it is very problematic to generalise and use such a category. As such, it is important to state that the materials are mostly relevant for Sub-Saharan Africa. Moreover, as we explore the application of theories and concepts in such a diverse spectrum of cities, we will use the case study of Freetown to problematise and demonstrate the limitations of theories, emphasise the importance of acknowledging the unique characteristics of each context, and encourage reflection.

#### How should I learn?

There is no single way to approach the course that guarantees success. The way you learn depends on many factors and will not necessarily be the same as everyone else. However, in order to maintain momentum and gain confidence about your studies, why not take a more active role within the course? You could:

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- Take notes on course steps. Which aspects of the material are most interesting to you and why? Is there anything you have struggled to understand? Why might that be?
- Analyse connections between the wider concepts and theories focused on African cities, and the specific examples from Freetown or your own city, to explore how these concepts and theories can help you enhance your understanding of an issue
- Ask yourself questions about what you're learning and how it relates to your own experiences
- Discuss your learning with others and consider how you can apply new knowledge, either in your personal life or in professional situations
- Explain what you have learned to others if they are struggling

In summary, we encourage 'reflective learning': an active process of thinking and reflecting on these materials, and especially in combination with your own experiences and understandings.

### Join the discussion

Almost every step has space for conversation and debate: the Comments area. While Discussion steps feature more focused conversational tasks, anyone can talk about the material within each step's Comments area. We will regularly prompt you to share your thoughts and ideas with questions or suggestions at the end of a step. You can contribute to these conversations as and when you are able to. You might like to read the 5 tips and tools for social learning on FutureLearn to help you get the most out of the platform's social features.

### Re-using course materials

If you're an educator or practitioner, we encourage you to download, adapt, and re-use the content from this course for teaching and learning purposes. Materials will be made available on this platform/repository.

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