

KROO BAY SETTLEMENT PROFILE – PREPARED BY SHACK DWELLERS INTERNATIONAL



1.0 HISTORY

The name Kroo Bay has two cognates – Ship Crew and Kroo tribe. For the former, it came about when the location became settlement for seamen hired to work in British sea liners, circa, early 20th Century. Since they were ships’ crew and their population steadily increased overtime, coupled with a deliberately attempt to construct living quarters for the men by the British colonial government, and the location geographically being a bay, the residents of Freetown started calling the locality Crew Bay. Incidentally however, these men were mostly the Kroo tribes from neighbouring Liberia (who were known for their skillfulness in shipping work), and given that Sierra Leone at that time did not have skilled ship workers, the British decided to exploit the resourcefulness of these people. In that light, since Kroo sounds like crew, people adopted the name Kroo Bay, since it was now inhabited by Kroo tribe replacing the name Crew Bay. These settlers overtime occupied streets alongside Kroo Town Road, Settra Kroo, Little Kroo and Nana Kroo Streets

In the early fifties, other people from the hinterland started settling down in this community. They used this point as wharf to trade their commodities such as palm oil, cassava, foo-foo and vegetables. It happened that some of these traders were compelled to spend more nights than anticipated because their goods did not finish. In the wake of this reality, some started building shacks as temporary structures to house them and store their goods. Overtime, the people transformed these structures into permanent dwelling homes and made permanent settlement.

In the early eighties, people from other parts of Freetown who cannot afford good housing moved into Kroo Bay where housing rent was affordable. The predominant tribe inhabiting Kroo Bay today is the Temnes who are approximately 54.5% of the entire population. Other tribes include: Limbas (9.0%), Fullahs (13.8%), Mendes (4.5%), etc.

2.0 POPULATION

2.1 Population Size

Age Interval	Male	Female
0 – 9	2367	1851
10 – 19	1477	1169
20 – 29	876	1488
30 – 39	379	389
40 – 49	154	207
50 – 59	112	120
60 – 69	41	224
70 – 79	29	75
80 – 89	16	15
90 – 99	0	0
100 and above	0	0
Total	5451	5538
Grand Total	10,989	

2.2 Household Structure and Tenancy

There is a total number of 2622 household in Kroo Bay occupying 754 shack/houses and as such the average household size is about 4. Most of the occupied structures are limited in space to provide enough room for 4 persons, such that most household are crammed in these tiny space they call their home. It is recorded that out of the 2622 household, 80.4% are male-headed household and 19.6% are female-headed households. Among these, the marital status is as follows: 25.1% are single; 61.3% are married; 6.3% are widowed; 2.8% are divorced; and, 4.5% are separated.

In terms of tenancy, 85.9% are tenant, whilst 14.1% are landlords or structure owners or caretakers. 88.5% of these landlords live within Kroo Bay and 11.5% are outside living Kroo Bay.

3.0 SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION

Kroo Bay community is a bustling slum close to the city centre. The community exhibits a wide range of socio-economic life such as petty trading in both local and imported goods, employment in various civil service and technical occupations, video clubs, tin smiths, etc. The survey showed that 67.7% of household respondents are self-employed; 20.2% are employed in various capacities; and, 12.1% are unemployed. These can be represented in terms of the contribution of Kroo Bay towards the socio-economic machinery of the entire Freetown Municipality. 70.6% of the respondents revealed that their employment locations, be it employed or self-employed are outside Kroo Bay community, whilst, 29.4% are within the community. However, other sources of income for livelihood include remittance, in which 15.8% responded affirmative. Among this figure, 57.8% are living outside this community, which is indicative that they probably live abroad from where they support their kith and kin. In terms of saving money, 63% do not save by any means, which could be inferred that income turnover of most of the respondents is limited. Similarly, only 14.1% of the respondents are said to be members of the federation.

3.1 Household Expenditure Pattern

Kroo Bay residents like any other urban settlers experience high expenditure pattern. From the data collected it is revealed that 85.9% are tenants. This means that most residents spend money on rents. For water services 71% spend Le 10,000 – Le 20,000 per month; 21.2% spend Le 20,000 – Le 30,000; 2.4% spend Le 30,000 – Le 40,000; 1.2% spends Le 40,000 – Le 50,000; and 4.1% spend above Le 50,000. Also, 56.8% of the household responded that they had children attending school, which means they spending on the education of their children. Other areas of expenditure is on family health, given that environmental and sanitary condition is so abysmal that have left the residents of Kroo Bay highly susceptible to diseases.

3.2 Health

The community has only 1 (one) health facility, which is the Community Health Center, built by Planned International in 1990 and has just been refurbished recently by Concern Worldwide in collaboration with Save the Children, UK. The center provides the following services to people in and around Kroo Bay:

- Family planning
- Anti-natal and Post-natal
- Maternity
- OPD
- Minor burns and injuries
- Inoculations/immunization services.

The people believe the cost of health service delivery at the center is not expensive as it is within their means to afford.

The health center is under community ownership and management, which indicates residents' responsiveness to maintain the facility as a public good intended for their general wellbeing.

The biggest Government hospital in the country is just about 200 meters away from the settlement. This means the people of Kroo Bay are not constrained by availability and access to health care.

3.3 Education

Kroo Bay has 2 public schools, which are all at primary levels; with 1 having a Kindergarten.

1. FAWE Primary School, built in 2004.
2. Sandra Hairston Primary School, built in 2006.

While the FAWE Primary is a public school owned by the community and managed by a School Management Committee (SMC), the latter is a private school owned by the Joshua International (an NGO).

Three adult literacy classes have been introduced in the community, which started in February, 2009. It is currently targeting 25 students per class with each class having over 80% of women attending. This programme is being supported by the YMCA Slum Project.

3.4 Water Supply

Like sanitation, availability and access to quality and affordable water services to a large extent determines the living environment of individual human beings and affects the state of health of a community. The main sources of water to residents in Kroo Bay include piped water into residence, public taps, water vendors, wells, water from a stream and rain water. Another water source, which is prominent in the settlement, is what is being termed as 'wash yards'.

The community currently has 14 functional public water taps which appear fairly distributed within the settlement for easy access. The community has 3 wells, 1 stream and rain harvesting as alternative water sources. Less than 5% of residents have in-house/in-compound tap connections. Commercial water vending is well noted in certain parts of the settlement, with a total of 26 commercial water points. Illegal connection is not being practiced by people in the settlement. Residents expressed satisfaction about availability of water for both domestic and commercial purposes. Although, they admitted that their taps do close, but it happens seldom and even in such instances, the residents are given prior notification and it happens just for a short period of not more than 12 hours. These indices clearly show that the level of service as prescribed by the UN Habitat can be said to be good in the case Kroo Bay settlement.

Water from taps are used for both domestic and commercial purposes, however not all alternative water sources are used for drinking and cooking. Generally, the quality of water, especially from the

taps are said to be good and residents are satisfied with the water quality in terms of the taste, odour and colour.

Water supplies from public water taps is not commercial, however a token is collected from households occasionally for maintenance and refurbishments. The city council is however devising a means to introduce payment for water use through the use of card. The success of this would among others very much depend on the residents understanding and acceptability of the fee charges. Alternative water sources such as vendors and wash yards operators charge for water supplied to consumers. Residents with in-house/in-compund connection from the Guma Valley Water Company (GVWC) pay directly to the company at the end of every month, depending on the amount of water consumed.

Public water taps are community owned, their management however are in the hands of caretakers. Respected senior household heads living very close to these water taps are normally chosen and entrusted with the responsibility of managing these taps.

It is conclusive from the foregoing that the availability and access to water supply in Kroo Bay can be classified generally as being very good.

3.5 Sanitation

The availability and access to safe sanitation practices and services has a direct correlation with the living condition and health status of any human environment. General waste management and toilet services are key indicators in the measurement of the living environment of human beings. Where these facilities are not available or inadequate, it depicts a potential epidemic.

In Kroo Bay, residents have expressed dissatisfaction at levels of availability and access to toilet services. The community currently has 4 traditional pit latrines (ICC, Bomb the Bridge, New London & Bankey), and 3 are said to be functioning, with only 1 (ICC) is said to be in a good condition in terms of its cleanliness and odour.

These latrines are evenly distributed in the settlement. Residents of new development towards the sea have difficulties accessing the latrine and therefore to other means. Apart from these traditional pit latrines, alternative sources for toilet service are the seas and open drains. Residents pay Le 200 to access these public toilets, which are considered by most of them as being on the high side considering the environmental conditions around these latrines. Open defecation is still being practiced by some residents and this could be attributed to inadequate toilet facilities.

The ownership and management of these latrines are in the hands of the city council, and the community has no control and cannot interfere with the conditions of these facilities. In the case of Bankey toilet, the caretaker has claimed ownership of the toilet because of his long-standing control.

The existing situation of toilet services in Kroo Bay leaves much to be desired, as the level of service can be described as very poor. Efforts must therefore be made to provide and promote the use of appropriate types of toilet facilities in the settlement.

Solid waste disposal is a major development challenge to residents of Kroo Bay; and the commonest way of disposing domestic waste is throwing them into the sea and nearby drains.

Properly constructed drains, which is a major feature of safe sanitation is non-existent in the whole of Kroo Bay settlement. The only drain mentioned is a major drain that only passes by the settlement and not many people have access to it. Surface drains are however very common, but majority of residents dispose off their water waste on open spaces, surface drains and some walk ways. This impedes easy movement within the area and the stench from stagnant waste water further pollutes the environment. Hand washing with soap is not a common practice among residents, which shows that basic personal hygiene is a serious challenge to the people.

The environmental sanitation situation in Kroo Bay as stated earlier can be generalized as being very chaotic and undesirable. It is not surprising therefore that malaria, cholera and typhoid were identified as major ailments affecting most people in the area. Regular cleaning around the settlement and desilting of choked drains are not commonly practiced in the settlement. The high incidence of choked drains is one of the reasons why the settlement is tagged as one of the most flood prone areas in Freetown. Indeed, September 11, 2008, while the people of America were hit by the 9/11 terror attack, people of Kroo Bay also had a shock of a terrible flood.

There is no recycling and reuse of waste in the community and waste separation is not practiced in the entire settlement.

Clearly, implications are that more waste management facilities are required and this must be supported with vigorous education and sensitization on basic personal hygiene and environment health.

4.0 PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

4.1 Location

Kroo Bay is one of the several indentation formed along the western coastline of the capital, Freetown. It is fed by a main stream the George Brook and minor stream the High Bay Brook (Borbor Komboh), which have their sources in the Peninsula Mountains to the south of Freetown. It is bounded to the west Kingdom Peninsula and to the east by Government Wharf. The bay itself opens into estuary of the Rokel to the north (Aureol, Paper No. 1).

The George Brook stream flows in a relatively narrow valley from its source in the Peninsula Mountains, but enters a relatively flat area adjacent to the bay. As a result, there is evidence of

flooding especially during the rains, and marsh lands have developed on both banks of the river. This unfortunately has not confined development to the higher lands, but dwellings are found springing up on the low lying areas sometimes as close as 100 meters to the sea (Aureol, Paper No. 1).

4.2 Land

The land is considered by the chiefs and elders of the settlement as being a crown land and therefore belongs to the state. The hillside outline areas were formally given to the Kroo people, who were migrant ship workers and fisher folks from neighboring Liberia. It is reported that a greater expanse of the location occupied by humans today was originally occupied by sea water. Over the years, massive construction has been taking place in the hillside terrain of Freetown, which led to the amassing of huge debris that finds its way to the Kroo Bay location. This gradually built up into an expanse of landmass which the people gradually occupied as construction work intensified on the hill top terrains of Freetown. There is therefore individual or groups of persons in the settlement who can claim ownership of settlement, because they have some form of recognition of occupation by the city council. Allocations for occupancy are done by the city council and occupants pay ground rent annually to the city council. Although the people do not have any form of title to the land, they have the belief that the original understanding under which the state gave the land to them would be revoked. There is also no form of documentation for claimancy on the part of residents of Kroo Bay.

4.3 Threat of Evictions

The Kroo Bay settlement since its establishment has not experienced any threats of evictions, although it is said to be a state land. There is however the possibility of that happening in the near future, unless residents initiate processes of acquisition and transfer of ownership from the state. The expansion of the settlement by constructing dwelling units closer to the sea could be considered dangerous habitation and may necessitate an eviction threat, at least for those developing closer to the sea.

4.4 Land Uses

The uses in which lands in Kroo Bay are put into are categorized follow:

- Commercial
- Residential
- Amenities
- Recreation

A largest portion (about 90%) of the entire land in Kroo Bay is used for residential purposes, with only about 10% being used for other purposes like infrastructure and play grounds. There is no designated area in the settlement for purely commercial activities, although commerce and industry (artisanry and craftsmanship) are thriving well in the settlement. Commercial and industrial activities

are undertaken at the frontlines of people's homes. This could have serious implications for planning especially in the provision of public infrastructure and developing the economy of the area.

4.5 Environmental Problems

The residents who participated in the FGD listed the following environmental problems in the area:

- i. Poor environmental sanitation
- ii. Poor personal hygiene
- iii. Lack of latrines
- iv. Erosion
- v. Filth
- vi. Pollution

4.6 Housing Types

The UN defines a house as a “structurally separate and independent place of abode such that a person or group of persons can isolate themselves from hazards of climate such as storms and the sun”. By this definition therefore, any type of shelter used as a living quarters, such as makeshift kiosks, containers and formal buildings were considered as houses.

65.8% of housing types in Kroo Bay are made of rusty corrugated metal sheets; 24.6% is sandcrete; 3.9% is burnt bricks; 2.9% is wood; and, 2.9% is made of others which are situated in close proximity to each other. These types of structures are owned by the few well-to-do people in the settlement. Aside the higher poverty levels in Kroo Bay, the nature of dwelling houses are poor partly also because the land is owned by the state and the people are in perpetual fear of evictions. Generally the community has a total of about 725 dwellings houses, occupied by about 2,622 households.

Kroo Bay like many other urban settlements has a higher tenancy ratio as against other forms of occupants in domestic homes. This is represented by tenants with 85.9% and 14.1% with landlords and caretakers respectively. The average household size is 4 persons.

4.7 Vulnerability to Disaster

Some risks identified in the community included floods due to the inadequate number of drains available in the area causing erosion whenever it rains. The topography of the area and its location close to the sea is a major threat to the very existence of the settlement, most especially, if the sea overflows at its banks. Other risks that Kroo Bay is vulnerable to, include fire outbreaks and the possible outbreak and spread of contagious diseases. The densely nature of the population coupled with the closeness of dwelling units and the widespread of stagnant drains are clear indication of vulnerability of the settlement to disasters. Poor personal hygiene and improper waste collection and disposal practices poses serious environmental health challenges to the people in the settlement.

4.8 Access Roads

Access roads for vehicular movements within the settlement are completely non-existent. Alleys, foot path and walk ways are available for pedestrian walking. A few of the paved alleys are currently being constructed by the city council.

The absence of access roads for vehicular traffic implies that in times of emergency situations like fire outbreak and medical cases, it would be impossible for appropriate vehicle to get into the community.

4.9 Communication

The most popular means of communication is the use of mobiles phones, although a reasonable proportion of the people patronize the services of ‘Tele Center’ operators.

5.0 SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

5.1 Existing Community Groups

The following community-based organizations (CBOs) were identified in the Kroo Bay community:

- Community Steering Group
- Joshua International – Educational incentives & relief
- Federation of Urban and Rural Poor – Sierra Leone (FEDURP-SL)
- Mid-west hunting Society
- Republic Ojeh Society
- City Jolly Society
- Civily Rule Society
- Arie Last Banking
- Bondo Society
- Soko Bana Society
- Wild Chase Foot ball Club
- Elite Crew Foot ball
- Giant of Bay Foot ball Club
- Malamento Foot ball
- Young Stars Football Club
- Kroo Bay Youth Empowerment

The presence of these CBOs in the community shows an indication of social integration and a stronger social bond among residents. They provide a tool for easy community mobilization for lobbying and advocating for development projects. It enhances easy flow of information especially, on issues affecting their lives as a people. The presence of such groups dominated by the active youth provides an opportunity to harness community resources for development projects.

5.2 Presence of Local and International NGOs in Kroo Bay

The under listed are NGOs that have presence and working in the Kroo Bay settlement:

- National Commission on Social Action (NaCSA) – Paving and banking
- WFP – Relief food for pregnant women 0 – 6 months old chilfren

- YMCA – Construction of community centre, skills training, community savings scheme, adult literacy & advocacy
- Concern Worldwide – Construction of Health Centre, Hygiene & Health promotion, HIV/AIDS sensitization & Teenage pregnancy
- Red Cross – Emergency response, relief, medical
- YAI – Skills training

5.3 Prioritized Needs/Projects

The under listed prioritized needs of the community were identified in a community meeting organized in April, 2009. The needs presented below are in order of importance to the people.

1. Drains
2. Toilets
3. Roads
4. Employable skills

The presence of a local and international NGO provides an opportunity for residents to take advantage of it to access development projects into their community.

