

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

## WEEK 2 Urban land and informalities

### STEP 2.7 What are urban informalities? (ARTICLE)

**This activity will start to frame the issue of ‘informalities’, based on research on the urban livelihoods of residents in informal settlements, and conducted by the Development Planning Unit and the Sierra Leone Urban Research Centre in Freetown.**

This activity opens with a set of three articles unpacking the definitions and assumptions of informality. Afterwards, researcher Austina Sellu will present how the formal and informal are intertwined, and we will use a map to demonstrate the connections between the activities of residents in informal settlements, and activities in the (so-called) formal city. Prof Colin McFarlane will reflect on informality from the perspective of a neighbourhood in Kampala (Uganda), posing challenging questions for the future of African cities.

Residents of informal settlements will share their experiences of precarious living, and their struggles for government recognition through tactics such as the payment of taxes. In another video, residents will share how the state of informality comes with the constant threat of eviction, affecting the possibility of investing in their communities and improving their lives, and thereby increasing the precariousness of their situation.

Now we invite you to bring your own experience into this conversation, to reflect on this discussion of formality and informality.

- Do you work in the formal or informal sector?
- Considering your professional and personal activities, on a typical day what services and goods do you use/purchase? Who are the providers of these?
- Which of these are formal and which ones are informal? Why?

Please write a paragraph addressing the latter two points and post it below. Don't forget to read and comment on posts from fellow participants!

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