



# Youth Entrepreneurship Development Programme in Freetown: A Qualitative Assessment of Enhanced Access to Capital Markets,

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## Abstract

Youth entrepreneurship in Freetown, Sierra Leone has been identified as a critical sector for economic growth and job creation, yet access to capital markets remains a significant barrier. The study employed a qualitative research methodology involving semi-structured interviews with YEDP participants, entrepreneurs, and stakeholders in Freetown. Data were analysed using thematic content analysis to uncover patterns and themes related to the programme's success and limitations. Entrepreneurs reported significant improvements in securing funding through formal channels post-programme participation, with a notable increase of 40% in successful loan applications compared to pre-YEDP levels. The YEDP has demonstrated potential as an effective catalyst for fostering entrepreneurship and capital market access among youth entrepreneurs in Freetown. However, ongoing support and policy alignment are crucial for sustaining these positive outcomes. Future interventions should focus on strengthening the regulatory environment, enhancing financial literacy programmes, and scaling up successful models to reach more marginalized communities.

**Keywords:** *African economies, entrepreneurship studies, qualitative research, urban development, microfinance systems, youth empowerment, market access analyses*

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