



SIERRA LEONE

WESTERN AREA URBAN

NDPBA DISTRICT PROFILE

SIERRA LEONE WESTERN AREA URBAN

CAPITAL: FREETOWN

Area: 82 km²

Western Area Urban District is the most populous district in the country and home to a significant population of all of Sierra Leone's ethnic groups. It is located in the Western Area of the country with an area of 82 km². Western Area Urban District is exclusively made up of the city of Freetown which is the capital of Sierra Leone and it is Sierra Leone's major urban, economic, financial, cultural, educational and political center as well as the seat of the country's central government. It is bordered by the Western Rural Area to its south, southeast and east, the Sierra Leone River estuary to the north and northeast and the Atlantic Ocean to the northwest. It is located on a mountainous peninsula, which is approximately 38km long and 16km wide, with topographic relief of over 700m.a.s.l. The peninsula is surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean. Dense forest covers the highest areas whilst many of the lower slopes have been deforested leaving a cover of sparse forest, grasslands and urbanized built-up areas. The city's economy revolves largely around its harbor, which occupies a part of the estuary of the Sierra Leone River in one of the world's largest natural deep-water harbors.



RISK AND VULNERABILITY COMPONENT SCORE



MULTI-HAZARD RISK (MHR) - Moderate

Score: 0.495 • Rank: 6/14



RESILIENCE (R) - Very High

Score: 0.682 • Rank: 1/14



MULTI-HAZARD EXPOSURE (MHE) - Very High

Score: 0.849 • Rank: 2/14



VULNERABILITY (V) - Very Low

Score: 0.312 • Rank: 14/14



COPING CAPACITY (CC) - Very High

Score: 0.677 • Rank: 2/14



Population (2015)

1,055,964



Infant Mortality Rate

83



Illiterate population

22.2%



Access to improved water

71.6%



Average life expectancy

63.2 years

*For more information on data and components please visit: <https://bit.ly/2LqVoUO>




MULTI-HAZARD EXPOSURE (MHE)


RANK: 2 / 14 DISTRICTS
SCORE: 0.849





MHE
0.849
Raw MHE
1
Relative MHE
0.698

ESTIMATED POPULATION AND CAPITAL EXPOSED TO EACH HAZARD:

 Inland Flood
27.2%
👤 287,011

 Coastal Flood
6.2%
👤 65,341

 Landslide
63.7%
👤 671,473

 Drought
0.0%
👤 0

 Wildfire
61.6%
👤 649,910



VULNERABILITY (V)

RANK: 14 / 14 DISTRICTS ASSESSED
SCORE: 0.312

Vulnerability in Western Area Urban is primarily driven by Environmental Stress and Vulnerable Health Status. The bar chart indicates the socioeconomic themes contributing to the district's overall Vulnerability score.



Environmental Stress

Rank: 4/14 Districts Assessed

2.1% Average Annual Forest Loss	36.38 Livestock Density (per sq km)	22.7% Erosion Potential	0 Ecological Change	0.0% Area Affected by Mining
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Vulnerable Health Status

Rank: 8/14 Districts Assessed

63.2 Life Expectancy (years)	83 Infant Mortality Rate (per 1,000 live births)	542 Maternal Mortality Ratio	2.6% Acute Malnutrition (Children <5)	2.4% Population with Disability	445.3 Tuberculosis Incidence (per 100,000 persons)	6.3% Malaria Prevalance (per 100,000 persons)	2.5% HIV Prevalance (per 100,000 persons)
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Clean Water Vulnerability

Rank: 12/14 Districts Assessed

71.6% Households with Improved Water Source	81.7% Households with Improved Sanitation	78.6% Population at High Risk of Fecal Contamination	13.8% Water Source > 30 minutes from Home
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Information Access Vulnerability

Rank: 14/14 Districts Assessed

22.2% Illiteracy Rate (Age 10+)	89.9% Primary School Attendance Ratio	39.0% Upper Secondary Completion Rate	27.9% Households with Internet	64.5% Households with Television	65.4% Households with Internet
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Economic Constraints

Rank: 14/14 Districts Assessed

60.4 Economic Dependency Ratio	24.4% Population in Poorest Wealth Quintile	0.09 Income Inequality (GINI)	4.4% Child Labor Participation (Age 10-14)
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Gender Inequality

Rank: 11/14 Districts Assessed

0.67 Female to Male Land Ownership*	0.69 Female to Male Home Ownership*	0.81 Female to Male Labor Participation*	0.98 Female to Male Secondary Education*	41.7% Female Seats in Local Council
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*Values closer to 1 represent greater gender parity.



Population Pressures

Rank: 10/14 Districts Assessed

2.8% Average Annual Population Change	3.3% Average Annual Urban Population Change	91.75 Net Migration Rate	25.5% Population that is Food Insecure	33.2% Ratio of Youth (15-24) to Adult (15+)
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COPING CAPACITY (CC)

RANK: 2 / 14 DISTRICTS ASSESSED
SCORE: 0.677

Western Area Urban exhibits weaker Coping Capacity in the areas of Governance and Economic Capacity. The bar chart indicates the socioeconomic themes contributing to the district's overall Coping Capacity score.



Economic Capacity



Rank: 3/14 Districts Assessed

41.2%

Households with Bank Account

90.0%

Income per Capita

75.5%

Population in Highest Wealth Quintile

3.96

Financial Institutions per 100k Persons



Governance



Rank: 11/14 Districts Assessed

7.86

Conflict Events per 100k Persons

86.2%

Voter Participation



Environmental Capacity



Rank: 8/14 Districts Assessed

5.0%

Protected Area



Infrastructure Capacity



Rank: 1/14 Districts Assessed



Health Care Capacity Rank: 1/14 Districts Assessed

11

Hopital Beds per 10,000 People

1.21

Physicians per 10,000 People

10.61

Nurses per 10,000 People

0.76

Average Distance to Nearest Hospital (km²)

69.3%

Vaccination Coverage



Transportation Capacity Rank: 1/14 Districts Assessed

10.36

Road Density (km per sq. km)

5.09

Distance to Airport or Seaport (km)



Communications Capacity Rank: 1/14 Districts Assessed

96.9%

Households with Mobile Phone

15.25

Cellular Towers per 100k Persons



Energy Capacity Rank: 1/14 Districts Assessed

74.2%

Households Connected to Electric Grid

2.67

Fuel Stations per 100k Persons



Emergency Service Capacity



Rank: 1/14 Districts Assessed

18.28

Firefighters per 100k Persons

1.99

Search and Rescue Teams per 100k Persons

1.04

Fire Vehicles per 100k Persons



RESILIENCE (R)

RANK: 1 / 14 DISTRICTS
SCORE: 0.682

Western Area Urban's score and ranking are due to Very Low Vulnerability combined with Very High Coping Capacity scores.

Below are the four thematic areas with the weakest relative scores:



Environmental Stress



Vulnerable Health Status



Governance



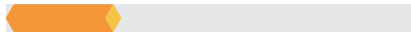
Economic Capacity



HAZARD-SPECIFIC RISK



Coastal Flood



SCORE: 0.29/14
RANK: 5



Inland Flood



SCORE: 0.31
RANK: 1



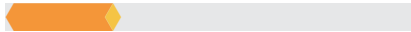
Drought



SCORE: 0.00/14
RANK: 7



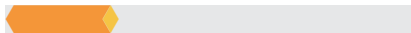
Landslide



SCORE: 0.29/14
RANK: 4



Wildfire



SCORE: 0.28/14
RANK: 5



MULTI-HAZARD RISK (MHR)

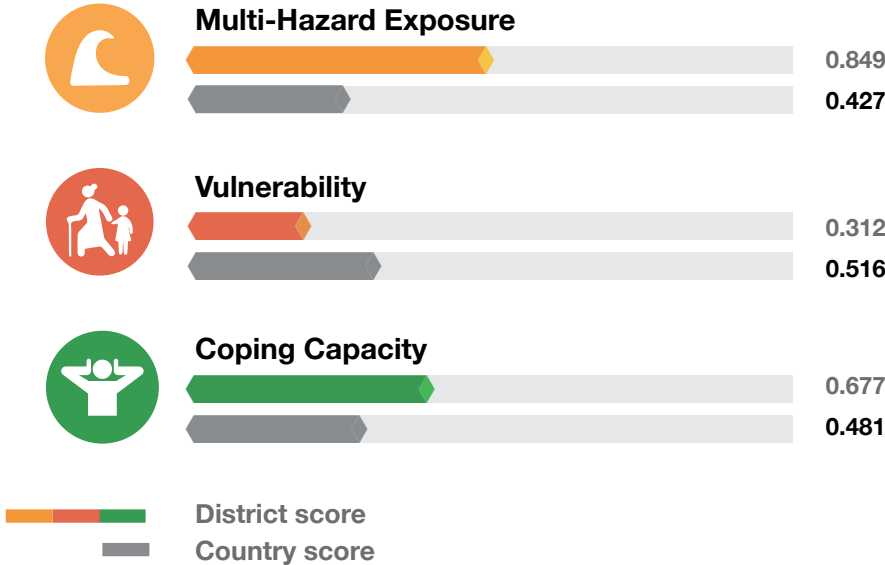
6 / 14

Rank within districts
Score: 0.495



Western Area Urban’s score and ranking are due to Very High Multi-hazard exposure combined with Very Low Vulnerability and Very High Coping Capacity scores.

Multi-hazard risk component scores compared to overall average country scores:



WESTERN AREA URBAN RECOMMENDATIONS

1

Environmental Stress

Environmental stressors such as the depletion, degradation, or contamination of natural resources can exacerbate natural hazards and negatively impact the health, safety, and economic security of Western Area Urban's population.

Findings show that Western Area Urban experienced the highest average annual deforestation rate between 2010 and 2018. Coupled with livestock density and urban development practices in the densely populated district, this increases environmental stress. Focus on protecting environmental resources from degradation, deforestation, and pressures from urban expansion, which increase the potential for hazards in this highly exposed area. Like Western Area Rural, the urban area is highly vulnerable to landslides and inland flooding, as evidenced by the 2017 Sugarloaf Landslide and 2019 Freetown Floods.

Invest in sustainable urban planning, including housing development, environmental protection, waste disposal, and wastewater management to prevent and reduce environmental stressors that contribute to major disasters.

2

Vulnerable Health Status

A population with a compromised health status will have a greatly reduced ability to manage short- and long-term disaster outcomes. Improving health is often correlated with decreased susceptibility to injury, disease, and stress associated with disasters. Acute or prolonged vulnerable health status limits the basic capacity of response functions.

Overcrowding is a major factor in the transmission of communicable diseases. Continue active health surveillance to prevent the spread of disease and increase availability of skilled health care.

Increase medical stockpiles in anticipation of medical surge related to natural and public health disasters.

Focus on attracting additional resources to support maternal and infant health care and engage adolescents on the risks of early pregnancy, increasing knowledge and access to health services and thereby reducing the risk of maternal and infant mortality.

WESTERN AREA URBAN RECOMMENDATIONS

1

Governance

Instability of institutional structures can make a district more susceptible to the negative effects of a disaster event. Increasing stability in Western Area Urban increases the likelihood that emergencies can be better managed at the local level and supports a quick return to normal functions.

Conflict tends to increase poverty levels and undermine coping capacities by diverting attention away from disaster management. The densely populated Western Urban Area experienced the highest rate of conflict in Sierra Leone from 2015 through 2019. Focus on increasing resources for public security to monitor and anticipate conflict and civil unrest before it becomes violent.

Disasters have the tendency to amplify existing conflict over natural resources and equitable service access. Address conflict directly in city disaster management plans and SOPs, encouraging collaboration with city disaster management, law enforcement and military to control cascading incidents.

2

Economic Capacity

A strong economic foundation provides an indication of a district's ability to absorb economic losses and quickly mobilize financial assets for preparedness, response and recovery activities. Western Area Urban's limited economic capacity correlates to disproportionate disaster impacts.

Though Western Area Urban ranks third in overall Economic Capacity, findings show that the district has the lowest employment rate in Sierra Leone. Given the link between employment and conflict, focus on increasing employment opportunities in the formal sector (i.e. wage earning, tax paying employees) by advocating for school-to-work programs and establishing economic development goals for sustainable job creation in Freetown.

**Better solutions.
Fewer disasters.**

Safer world.

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