RISE Africa

RISE Africa 2022 Action Festival / 23 - 25 May 2022 / Event Report
CREATIVITY / AGENCY / URGENCY

Photograph by Emmanuel Bekoe

RISE AFRICA
Inspiring Action for Sustainable Cities

/Acknowledgements

CREATIVITY / AGENCY / URGENCY

RISE Africa 2022 Action Festival Report

WELCOME TO RISE AFRICA

/Welcome

Let me take this moment to welcome you into this rich and detailed report on the RISE Africa 2022 Action Festival! On behalf of ICLEI Africa, Our Future Cities, African Centre for Cities, Red Cross Crescent Climate Centre, and partners, WELCOME! I hope the report will inspire you, provoke new thinking, and give you great comfort in being part of a growing community of passionate and committed people who are also seeking ideas, possibilities, answers and action for realizing sustainable African cities.

In 2022, we chose the theme of creativity / agency / urgency to bind us together as a community that is serious about the future of Africa - a community of people connected deeply to the continent of Africa, and especially committed to its shared urban future. We see new cities being built and we see cities that have been around for ages – both of these are reinventing themselves, reengineering themselves, shaping themselves, gearing themselves for a future where everybody can thrive, where everybody has access to basic needs, access to services, and access to community, where they can connect easily, where they can have full lives, and realize a holistic sense of wellbeing, in an inclusive society, in which creativity, diversity and culture are celebrated as pillars of a sustainable urban society.

This year's RISE Africa was especially important, because we were joined by so many new people from different walks of life and experiences – academics, community mobilisers, city leaders, national government, business people, multilaterals, residents who live in cities: mothers, fathers, children, families, neighbours – that came forth to speak about their desires and shared dreams for improving Africa's urban future.

One thing that stood out for me is that we have immense creativity on this vast continent of ours. We have the solutions we need. People know that we need to act urgently – we are facing so many pressures and ongoing transitions – we need to act now. And we need to act together. We need to give each other the agency to act. This is really what carries us forward on each of our paths, to influence our neighbours, society and cities – we must seek all opportunities, and support others to do the same – to shape bold and bright new futures for Africa.

I welcome you to explore this rich collection of sessions, poems, images and stories.

KOBIE BRAND
Regional Director: ICLEI Africa

Background to the RISE Africa 2022 Action Festival

We launched RISE Africa virtually through monthly events in 2020. We had our first Action Festival in May, set around Africa Day, and here we are again in 2022. RISE Africa is still finding its worldview. It seeks to be a positive platform to reinforce good efforts. It seeks to be action-oriented, not satisfied with only talk. It seeks to be future looking. But it is actively grappling with uncertain futures and difficult realities.

Kobie Brand, ICLEI Africa's Regional Director, insists that we must engage with our pasts to understand the horrors done upon the continent, but also to celebrate the civilisations that rose and presented different forms of society – to look back to understand the intrinsic characteristics of African cities which are still visible now. She says it is in the current challenges and uncertainties that we can access new opportunities to make a living and live in close proximity to our fellow Africans in vibrant, buzzing urban environments.

Edgar Pieterse, Director of the African Centre for Cities, notes that we cannot upend the legacies of colonialism, authoritarianism, economic dependency, and environmental degradation without a sharp break with what we have inherited. He expresses that sustainable cities as discourse is always a provocation and an aesthetic register; a daily reminder that we need to simultaneously fight the structural forces that shape our default systems, instantiate alternatives and design new forms of collective action, love and imagination.

We have just returned from the AfriCities Summit held in Kisumu. There, **Hon. Eugene Wamalwa, Cabinet Secretary for Devolution,** provided two insights in his speeches: When John Haning Specke arrived at the shores of a lake, he named it for his Queen, and it still bears the name Lake Victoria, in Africa, with no notion (like our powerful waterfall, Mosi-oa-Tunya, misnamed by so-called discoverers) that this lake was actually called Nam Lolwe, Nalubale, Nyanza Ukerewe, by those who actually shared a relationship with its waters. He further reflected on the changing discourses, which were popularised by many worldwide: those of the Dark Continent and Afro-pessimism, and within a decade later, that of Africa Rising.

And while we bear the name **RISE Africa**, and wish to express an optimistic worldview, we also aim to navigate between those two: It is neither useful to be overly pessimistic nor so optimistic that we blind ourselves to the realities we're engaging with.

Photograph by Emmanuel Bekoe

/Curatorial statement

CREATIVITY / AGENCY / URGENCY

From the westernmost point of Africa, Ngor in Dakar, to the southern city of Cape Town, to the northmost city of Bizerte – technology, innovation and art have reshaped and redefined creative expression in African cities. The people at the heart of these expressions are as diverse as the foods, marketplaces, architecture, city centres and knowledge centres that have emerged through thousands of years.

Separated geographically, they are still intimately connected through networks of shared knowledge, science, history, culture, religion and the ambition and need to innovate. The ancient city of Zazzau (now Zaria) was a melting pot of trade and cultures as far back as the late 16th Century. The Great stone structures of Zimbabwe, that stretched all the way to Mozambique and date back to as early as the 9th Century, played host to massive knowledge and trade centres. The ancient city of Timbuktu held its pride of place for half a century as a city for learning and innovation, hosting well-traveled residents, famous for educating prominent Islamic scholars. African cities have been locations of tension and experimentation, as deep histories merge with new innovations and progressive ideas to make new cultures. This creative process weaves together knowledge, practice and art to inform and guide society.

African identity, in all its forms, is complementary to the African renaissance. The what, the who and the why of the continent have evolved through the years, shaped by the rich history of yesteryears, though often obscured and hidden through the atrocities and imposed practices of colonialism.

In 2013, Paul Kagame, President of Rwanda, said 'Africa's story has been written by others; we need to own our problems and solutions and write our story'. African countries, cities and its people, are re-writing their stories – they are using their voice, and demanding better lives and livelihoods. Ever-more, people and societies are deliberately making space for the voices of their vulnerable, for those previously unacknowledged or oppressed, knowing that diverse experiences and perspectives contribute to stronger societies.

These stories acknowledge the often overwhelming challenges of the present – the pace of urbanisation, deepening inequality, rising joblessness, food insecurity, ecological degradation and the climate crisis, weave together to present a frightening prospect: if we do not act decisively now, our futures will be decided for us. We need to act to build resilience in our communities and to respond to unprecedented shocks, while being proactive in supporting human rights and resource

efficient, naturally regenerative and socially inclusive practices. What could our cities look like, if we learn from our most strategic, responsive and resilient residents? What does a fully African form of urbanism offer to addressing our challenges and shaping globally aspirational cities? Today, Africa stands at the cusp of a re-imagined rather than an altogether new identity. Next to these overwhelming challenges, we must note the possibilities of the present – a young population with new ideas and energy to be unleashed, cityscapes that have yet to be designed and built, and food, fashion and music cultures worth sharing. We must reimagine our cities, and make these imaginaries physical, now.

RISE Africa 2022 is poised to be the think tank for generating creative actions that reposition African urbanism and set a new path for our cities, as Africa, together with the rest of the world, emerges from what we hope are the worst of the pandemic years. As a platform for thinkers, doers and enablers, RISE Africa aims to create space for deep learning for all, as we envision and design innovative forms of action towards creating cities that are sustainable, equitable and uniquely African in their individual contexts.

We want to create innovative yet practical, measurable and achievable ways forward. How can we optimise and unlock the financing that our cities desperately need to address the impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss? How do we harness the opportunities that a low-carbon society and nature-positive development brings, without compromising ancient African sustainability practices and ethos? What community-led examples can be duplicated and scaled up across cities in Africa on the path to our re-envisioned futures? How can creating new paths in urban food, water, energy and waste systems contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals? Which ideas offer the best potential for leapfrogging dirty, inequitable systems into the future? What practices showcase how African cities can grow their economies and improve people's lives, without compromising their urban natural assets?

RISE Africa 2022 invites you to sit in the tension points between Creativity, Agency and Urgency, to share new concepts and activities across multiple urban themes, and various streams of influence including finance, governance, the arts, and grassroots mobilisation. We invite you to share your contributions to the re-imagining necessary to make equitable, sustainable African cities.

"The stories of cities in Africa are tethered to the agency of its people, the rich creativity that is the hallmark of the continent, and the awareness of the urgency with which we must drive change."

/Curator reflections

Paul Currie, ICLEI Africa

The RISE Africa 2022 Action Festival has enriched an already vibrant and diverse community of ideas, practices and people. My overwhelming feeling throughout the curation of this platform over the last few months is that RISE Africa is still an emerging worldview. It may take a few more years for this worldview to solidify, and, indeed, it may not. This is because central to the ideas and practices of this platform are the elements of process, sharing, creativity and boundary-pushing – which require high levels of fluidity and flexibility. Something emerging through related projects in our work is that **the process is as important as the product**. In that way, RISE Africa represents a space in which emergence and evolutionary thought processes are welcomed.

During and after this festival, it was clear that the concepts presented by our peers had reached a new level of depth. While our first Festival in 2021 explored a diversity of ideas, I feel that they did so, necessarily at that stage, in quite a literal sense, asking: What do creative expression, food systems, inclusive mobility, nature-based solutions, climate resilience, circular economy and any number of additional global concepts, look like in African urban contexts? And certainly, asking whether these were appropriate and how best to engage them. This festival explored the very same themes **yet** through a variety of lenses, such as the language that we speak with regard to nature-based solutions, the layering of a human rights framework over biodiversity and natural asset mapping, the questions of equitable collaboration setting a basis for conversation about climate crisis and action, and the invitation of poetry as the medium for research and reconceptualising what counts as "evidence" for decision making.

I see this as a validation of the need for such a platform that welcomes vulnerability, curiosity and creativity as core values in how we engage with, typically, quite rationalist concepts and methodologies. This is due to the generosity of interest by participants and the generosity of contribution by those who proposed and hosted sessions, rising to the call of the Curatorial Statement: to explore the tension points between creativity, agency and urgency. These contributions and ethos have certainly been validated by the registration of over 2700 people, 84% from within the African Continent, to this event and platform.

Creativity / Agency / Urgency as a theme explores the tension between these elements. Creativity is the processes in which art, creative expression, cultural expression, and the things that make us human and make living and sharing worthwhile, are formed.

Agency is the process in which we explore how to raise the voice of all people in our society, making space for those who are vulnerable, for people with different experiences from our own so that we can learn from them and to ensure that everyone has a say in the cities and societies in which they are living. Both processes of creativity and agency require time. And what does that mean when there are eight years left on our route to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals? All around us, we see our cities' infrastructure collapsing, our environments degrading, and real demonstrations of the climate crisis, flooding and drought, hand in hand. And these calls to act now, to act with urgency; we cannot wait. So, we are exploring that tension between processes that allow us to be purposeful and inclusive in our action while needing to lay the foundation for the next 100 years of infrastructure and the next 100 years of societal engagement. Now. This theme is incredibly appropriate to our times as it provokes conversation about fundamental contradictions in our world and tensions about what we accept as normal, what we seek to change, how we practice this, and on whose behalf we are doing so. It also provokes a specific, often quite personal, tension between different elements of ourselves, arguing for the need to pause, reflect and imagine, speak up, create space for others and act.

And so, RISE Africa has offered a space for questions and sharing, across experiences, in an authentic and vulnerable way. I think this practice of asking questions and genuinely offering others, and ourselves, the time and space to listen deeply, is how we can best sit in the tensions of our times and unearth new routes forward.

Rashiq Fataar, Our Future Cities

Despite the turbulence experienced globally in the last few years and the continued pressure on all parts of African society to change and innovate, the 2022 edition of RISE Africa's Action Festival left a remarkable feeling of youthful optimism.

And based on the presentations, projects, provocations and ideas, this optimism would not be unfounded. From several sessions, the key messages were loud and clear: look closer, gather more information, shift cultures, embrace local and be open to morphing systems and spaces into the future, many of which, for now, seem set in stone and rooted in outdated views.

The creativity showcased brought to light the multiplicities of African architecture and design and the emerging ways designers observe their local cultural practices and communities and manifest them in their work. Housing, markets, public spaces and transport nodes became fertile sites for innovation, often nudged on by urgency.

Spaces were also opened up to consider the possible: an academic, a student and an architect sharing common ground reflecting on what could change and should change in the management and operation of
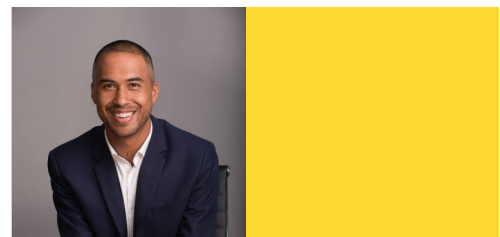
city resources and infrastructure – especially if sustainability was our watchword for the coming decades.

And, if we needed guidance on where and how to invest in sustainable infrastructure, it was no revelation that data was key, be it economic or spatial data. African cities and towns would note that growing and sharing data and improving trust and cooperation would have seismic benefits in the future and may be essential as the powers to govern urban areas evolve and devolve to local authorities across the continent.

Funmi Adeniyi, ICLEI Africa

RISE Africa- An idea, whose time has come

The conversations at RISE 2022 Action Festival were testament to the notion that we are all keenly aware of one fact - the world is in recovery. What post-recovery looks like for the world, for the continent- is largely up to the decisions we make today, for tomorrow. Whether those decisions are harnessed to address the current climate crisis, the burden of poverty and inequality in Africa, the ever-looming threat of the next global health pandemic or even conflict and security crisis - our decisions will define the future of the continent. Knowing this has fostered a sense of urgency in us all. An urgency to define what are the best responses to the multitude of challenges that confront us as a continent and a people.

The theme for this years' RISE Action festival - Creativity, Agency and Urgency - was a launch pad for ideation. Ideation for the thinkers, the doers and the enablers to creatively define where we go from here and what post-recovery means for us on the continent within the broader context of the global political economy. The provocations, discussions and presentations emerging from the festival reminds us that everything great begins with one idea.

The journey from that one idea, is the space that RISE Africa creates. A space where activists, researchers, practitioners, poets, students and the everyday person in Africa, can actively ideate and create visions for where the continent is going. A space to challenge conventionally held ideas, a space for debate, a space to question and a space to advocate.

RISE is evolving… from a platform which merely connects, to an idea. An idea spread across Africa. An idea, whose time has come!

/Provocateurs
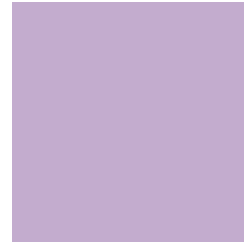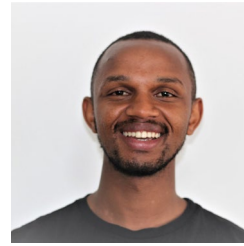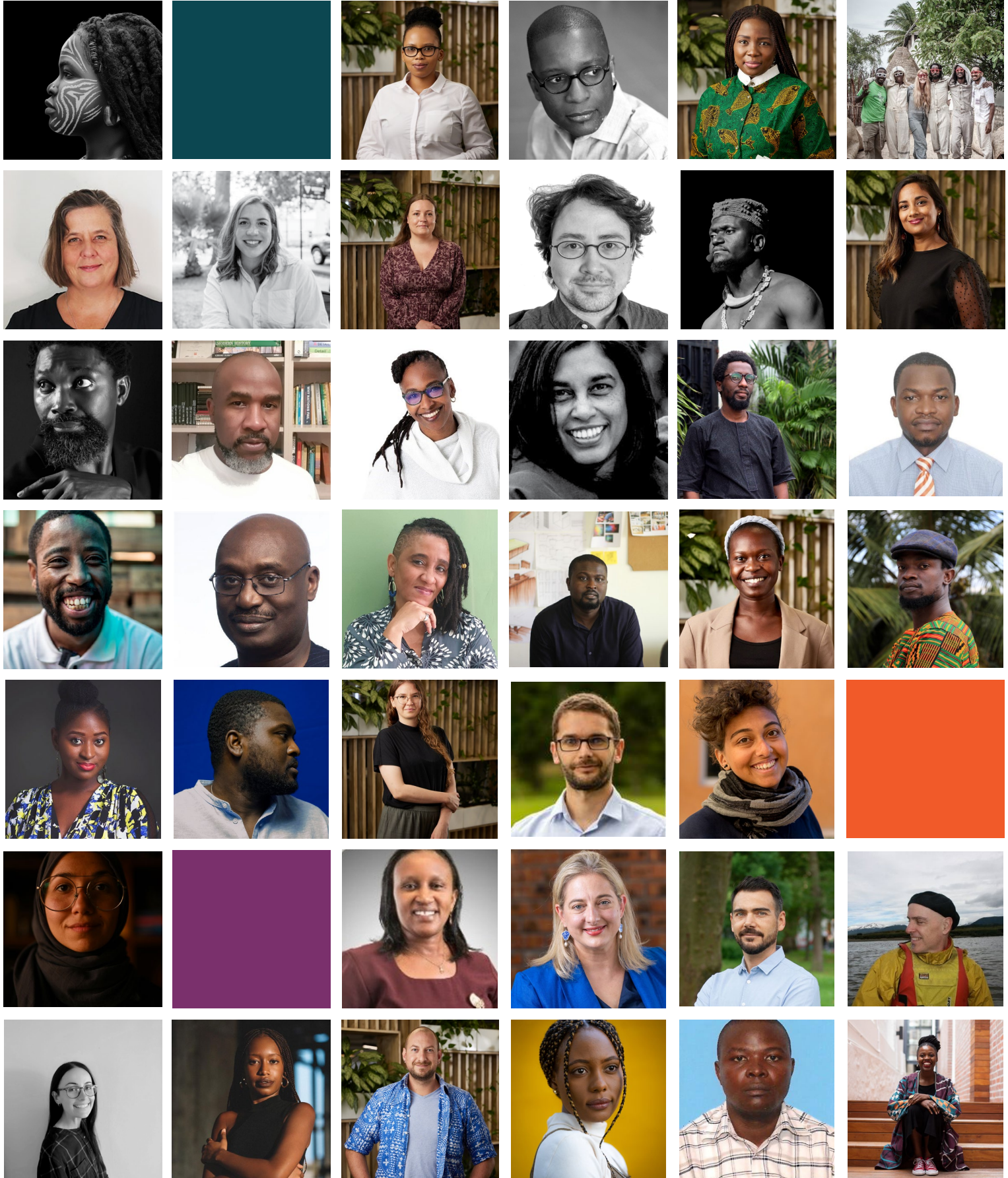
/Who attended RISE?

RISE Africa 2022 Action Festival drew in 2900 registrations for 33 Sessions, from 511 different cities around the world. Eighty-five per cent of these registrants are based in Africa – 32% in South Africa, and 15% representing global partners and colleagues.

They represent partners from civil society (26%), academia (22%), private sector (19%), local government, regional and national government (13%) and many more.

1200 unique participants joined these sessions live, while RISE Africa keynotes were watched asynchronously 948 times, and session recordings were watched asynchronously 598 times so far (as at 31 July 2022). We received 91 committments to action that we will follow up.

Session recordings can be found on the RISE Africa website, here

The RISE Africa 2022 Action Festival Programme can be found here

Subscribe to our community mailing list of 3200+ individuals and organisations committed to sustainable African urban futures

120 submissions were received for the City Scenes photo competition. See the exhibition here

RISE Africa Thought Pieces are consistently being published. Download and read them here
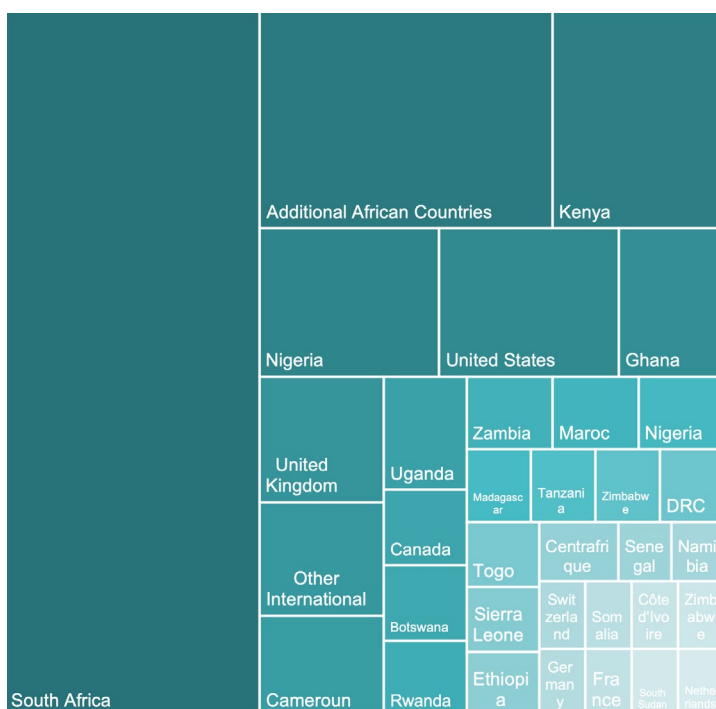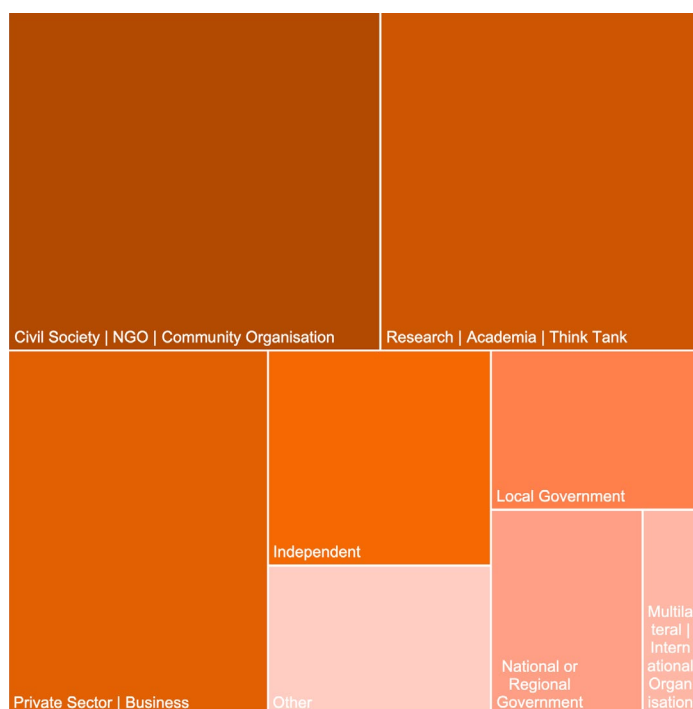
/ CREATIVITY
/ AGENCY
/ URGENCY
IN THREE
SESSIONS

Éclairons l'Afrique

l'Afrique
L'Afrique est fatiguée de se retrouver dans l'obscurité
Elle est fatiguée de naviguer contre le courant de l'industrialisation
l'Afrique me dit qu'elle est fatiguée de se reposer au feu du bois
Il est temps de faire sauter les compteurs
Éclairons l'Afrique
Libérons son énergie
Pour libérer son potentiel
Accélérons le rythme cardiaque de son développement
Libérons son énergie
Pour libérer son potentiel
Transformons l'enveloppe énergétique de l'Afrique
Pour stimuler son développement
Car la nature nous a tellement gratifié de ses richesses
(l'Afrique regorge d'un immense potentiel énergétique)
Changeons l'histoire
Éclairons l'Afrique
Donner un bout de lumière à chaque foyer en Afrique
Est une possibilité
Changeons l'histoire
Éclairons l'Afrique
Libérons son énergie
Pour libérer son potentiel

Linda Kouame N'Gondie

/Creativity

The festival's opening session on creativity reaffirmed that creativity and innovation are vital across sectors, organisations and practices, and reflected on how we bring creative practice and creative resources to support the work we're doing to improve African cities.

Eddie Jjemba holds the space with interest and curiosity, inviting provocateurs to embrace the ethos of the session and present their inputs with deference to many ways of knowing and being. He plays an instrument and remarks that our forefathers were quite creative, and that this creativity is in us too. He invites participants to share their mother tongue words for creativity.

Malika opened the session with poetry and singing. She set the tone that creativity and artistic work is not just about vivid colours and additions, but rather that creatives are the documentarians, activists, visionaries, healers, community builders and educators who are central to our society and what it means to be a collective society. "The ways in which we use language, through multiple arts, our contributions, is what supports to bring forward new ways of being." She remarks that sustainability is inherently a collaboration practice; for this to work, we must tap into resources within and bring them without.

This is particularly vital at this time because there is a pervasive notion that Africa is lacking, and we can directly challenge that with creative expression.

Rashiq added to this, noting that many practices or sectors stick to their specific boxes, rules and regulations and that, rather, what we need are those people who dare to bring arts, music and culture into the everyday – those who dare in their everyday work to push the boundaries of the rules and expectations. And here, they should not wait for significant events or happenings to do so but be doing this in everyday actions. As part of this, how, in our daily actions, can we increase our respect for indigeneity and nature?

Tosin remarks that we must embrace indigenous knowledge as it is in us, and we must use it. Here again, noting a resource that is within and that we must bring without. "What is possible has always been here," and Tosin shares some examples of how she's applied this directly to her work in architecture by seeking new, but existing, building materials and building practices to improve sustainability and inclusivity in her field.

Nwabisa reflects that business is often demonized for its role in entrenching unsustainable practices and therefore sitting on the outside of important conversations about shaping future African cities. This needs a reframe, as businesses can be a force for good as
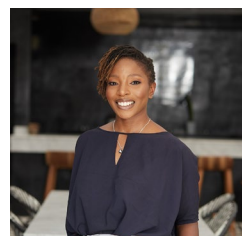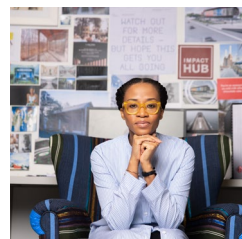
they are central to how we live and navigate our cities. In reflecting on how we can practice more creativity, she reflects on the Virgin Group's attributes of good businesses and suggests that these can be relatively universal across other sectors. These are to:

> spark insatiable curiosity, be heartfelt in services to ourselves and communities; practice smart disruption; be straight up in seeking simple but effective approaches; be delightfully surprising; and be red hot and relevant.

To this last point, entrepreneurs need to seek to do something that people need rather than focusing on a product or service that the entrepreneur is specifically passionate about. Finally, Nwabisa suggests we must take an ecosystemic approach – we must ask: Can our cities be inspiring places? Can our cities be places that are inspired? And can our cities be relevant places?

From a civil society perspective, Olamide reflects that they are inbetweeners whose role is to bring different groups together and that creativity emerges specifically through this practice. As part of this, "talking broadly or vaguely about visions for the future may be difficult for many people. So we have to make it tangible and ask people: What do you like about your community or what don't you like?" This gives a real basis from which to imagine. "It is so important for community members to have the language to articulate and advocate for what they like and what they want." This requires creativity because people are not engaging with the buzzwords of sustainable cities, so we must start with their needs.

When asked how each of the provocateurs cultivates their creativity, several entry points remind us that imaginative practice will be different for everyone. There's resonance across the speakers that indigenous wealth has always been here and should be engaged with. Malika suggests that you must look up to and engage with inherited cultural and personal creativity within you.

Rashiq remarks that we must look at those who have done this before and what already exists. To do this, we have to observe how others navigate cities, noting how people are working, living, playing and reacting to the system. "Creativity is not only an artistic act but the practice of pausing, observing, removing the ego and coming up with creative responses to what you're seeing."

While agreeing with learning from oneself and one's observations, Tosin argues that one must learn from one's networks – they provide existing skills, technology, and different practices – and to do this, one must be open to sharing and receiving.

Nwabisa remarks that entrepreneurship can be an exciting but lonely

watch session here

journey. To remedy this, they bring in fun. One approach is to start a conversation with "wouldn't it be cool if…" – doing this, you give people an opportunity to walk away from specific existing challenges and delve into those hypotheticals.

Olamide reinforces that collaboration is key and that we must embrace the value of learning – to do this, one needs to be humble.

In a final challenge, each of the provocateurs share. Tosin says, "the answers are in our problems. We just need to open our minds to see the solutions that already exist and that have always been with us". Nwabisa says, "we have everything we need. We must just connect the dots and leverage this in order to ignite our imaginations". Olamide offers that "collaboration is key". For Rashiq, "ambition, combined with optimism," is key, and Malika closes us off with a refrain that will see us through the rest of the festival:

Every story knows its teller
Every story has its time
Yours and mine has its place and time
Its time

INCLUSION SOCIALE

Je vis avec un mal dont je ne suis pas le porteur
Je vis avec mal qui me donne de l'espoir
Atteint de l'albinisme, déficience intellectuelle ; Handicapé physique, mal entendant, mal voyant
Je suis dédaigné par la population
Exclusion, désaffiliation
Je suis exclu de la société
Ils disent que je suis différent d'eux
Discrimination, Marginalisation,
Je vis en marge de la société
Je suis la risée de la société
Stigmatisation, ségrégation,
Je proteste contre les travers de la société
Je refuse ce mode de vie
Inclusion, insertion, Intégration, assimilation, Affiliation, socialisation
Nous promouvons l'alphabétisation, l'éducation inclusif
L'accès aux infrastructures et aux services sociaux pour les personnes en situation de handicap
La création d'un système distributif pour réduire la pauvreté
La reconnaissance du travail non rémunéré
La réduction du chômage de longue durée
La valorisation de l'égalité pour toute la communauté
Je suis différent d'eux
Le handicap n'est pas une fatalité
Sachez que mon handicap à faire de moi une bomme à épanouissement
Sachez que mon handicap à faire de moi une bomme à épanouissement

watch
here

Aziz Siten'k
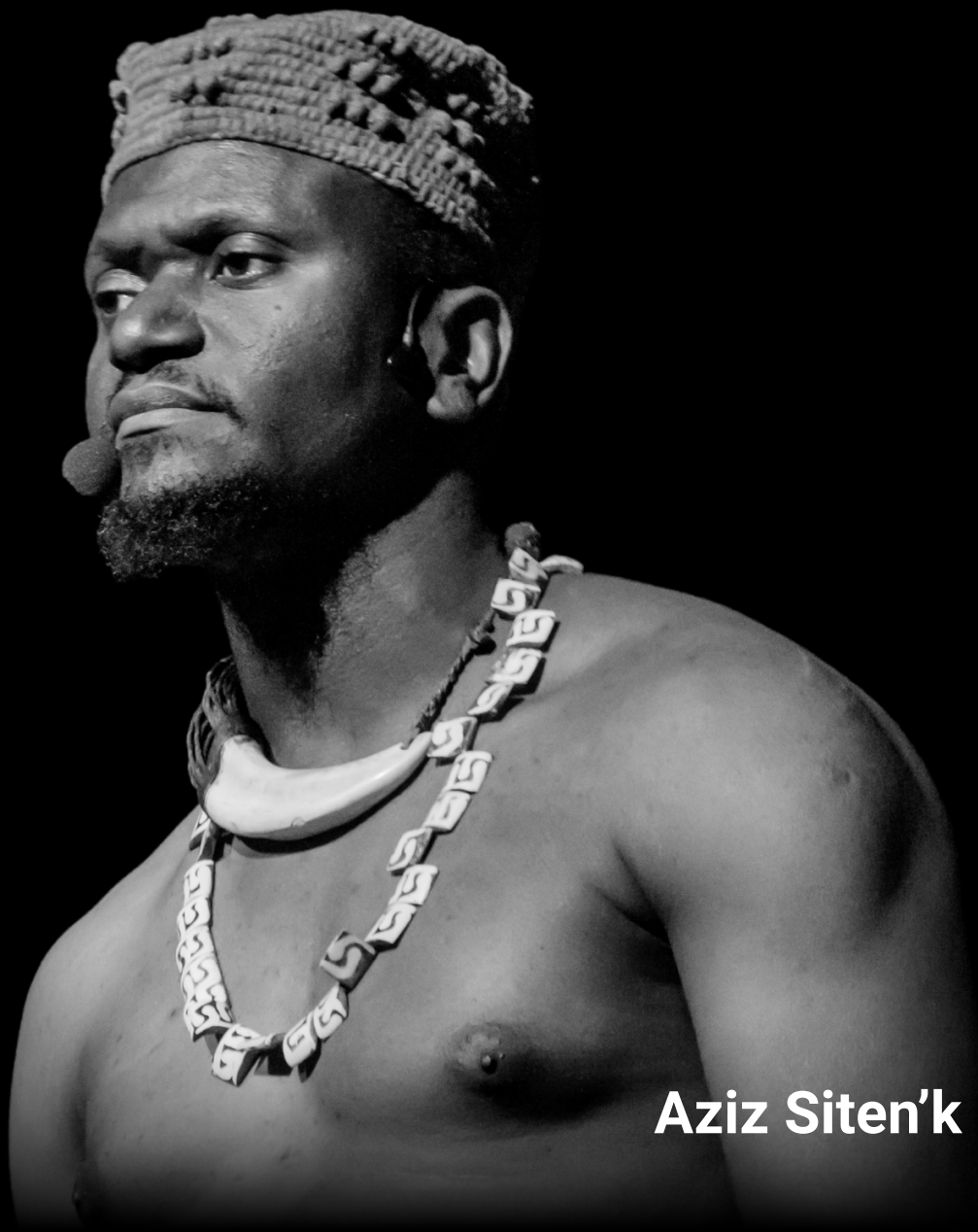
/Agency

We carry our knowledge like an arsenal of weapons
We study, we learn, we fight, we stand up tall
We bear up our responsibilities, and demand for our rights
--Nora Anyidoho, Poet

The origin of human rights has often been traced to the global North. To this day, most discussions on the normative framework on human rights begin with reference to human rights instruments developed at the United Nations level. On the other side of this historical context of human rights, is the debate for viewing various elements of human rights as indigenous to other societies in the global South, including African societies, albeit iterated differently in times past. This session set out to explore the context of human rights in African cities through different lenses in the city and how these lenses should be used to enhance agency.

Are human rights African? There is a conception that human rights are not African or relevant to African societies. Human rights today are universal and therefore African, but this does not mean that human rights are protected universally, or that they reflect African norms, goals and aspirations. We must push for the vernacularisation of human rights to make it relevant to local norms and people.

We must understand people's context within the city and how people arrive in the city, live in the city and are included or excluded. Citizens' mobilisation strengthens the idea of collaborative action for future activities. We, therefore, need to create enabling conversations to engage with people about their lived experiences to foster inclusive cities.

African cultures and cities are inherently inclusive; however, our societal, long-held beliefs of what disability is, limits our responses. We must shift our lens from a medical approach to viewing disability to a rights-based approach. It is important to raise awareness so that those who benefit from the policy are given the agency to demand their rights. We need an inclusive approach to speaking to all groups within a city and context-specific sensitisation with an accountable system.

How do we bring inclusive approaches to the ground and make them part of our culture? Human settlements are more than just shelter; they are also about social cohesion, using culture to integrate citizens and migrants. We need an inclusive approach to speaking to all groups within a city by creating spaces for children to contribute in their own ways with their capabilities.

We live within a social culture crisis that erases the presence of women in society and leads to women being treated as beneficiaries
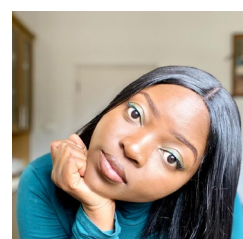
rather than decision-makers. Spaces should not be exclusive to one gender over another. Women are not just beneficiaries – they should be involved as decision-makers. African cities should be designed to enable women to be seen and to be able to see the city. We must claim our position in public spaces as women rather than wait to be invited. Agency is crucial for development in our cities. "It's not that we do not have human rights, it is just that we iterated human rights differently."

Centre for
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session
here**

Urgency

I don't expect you to clown yourselves
and collapse the distance and difference
between sharing bread
and sharing bed
I know that feeling
so give me a break
and stop the fake
They say a hungry man is an angry man
but I say
I am not hungry
I am hunger
I am not angry
I am anger
I am not dangerous
I am danger
I am an abominable time bomb
able to blast limestones and thunderbolts
because somehow
I am torn
tried
and tired
So you see,
you don't have to hear the sound of my voice before you know
that hunger is real
scarcity is not
So please, check the time
It's history time
Passion time
Meaning time
Access time
Free-flow time
Sharing time
Bread time
Your time
My time
Our time
Now, oh now is urgent time

watch here

Yibor Kojo Yibor

/Urgency

The pace of urbanisation, growing inequality, rising unemployment, food insecurity, ecological degradation and the climate crisis are all intertwined and present us with a frightening vision of the future. Indeed, the latest global reports show reinforcing impacts of natural degradation, inequity and climate crisis, which are and will be particularly severe in Africa.

These different concerns require a form of urgency to act in order to set the basis for sustainable, equitable and resilient societies. These actions must avoid lock-in to unsustainable practices, which are often more expensive and require deeper participation and collaboration across sectors. The scale of change and the urgency required is often overwhelming for societal actors, who are compelled to act in contexts of increasing uncertainty. There is an urgent need for funding and the establishment of stronger governance systems to drive change while retaining agency in these processes. Yet, if we are to make the right development decisions and build the right coalitions for change, we cannot lose sight of deliberative, creative and inclusive processes that support reflection, innovation and community voice and which require time.

Paul Currie started the session by engaging directly with the multiple layers of crisis that are enfolding us and representing a paralytic for how or where to start dealing with them. Presenting no solutions is an uncharacteristic way to start a RISE Africa session, which typically focuses on the actions and ideas which are driving change. This framing emerges from a conversation about how we speak honestly about the difficulties that cities, decision-makers and residents will face as a result of the climate crisis and globally extractive economy. Neoka invited us into the session by connecting the community with the personal, remarking that as development agents, we offer much of ourselves and address the world's challenges. "You have to bring a level of empathy when it comes to urgency, understanding that we're multiple aspects in ourselves. How do we actually bring about action without losing ourselves through that process? I think there's a lot that can be said about how we act, when we act and whether there is also a usefulness in being silent and still, to reflect before we act. That level of stillness could also provide some intellectual and emotional clarity."

Bayo engaged with this input, first by upsetting the established practice of hiding behind mute buttons and silent videos of online platforms and requesting that everyone greet each other in the space. He reflected on the cosmic rupture represented by the COVID-19 pandemic, in which certainty was no longer something we could depend upon and in which narratives about what was "normal" became more frequent. How do we get back to normal, and what is "normal"? In these questions, there remains a lot of uncertainty about
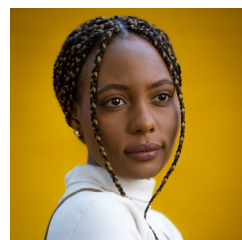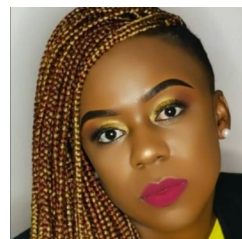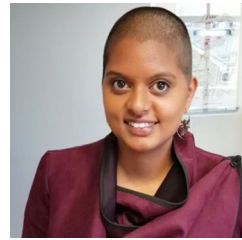
how to reframe our own lives and how to reframe society. Out of this, Bayo shares a Yoruba framing that he has adapted: The times are urgent, and we must slow down.

Slowing down is centrally about noticing that even how we think, and how we profer solutions to crises are becoming part of the crisis. So, what happens when the way we address our problems is the problem? … Slowing down is not a function of speed, but a function of Crossroads, a function of interruption, a function of intra agency, a function of noticing that we're suddenly not the only ones in the room. Bayo closed with an additional provocation: "My people also say that, in order to find your way, you must become lost. I think there is a vocation of getting lost that we can start to co-create together". He reflects that getting lost might mean asking dangerous questions, ensuring we do not position ourselves always at the head of processes, immersing ourselves in our worlds, having unusual conversations with each other and nature, and attempting to rethink how we view our positions in the world. "In order to find our way, we must become lost. The times are urgent, and we must slow down. And the only way to slow down is to listen, is to listen more than we're used to."

Meggan adds to Bayo's inputs that as a scientist, or as anyone who goes through scientific training, you are taught to think in a certain way, which is fairly linear – "I'm more and more convinced that this way of thinking is actually not that helpful in dealing with the challenges of today".

She emphasises the importance of connection. COVID-19 has shown what the world is like with people being separated, and it is clear we are missing something. The inspiration gained from being in the room, next to people – in particular, mayors struggling daily to service their cities in this ever-evolving climate crisis – is invaluable. "We need to pay special attention to how we enable those connections because those connections give us energy." There's a sense that many, when working in this space, feel overwhelmed, sometimes with the tendency to want to put their head in the sand. "It's in navigating the space in which we are working, we realise that we've made significant progress, but it just never feels enough." Moments when we come together are vital to helping energise all of us in the space.

Bwalya adds that "sometimes we may be planning, thinking that we are right ahead of issues, when we are not really doing as much as we should, or we are not recognising the different actors apart from ourselves". She remarks that it is time for Africans to start thinking outside our usual planning routines or planning frameworks and think outside the box. "If we could think about many different scenarios and explore how we would handle different crises, maybe that would help us more when it comes to preparedness."

"In order to find our way, we must become lost. The times are **urgent**; we must slow down."

– Bayo Akomolafe

"As a city, we have several challenges that we're facing related to urbanisation and informality. In Lusaka, 70% of the population is living in informal settlements and have no access to basic services, such as water or proper sanitation. When it comes to issues to do with climate change, Lusaka is mainly hit with flooding and droughts – this increases the load of disease burden in these informal settlements. The local authority's budget is not sufficient to cater for these challenges. So, what we are doing as a local authority is that we've engaged with different partners to try and sort out these issues. And we can also leverage both financial and human resources together."

"I am particularly encouraged by what I'm reading in the recent IPCC reports about even the most hardened of sciences finally realising that if you do not have diversity of thought processes, from different disciplines and different walks of life, as part of the process of decision making, you're going to get poor decisions. And so this element of inclusivity is going to absolutely be paramount in the decisions that we make, and in equipping organisations and individuals to make the best decision possible in a very fast-changing environment." – Meggan Spires, ICLEI Africa

Nasreen argues that to get people acting, media and communication are critical. This is important for finding movements, illustrating lived realities and holding governments to account. "We can leverage art, photography, music, and storytelling to strengthen communication links from city to city or at regional or continental levels. And this amount of robust communication will bring us to the fold of responding to risks and shocks rapidly." Media and communication are so critical for maximising the urgency of the situation. "I think that we're on a great path in terms of pushing for sustainable, open cities, equality, inclusion, and resource use. And when we look at competing and activism, there's been lots of progress. However, I do think that we can't move forward without identifying what works for us and what doesn't; we indeed need to transition to clean energy models, develop alternative economic models, and ready our cities for the future. We need new data; we need research on our present official social and economic needs to create transition pathways that support our rapid urbanisation and integration of our cities."

This has to be a cultural revolution as well. "When you look at this through the lens of our discussion today, you can see that there is a need to truly understand the risks and opportunities that the climate crisis, our social, political economies, and collective cultures all present to us, and to also digest it all while being very present, acknowledging that our sense of urgency and our solutions are defined by this presence."

watch session here

crisis

we have a crisis

we have a crisis of access. we have a crisis of inclusion. it is a crisis when there is enough for the world, but not for Africa. it is a crisis that we lack access to time, to choice, to voice!

we have a crisis of congestion. it is a crisis when the luxury vehicle holding one is hooting, honking beeping at the bus holding 40. it is a crisis when residents must wait in looooooong lines to receive grants, healthcare, water, humanity. it is a crisis when people must wait for decent living and being!

we are in a climate crisis. it is a crisis when flooding steals our roads and homes before droughts steal our food and water. it is a crisis that the world has tacitly accepted that we will not meet a 1.5 degree warming goal. it is a crisis that 1.5 degrees for the world means three or four degrees warmer for Africa. it is a crisis that we are overwhelmed by what this means. it is a crisis that we cannot conceive of what this actually means

we have a crisis of nature and& biodiversity. it is a crisis that African cities may have more nature than many other cities in the world, yet are replacing it with concrete. it is a crisis that some of the greatest biodiversity hotspots in the world are being paved. it is a crisis that this is often done for survival.

we have a crisis of the future. it is a crisis when our children are undernourished. it is a crisis when our children are stunted and have been robbed of their very potential. it is a crisis when our girls are snatched from the cradle, married off to men older enough to be their fathers. it is a crisis when our girls and women are not safe in their very homes and their streets.

we have a crisis of stratified communities. it is a crisis when a young woman, grateful for temporary employment cleaning streets, is apologiszing to me for being in my way. it is a crisis that I have to remind her of her humanity and my appreciation. it is a crisis that I have access to this forum, while those experiencing these crises do not.

we have a crisis of leadership. it is a crisis when leaders consist only of men. it is a crisis when leaders are four times the average age of Africans. it is a crisis that politics compete with economics. it is a crisis that Africa has achieved political emancipation, but not economic freedom.

we have a crisis of identity. it is a crisis that we trust outside concepts before our own. there's a crisis that we trust outsiders before our own residents. it is a crisis that we trust outsiders to validate and provide information before our own employees. it is a crisis that we are not investing enough in our own

we have a crisis of compassion. it is a crisis when, just like our scarce resources of water, food, energy, shelter, we are short on compassion. it is a crisis that those acting with empathy are running on fumes

we have a crisis of scale. it is a crisis when those providing food for the hungry feeling hopeless and paralyzed under the sheer weight of hungry mouths

we have a crisis of action. act fast act now. act thoughtfully. act purposefully act with an outcome in mind act based on evidence. act based on compassion act now because times are urgent

but the times have been urgent for the last three decades urgency has lost its meaning

so how do we act?

how do I act?

Paul Currie, Associate Director: Urban Systems, ICLEI Africa
Prepared as the opening for the urgency day of the RISE Africa 2022 Action Festival Africa Day
25 May 2022

/Keynote lectures

**DAY ONE
MONDAY
23 MAY 2022**

**DAY TWO
TUESDAY
24 MAY 2022**

**DAY THREE
WEDNESDAY
25 MAY 2022**

How cities can lead the transition to clean energy in Africa
Hastings Chikoko, Managing Director of Regions and Mayoral Engagement & Regional Director for Africa at C40

watch here

Liminality in West African Architecture
Dominique Petit-Frère, Founder & Vision Director of Limbo Accra

watch here

A New Material Public Realm

Papa Omotayo, Creative Director, MOE+ Architecture

watch here

Revolution through creativity in African cities - Thoughts
Vida Madighi-Oghu, Artist and Writer

watch here

Finding the city, one sketchbook at a time
Arthur Adeya, Director of Projects and Technical, Centum Real Estate (Centum RE)

watch here

Lamu Space Station - narratives of the African future
Ajax Phillips, Abdul Rop, Joseph Chege and Lincoln Mwangi
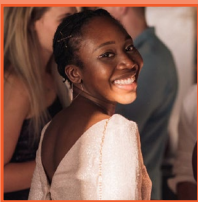
Re-imagining Narratives: The Documentation of Africa's Architectural Landscapes
Livingstone Mukasa & Adil Dalbai,

watch here

Lost and Found: Crises, Emergence and Possibilities
Geci Karuri-Sebina, Professor, SA Cities Network, African Centre for Cities, University of the Witwatersrand & Paul Currie, Associate Director: Urban Systems, ICLEI Africa
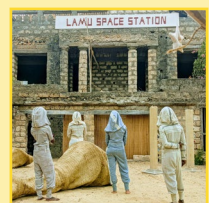
watch here

watch here

AN AMBITIOUS PURSUIT TO CO-DESIGN AFRICAN CITIES IN THREE SESSIONS

/ African designers at the forefront of solutions in housing, public spaces and mobility

Our Future Cities

The session, Design for Innovation: Creativity at the forefront of housing, public space and mobility solutions, was hosted by Our Future Cities during the RISE Africa 2022 Action Festival.

Four incredible examples of creative problem-solving and innovation across Africa were spotlighted and collectively acted as a think-tank for African cities, guided by the panellists: Antonia Kihara, Carl Jacobsz, Moses Nderitu, and Nifemi Marcus-Bello.

Antonia Kihara, a design and innovation consultant at Quarter Acre Developers, Kenya, presented the new net-zero and affordable housing project in Nairobi, which was described as "the village as an apartment".

This proposed development draws inspiration from indigenous Kikuyu practices to create an inclusive and sustainable model that embraces minimalism and zero-waste, and encourages sustainable and community-centred living. Kihara elaborated through various aspects of the project, including that sustainability can be economically viable through smart design by using the right materials and resources.

According to Kihara, the project concept was formed through design thinking as a holistic concept, as well as linking "Food, Housing, and Community" together through partnerships with local small-scale farmers to bridge the gap between food supply and the reduction of people's carbon footprints. According to Kihara, design and "out-of-the-box" thinking, specifically within the architectural realm, is new, especially when trying to incorporate new sustainable materials into designs.

"Use local materials. We need to commit to use creativity...Creativity is about limitations, and we need to get used to designing with materials we have in our local areas". - Antonia Kihara

"Centering design around community" was a major thirst of Carl Jacobsz' design ideology when designing the expansion of the Nike Soweto SHAPA Park. Jacobz raised the important role of the physical interface of buildings when embarking on the designing process for the additions of the new mixed-use community centre and skatepark area. Jacobsz emphasised the importance of ensuring that the design of the community centre would enable the community to enjoy and take ownership of it long after the design was implemented.

"The aim was to make the community the owner of this facility". - Carl Jacobsz
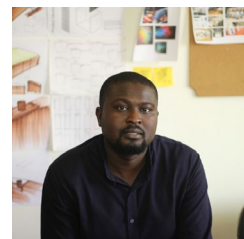
watch session here

Jacobz also shared his belief that sustainability is more than just materiality; it is "also about making projects like this last for a long time". A stand-out aspect was the flexibility and mixing of different uses into the overall site community centre to cater to the diverse nature of people's needs and wants.

Moses Nderitu of BasiGo Kenya, presented an informative overview of the company's e-mobility model and framework and the multiple levels of sustainability it encompasses in terms of environmental and affordability aspects.

"One of the things that COVID-19 taught us is that Africa is choking...and it is choking through emissions". - Moses Nderitu

Nderitu shared the many barriers to e-bus adoption within the African context, which included electric buses designed for Chinese and European cities, but which need modifications to be sturdy enough for the unique requirements and terrain of the African road network. In Lagos, Nifemi Marcus-Bello, an industrial designer, won a competition to design an interactive and innovative kiosk for skateboarding brand, Waf. Marcus-Bello elaborated on his design thinking and process, identifying the "kiosk" culture in Lagos and investigating how to create products that support the community and amplify "anonymous" innovations that integrate into people's everyday lives.

The kiosk presents an ingenious example of how flexibility and innovation can work together to improve public spaces, mixing convenience with economic opportunity and enhancing the adaptability that people appreciate in public spaces. The kiosk does this by being extremely lightweight, using bamboo as the main material, and displaying clothes at eye-level height to pay homage to the archetype of Lagos' "streetwear" vendors, "Okrika", who sell second-hand clothing throughout Lagos.

The "think-tank" on cities once again brought to light the multiplicities of African architecture and design and the emerging ways designers observe their local cultural practices and manifest them to create sustainable, innovative, and practical work. These design processes and designers showcased a strong impetus for sustainable and community-based design through a new lens. They amplified the importance of creativity as a strong and impactful tool in the African context.

"African design is generally very **contextual** – it is contextual to humans, to the materials around them, to the experience".

- Nifemi Marcus-Bello

Futures and Possibilities for African Cities: Rashiq Fataar in conversation with Doreen Adengo, Braima Koroma, Rudi Kriel and Sindile Mavundla

Our Future Cities

"It takes a village to raise a child, and it takes a diverse community to make a city thrive." – Livingstone Mukasa

The conversation brought together an architect, academics and a grassroots cycling advocate.

Doreen Adengo, Principle of Adengo Architecture, presented her research project, Unit 15(x) Radical Landscapes (with students from the University of Johannesburg), which explores the threat to Kampala's wetlands as a result of unplanned urban expansion.

Adengo's foray into the future explained that wetlands have an essential purpose. They control floods and help to conserve biodiversity and filter runoff water, thereby removing pollutants. She also noted the pressure to use the land for development and how crucial building awareness with designers is, to be inclusive of the need for environmental preservation.

Adengo also showed the African Mobilities (3x3) project, which celebrates the Kitenge fabric trade and utilises the smaller spaces in the market by creating 3x3 meter shop units that connect Congolese refugees to the global fashion industry. Adengo also pointed out how important mapping of the wetlands is in the future protection of these areas.

"It is important to have multidisciplinary collaborations. As architects, we are also storytellers, and I realised the importance of using videos." – Doreen Adengo

Braima Koroma spoke to the potential for future governance models in African cities and towns due to the shifting powers and contexts.

Speaking on the potential for devolution of powers from states to cities, Koroma clarified that the devolution agenda will not only be an event but will take some time. He explained that it would require: (i) continuous commitment from those in power and their support, (ii) a gradual process, (iii) that the starting point is based on a shared vision and shared objectives, and (iv) it must not only be supported by the government: Citizens also have a role to play.

Koroma believes these are key aspects enabling African cities and towns to shift the relevant reforms and policies for an effective
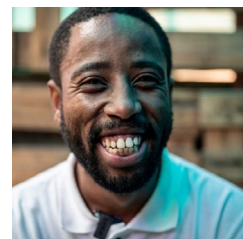
devolution process.

 "Devolution is very unique across different countries...in the Kenyan institutions, it happens at a country level as well: There is a national commitment to a commission review process that allows some of these processes to function much more effectively." – Braima Koroma Koroma pointed to Freetown's successful review of their property tax law, which increased the city's revenue fivefold, helping to fund critical local services for residents and expand the local powers to deliver to "make things happen".

Rudi Kriel explored a future in which the private sector may begin to participate in the operation of the rail system in Cape Town using the Cape Town Southern Line as a case study. Presenting his master's thesis from Stellenbosch University titled Revitalizing Rail: The case of public-private partnerships, Kriel stated that despite his findings, attracting the private sector to participate in any of the rail lines in Cape Town would be a challenge, and it presents a big business risk due to the threat of vandalism. However, rail is feasible for private vehicle users due to the relatively small public transport market in the Southern suburbs. If improvements in operating standards from private sector participation are made, the Southern line is economically feasible.

"If you plan privatisation of rail well enough and take into consideration the climate and environment of your particular city and don't just copy what other cities have done, it can be viable." – Rudi Kriel

Sindile Mavundla, cycling advocate and director of Khaltsha Cycles, transported us to the future of Durban's cycling network based on cycling more than 150km across nine days around the city. The project, in collaboration with The Transformative Urban Mobility Initiative (TUMI), explored the inequalities experienced by cyclists through Durban North, Athlone, Essenwood, Briardene and KwaMashu areas and the potential to link cycling routes and infrastructure to the City's planned BRT infrastructure.

Mavundla's main learning for the future was not to only focus on hard infrastructure but to understand that people want and need to learn how to ride a bicycle and need to do so affordably and safely. Mavundla mentioned the bike-bus model as a good starting point in getting people comfortable by riding safely in groups, making bike-bus routes and times and linking this to and from schools. Mavundla expressed the need for city governments to urgently get on board to improve cycling culture and infrastructure.

"Cycling with other people and creating a community – that's what people actually want, a community of cyclists." - Sindile Mavundla

As part of the discussion moderated by Livingstone Mukasa, several learnings emerged, some of which included: The need for awareness

"We can't avoid the fact that flooding in wetlands is happening, and *we shouldn't wait until it is too late* – let's not let it get to the point of destruction before we act."

- Doreen Adengo

to improve urban design and architecture around environmentally sensitive locations, the need for political commitment to new governance models of cities to ensure they become more efficient and functional, the importance of rail and not seeking to generate profits from public transport systems, and the need to facilitate future communities around cycling that are as important in delivering non-motorised transport infrastructure.

Key messages

1. It is extremely hard to regulate the environmental projection of the wetlands as there is continuous pressure on two sides – one advocates for environmental protection, whilst the other, the development of land where people will have spaces to live. Awareness is a crucial part of improving the design to become more inclusive of environmental elements.

2. Political commitment to a new future in terms of the role of different partnerships and powers is critical to cities becoming more efficient and functional.

3. It is almost impossible for any transport system to produce profits without government subsidies – the Netherlands is one of the only transport systems that have and can make a profit. Rail is one of the most feasible options because it will improve cities' sustainability and save people time and money.

4. There is a great need to make, promote and support cycling communities within the cities of Cape Town and Durban.

5. Grassroot level initiatives need to be scaled to city-wide levels with increased government support.

watch session here

The key to unlocking effective investment towards more sustainable African cities

Georgia Rowley, Rashiq Fataar

Urban Africa requires investment strategies for more sustainable cities, grounded in evidence, that respond with urgency to the needs of urban residents and are matched by the investment priorities of funding institutions. The session, Africa now! An urgent case for investment towards more sustainable cities and towns, presented an opportunity for a realistic conversation about urgent needs and emphases for impactful investment strategies.

> *"Africa is one of most innovative places in the world for finance, technology and innovative ways for development."* – Saliem Fakir

Saliem Fakir opened with a message highlighting the need to embed sustainability in infrastructure investment and emphasised the opportunity for Africa to "leapfrog" the rest of the world in efforts to decarbonise. Fakir noted the need for creative, holistic investment strategies to unlock Africa's potential and position the continent at the forefront of innovations in financing, technology and new models for urban investment.

Kecia Rust presented the work of The Centre for Affordable Housing Finance in Africa (CAHF) and stressed the importance of open access data sharing to build on existing knowledge and develop better investment strategies. Rust noted the lack of accessible data in the sector and the hesitancies of developers and financiers to share information regarding feasibilities and investment landscapes. According to Rust, this "hoarding" of data undermines access to green finance and progress in the research on effective investment and approaches to sustainable housing. Important data is needed at every level – from household to the continent – and consistent contributions can allow for better decision-making.

> *"Housing has become more expensive while people, our governments, and suppliers have become poorer. As affordable housing practitioners, we need to do much more, but with much less. We must ask: Is sustainability imperative in housing a challenge or an opportunity?"* – Kecia Rust

Samantha Naidu, speaking from a national government perspective, through the South African National Treasury Cities Support Programme, described ongoing efforts to achieve meaningful investment through context-specific and adaptive investment, and enhancing the agency of local actors – constructive relationships to "do the basics". Naidu noted the significant impact climate change would have on urban development, reminding us of the urgency of better vision, innovation, sustainability and cooperation.

watch session here

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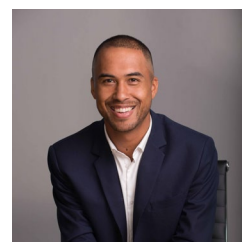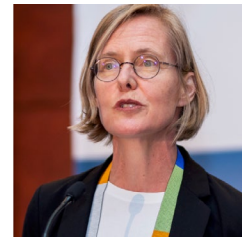
"By 2030, weather-related and other disasters will cost cities $314 billion, which is more than South Africa's GDP." – Samantha Naidu

Kioi Wambaa then presented the case for urgency by describing the realities and pressures of urbanisation – with rapid population growth and significant economic development, Africa is growing in every single way. Considering decentralisation as a key response to these pressures, Wambaa pointed to the devolution strategies in Kenya as a successful example of boosting local governments' investment capacities, particularly in supporting housing development. Wambaa further described the need for reimagining the roles of government as facilitators rather than lone suppliers of investment into housing and other vital infrastructure, pointing to South Africa as a unique example.

The session acted as a reminder of the large appetite for financing sustainable infrastructure in Africa, especially in housing. However, miscommunication, a lack of data and poor cooperation between stakeholders remains a major impediment to direct investment where it is needed. Fostering trust, building a culture of sharing data, prioritising sustainability and enabling city agency are essential for pragmatic and effective investment for a better future.

"There's a direct correlation between the increase in population and GDP: Cities drive development, and the more we urbanise and develop urban areas, the more we get out of them and access to finance." – Kioi Wambaa

"[We should] bring in climate irventions at the start when conptuallising projects, not as an ad-hoc later on."

– Samantha Naidu

CITY SCENES PHOTO COMPETITION

/Photo competition

Participants were invited to share image/s, and an associated story or explanation, of their city through the lens of creativity / agency / urgency to demonstrate how one or more of these elements contributes to a more sustainable, equitable and liveable city. The winner, finalists and select images from the shortlisted entries are shown below. Visit the online gallery for the full exhibition.

visit the online exhibition here

winner

@Ghana.must_go

Location: Accra, Ghana
Title: The Good Ol' Days

"There were times when we gathered around the fire to listen to and tell stories. Stories that taught us about our origin, reminded us of who we really are. Moral lessons were embedded in these stories, values were preached, we sang songs to praise the brave, the courageous and the selfless. These were times families get to bond, have a good laugh, learn and exercise. These times develop great oratory and questioning skills in the young ones, but these I now hardly see. The fabric of civilization seems to be tearing us apart and we seem to be lost in the wonders of technology. What was really meant to bring us closer is making us distant, we're loosing our Cultural and Traditional values, we're loosing who we truly are, we seldom hear of great men who lived before us, our minds are saturated with the imaginary heroes we see on screens , we hardly spend time with our families, we're loosing ourselves. If only we could take a break to look back and embrace who we really are and pick up the positive aspects of our culture, this continent will be a great and enviable one. This is to acknowledge the ones who however, will not let history die. The old folks around the continent who still hold down the tradition of storytelling. It's one thing to read, but another to hear from the ones who lived it. They continue to serve as agents of history, passing it down to generations, making sure we never lose our roots and taking pride in our identity."

Kevin Ochieng
@Ochieng_kevin254

Location: Nairobi, Kenya
Title: The last breath

"This image shows a young boy taking in air through a plant with a Mask and a straw connected to it with a sandstorm brewing on the background …this project is symbolic to show the importance of trees in our ecosystem and the role they play in tackling climate change. Trees Help Fight Climate Change. As trees grow, they help stop climate change by removing carbon dioxide from the air, storing carbon in the trees and soil, and releasing oxygen into the atmosphere. This project pushes the message of conservation and encourages the reforestation….."

Emmanuel Bekoe
@obeimages

Location: Madina, Ghana
Title: The Banana Market

"This image depicts the way we tend to replicate each other's trade in a city once we realize that there is profit that can be made from that trade. We all can sell the same products but there is enough market out there for everyone thus there is no need for us to be greedy or compete with each other for profit. However, some people in the attempt to become rich, increase the prices of their goods and services rendered and this causes people to also copy even the way they price their products and services. In Accra, Ghana people will try to start a business once they think there's money in it and not because they love it. You can find two provision shops opposite each other and you wonder ""don't they sell the same things"" Gradually people are learning to be different and creative from each other not doing the same thing and being themselves and learning each day to improve on their skills. Thus in a sea full of fishes, you choose to be different or blend in."

(Above) @herman_kambala
Location: Kinshasa, République Démocratique du Congo
Title: KINSHASA BY NIGHT

(Below) Reduoane Akharaz | @reduoane.breezy
Location: Rabat, Morocco
Title: Ashura night in Morocco

@Ivoiriennwar
Location: Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire
Title: La Créativité par les Petits Métiers pour faire face aux urgences de la ville

Mukong Ngong
Location: Bamenda, Cameroon
Title: Growing up To know my Origin (Africa) is a blessing

Babajide Olusanya
Location: Abuja, Nigeria
Title: Tale Of Two Cities

Samy Ntumba Shambuyi |
@samyntumbashambuyi
Location: Kinshasa, RD Congo
Title: URGENCE

(Below) **@i_gat_shots**
Location: Nairobi, Kenya
Title: The haves and the have nots

(Below) **Ikwueme Patrick obiora | @owusilens**
Location: Lagos, Nigeria
Title: Urban decay
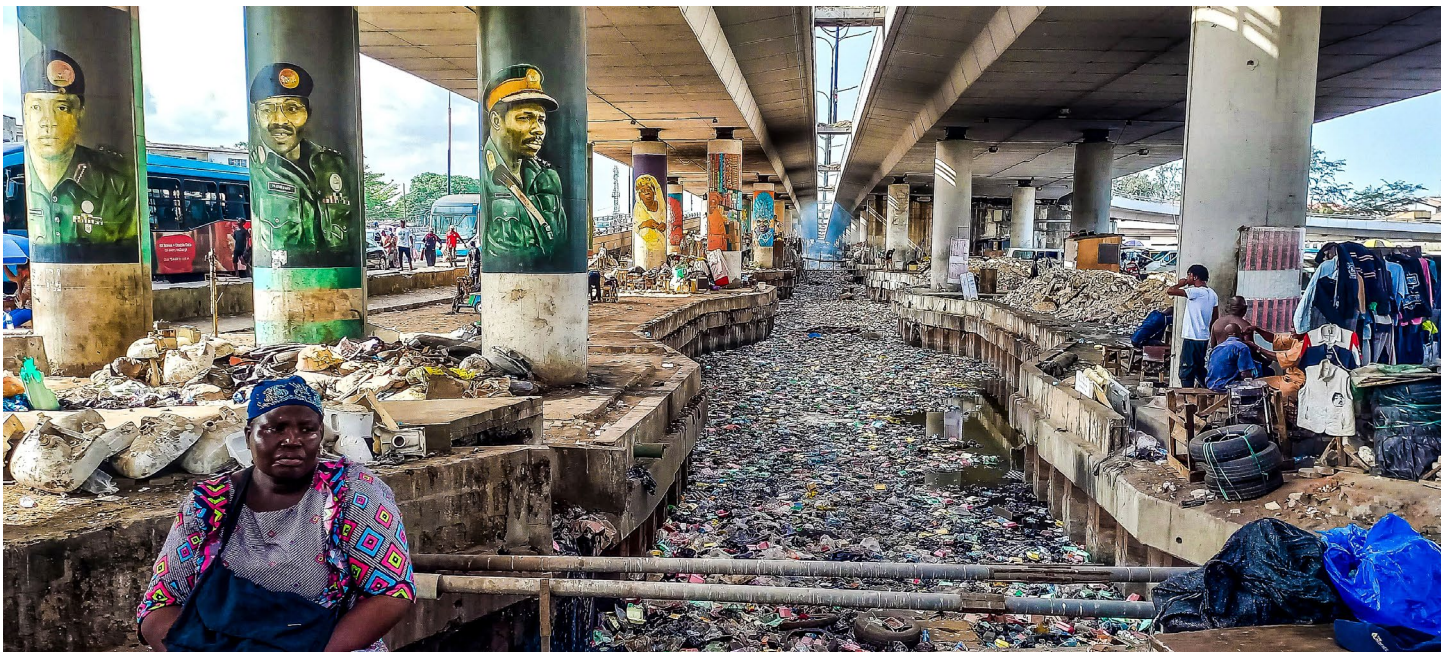
(Above) **Stephen Ofori Amo | @creativeofori_**
Location: Accra, Ghana
Title: Mother Nature

(Below) **Peter Irungu | @irungu_**
Location: Nairobi, Kenya
Title: Nairobi Urban Rush

visit the online exhibition here

PARALLEL FESTIVAL SESSIONS

Shifting systems: Infrastructure innovation for sustainable African cities

This session focused on sustainable infrastructure development and was co-hosted by the African Centre for Cities (University of Cape Town) and the Urban Futures Studio (UFS, Utrecht University). Edgar Pieterse (African Center for Cities -ACC) kicked off the session with a discussion of the "cascading urban challenges" that many African cities face and the potential for sustainable infrastructure to achieve social development in a way that is less impactful on resources and the environment. Four additional speakers from across the continent shared stories on how to approach infrastructure interventions in the African urban context:

- Sandile Mbatha (eThekwini Municipality, South Africa) argued that we can make no progress without first knowing the state of the world we live in and this knowledge is gained through data. Only then can we make informed decisions around what infrastructure is needed.
- Michael Uwemedimo (CMAP, Nigeria) challenged the story that we often hear of future African cities as informal, underdeveloped and poor and instead argues that if you can empower overlooked communities through participatory initiatives, then you can change the plot of this story.
- Regina Opondo (Kounkuey Design Initiative, Kenya) discussed three key principles vital to building productive public spaces and infrastructure – participation, integration and network exchange. She explained how participation allows you to build on local knowledge and increase social cohesion and the capacity of social workers to effect change. Integration is vital to create a truly multi-sectoral intervention by connecting different strategies. Lastly, network exchange is essential because working in silos results in less impactful solutions detached from larger city projects.
- William Senyo (Impact Hub Accra, Ghana) closed off the session with his experience building infrastructure in Accra. He stressed that you cannot out-innovate the local community and instead must make the city work for them. It is important to allow the community to take ownership of projects as we redefine urban spaces and urban economies.

The session also included two interactive exercises run by Blake Robinson (UFS), aimed at informing the design of a new multi-year collaboration between the ACC and UFS focusing on innovative infrastructure in African cities. The first exercise used a live Mentimeter word cloud to gather perspectives on what the audience thought their city would be like in two generations' time to assess how people perceive the future of cities. These responses (see figure below) were mostly optimistic (e.g., green, walkable, safe, clean, friendly, inclusive, accessible), but many were not (e.g., unequal, congested, crowded, flooded). The second exercise used a Zoom poll to identify which

infrastructure domains are most in need of sustainable innovation in Africa, and identified energy, waste management, water, buildings & housing and green & public space as top themes of interest to the audience.

The session concluded with observations from Edgar Pieterse (ACC) and Maarten Hajer (UFS). Hopefully, this discussion will continue at future Rise Africa events and other gatherings focused on African cities.

Key points:
1. The role that infrastructure investment can play in responding to urban challenges in African cities needs to be further explored.
2. Infrastructure development does not only exist on a large scale. There are vital interventions that can happen at a neighbourhood or community scale.
3. Data is crucial as we make decisions around what infrastructure is necessary. Where digital tools are available, they should be used to shape decision-making in a more sustainable direction.
4. Cooperation and collaboration across local agencies and organisations are important for achieving impact, reach and contextual relevance.
5. Sustainable infrastructure development can only happen when meaningful participation with the community is achieved.

Utrecht University

AFRICAN CENTRE FOR CITIES
urbanism from an african perspective

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Describe what your city will be like in two generations' time

Mentimeter
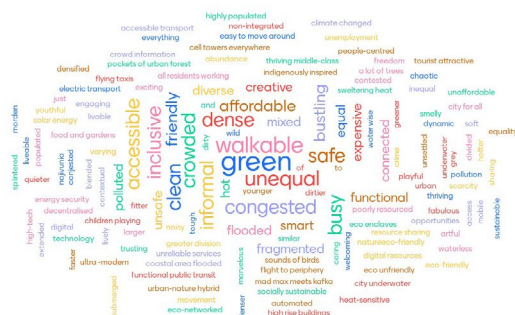
Photographer lenses on African urban dynamics

Lauren Arendse

African cities experience an array of pressures, drivers and changes that shape the quality of our lived experiences. These competing causes and effects give our cities a dynamic and emergent quality which may best be captured through photography and storytelling. Photography is an evocative and accessible medium that Africans can use to tell our own stories and restore ownership over our narratives. Photography is an important tool not only for reflecting on the world around us as we observe it, but also as a tool for learning and gathering data to inform how we can shape and improve our communities and cities. We can use photography to gain a deeper understanding of how people use spaces, to highlight the problems within our cities and potential solutions which are initiated or supported by communities.

"Great photography highlights our different ways of thinking. We all come from different countries with different ways of doing things and affirmations on what's right or wrong. However, great photography has the ability to undo our assumptions about life, and this is done by inspiring or horrifying stories told by either a single or a series of frames. And in the end, this does not only connect us but also helps us in finding solutions to real problems in our communities as we celebrate our differences." - Katumba Badru, Photographer
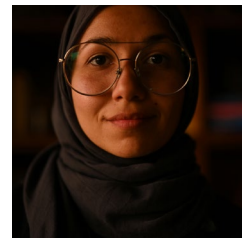
Urban Decay by Ikwueme Patrick obiora, @owusilens | With comments from the Mural board

Above and next page, Chaser by @ antonytrivetphotography

"...[to] an outsider it might look chaotic, but there is order, [everybody] knows their place and they know what they need to be doing". – Liteboho Makhele from the South African Cities Network

Funmi Adeniyi shared similar sentiments and said, "We don't have to plan African cities to look like European cities; there is beauty in the chaotic order that we currently have in many African cities. We need to lead with that in how we plan for and in what we do on the continent".

These images also centre around women and their role as the backbone of economies in our cities. We must plan our cities to cater for women and their needs, considering urban safety and the use of public space. Cities must be designed and built for different population groups, genders, and activities for African needs and uses.

As Caitlin Sole noted, the richness of the conversation was due to "the value of having a range of different voices from diverse backgrounds... People responded with completely different perspectives and ideas of the themes and issues evoked through the photographs". This is an important takeaway acknowledging the importance of stakeholder engagements, data collection and research for policy and practice.
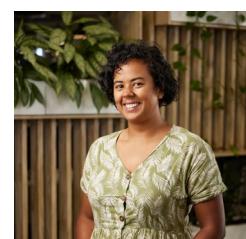
So could "we use photography as a form of inquiry, a way of doing research?" David Maddox, The Nature of Cities, proposes an imaginative and creative process as the research lens, where planning practitioners are invited, as one form of primary data. This places creatives at the centre of the development process instead of the current way where planners design and creatives experience after the fact.

"These photographs are an example of Africans telling African stories." - Rehab Eldalil, Photographer

How can we use photography and creativity to enhance our sustainable development? Is there a way we can be more adaptable by including creativity and freedom of expression into more traditional infrastructure development, creating the Africa City by Africans? How do we encourage solutions that consider multiple futures instead of one person's vision of the future African city?

"Every time a photographer shares an image, they are saying: Nothing about us without us... Photography is used as evidence, [showing] things [that] are going wrong in our cities, things [that are] going right, [and] things we hope for."

- Chris de Beer-Procter, Photographer

watch session here

Does evidence justify Circular Economy as the path for development for Africa?

A circular economy is being conceived as the silver bullet to social, environmental and economic challenges. But does the data back this up?

This session featured thought-provoking insights from research conducted by both ICLEI and Footprints Africa. The need to measure the circular economy with both quantitative and qualitative data was reinforced. Quantitative data alone does not tell the whole story: We agreed that qualitative data is key to contextualising quantitative data.

The familiar adage, "you can't manage what you don't measure," echoed throughout the session, reminding us that we may not even be aware that a circular strategy has a negative impact if it is not required to prove its claims.

Footprints Africa shared an overview of their measurement framework for African circular economy companies. Focusing on quantitative data collected for resources used and outputs made, the framework enables one to measure the impact of circular economy activities on Social-wellbeing, Economic Prosperity and Environmental Quality. The Strategic Circular Economy Impact Assessment (SCEIA) framework, a comprehensive model designed for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), is intended to be adaptable and modular to ensure easy use. It is currently road-tested with five circular economy companies in different African countries.

ICLEI shared insights from The African Circular Cities Initiative (ACCI), whose aim is to develop an African approach to Circular Economy implementation in cities. Their project intends to support local government officials to articulate a vision for a circular economy in their cities, profile African cities' efforts, and work in a circular economy. They are focused on building qualitative data, documenting case studies, producing a training series on circular economy topics and designing a methodological guide for a city-level roadmap for circular economy in African countries.

Five key points from this session:
1. Not every circular economy strategy delivers its promised impact. For example, some recycling processes may be so energy-intensive that they outweigh the positive impact of recycling.
2. Qualitative analysis gives meaning to quantitative data.
3. Data analysis frameworks need to be flexible given the limited resources of SMEs.
4. Every city has its specific challenges and solving them requires consulting a variety of perspectives rather than implementing one prescribed approach.
5. There is a prevalent need to standardise the definition of the circular economy and the measurement metrics.

watch session here

The Strategic Circular Economy Impact Assessment (SCEIA) framework

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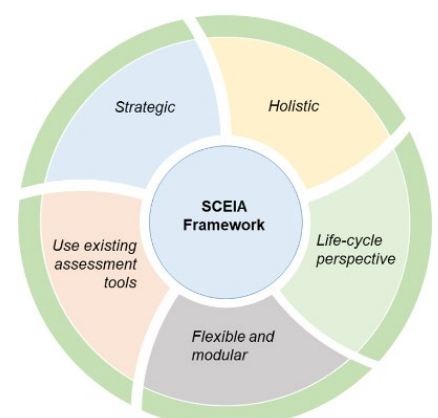
Using Civic Technology to unlock Africa's Urban Opportunities

To address the convergence between civic technologies and African urban difficulties, as well as to highlight instances of how civic technology may be used more effectively to address Africa's urbanisation challenges and potential, it is vital to build local skills that will create the required digital information while providing learning and livelihood opportunities. In addition, to build resilient cities, local communities must have access to accurate, up-to-date data. A bottom-up strategy for data collecting, including accessible disruptive technologies for digital, open, and other solutions, is required for sustainability and scale. Overall, it is important to take a responsible, inclusive approach to address locally articulated needs and pool expertise and resources. This approach will also protect the vulnerable, ensure shared benefits, and promote local capacity-building and skills development.

Key points:
1. There is a need to train people in order to create data.
2. In Africa only 15% of the Digital map exists versus 87% in Europe.
3. We must develop local abilities to create the necessary digital information while giving possibilities for learning and livelihood.
4. To make cities more resilient to natural disasters and climate change, precise, up-to-date spatial data on the urban environment is required.
5. Africa is urbanising faster than any other continent, and these patterns of urban expansion are increasing vulnerability.

"Shaping resilient cities requires accessible, detailed, up-to-date data co-created by local communities." – Pierre Chrzanowski, Open Cities Africa

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How fast-growing African cities are developing economic plans to build more climate resilient futures

Sustainable Urban Economic Development (SUED) Programme, managed by Tetra Tech International Development, is a £70 million, six-year programme supported by the UK Government. The programme supports 12 fast-growing municipalities to develop sustainable urban economic plans and attract investment for critical infrastructure, value chain, and climate-resilient infrastructure projects. The UK government's support towards these municipalities is geared at a development approach oriented around urban to rural development rather than an approach based on having development efforts span a continuum that interconnects the rural and urban areas.

SUED's technical assistance is focused on improving local investment opportunities to scale up viable urban development approaches that support municipal resilience. The programme works with local actors to ensure its support is inclusive and sustainable. The programme demonstrates that it's possible to leverage scarce resources through collaborations and partnerships with the private sector, local governments, and other like-minded organisations. This session demonstrated how SUED has collaborated with municipalities to develop responsive urban economic plans that identify viable economic sectors and is partnering with them to attract investors to support identified value chains and climate-resilient infrastructure projects.

Simon Elliot from Atkins outlined how the programme supports the development of urban economic plans across the 12 cities involved. Climate change considerations, as well as economic inclusivity, were key focus areas of the plans. The investment attraction process for SUED is a key component of the programme. Milton Lore from Open Capital highlighted the need to build relationships with stakeholders across the value chains, as well as partnerships between municipalities/counties and the development partners.

The impact of the SUED programme was highlighted through the case study of the Malindi Water and Sewerage Company (MAWASCO) Sanitation Journey, presented by Priscillah Oluoch from Malindi Water. The project aims to accelerate access to sanitation services in Malindi, Kenya, by creating a city-wide inclusive sanitation and investment plan in partnership with the county government. Priscillah highlighted some of the project's achievements thus far but also stressed the need for further funding to scale up the provision of sanitation services in Malindi.

Key points:
1. Understanding how financing flows from the National to County to Municipal governments in Kenya is key to obtaining funding for projects.
2. Investment promotion authorities are key stakeholders for municipalities to partner with.
3. Attracting investments for value-chain projects is much easier than for infrastructure in intermediary cities.
4. The focus is on building climate resilient and economically inclusive infrastructure.

Below: The Then Cabinet Secretary for Devolution and Aris and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALS), Hon Eugene Wamalwa together with the Deputy British High Commissioner-Julius Court with the Kisii Governor address the press after the public launch of the Kisii Urban Economic Plan (UEP)

watch session here

Gender rights in UNA: Why it is important

Building on the previous UNA programme work funded by SwedBio since 2014, the overarching impact of the newest project under the UNA programme, Urban Natural Assets: Resilience and Restoration for Life (UNA Resilience), is to transform development trajectories for African cities toward those that improve the sustainable development of, and interconnectedness with, their surrounding natural systems along three interlinked urban pillars (governance, planning and finance), through building urban resilience, sufficient agency and momentum for an unfolding process of transformative change.

Led jointly by ICLEI Africa and ICLEI Cities Biodiversity Center (CBC), the UNA Resilience project focuses on bringing a human rights-based approach to the work with our cities. A core pillar of which is gender and informed the development of this dialogue.

Within the context of Africa, it is very difficult to introduce the gender approach, especially around the topic of urban natural assets. In some areas, although some men are affected too, women are usually affected the most when it comes to climate change impacts. As such, we need to forward plan our engagements on the ground to anticipate for, and design modalities of engagement that overcome barriers such as gender, power dynamics and language to elicit participatory interaction across stakeholders. We, therefore, need to focus on designing grassroot scenarios, for example, using tools such as "a Day in the Life" so that participants can better understand the reality of different societal groups, including women.

While women are key stakeholders, their voices have been underrepresented in development projects, and their needs and inputs are sometimes missing. Therefore, the involvement of women in participatory planning and dialogues should be bottom-up, not top-down. They should be given the platform to make decisions that will allow them to address women and gender issues they face. In addition, focusing on increasing men's sensitivity to women's marginality and fostering their actions to change that narrative, is also important to strengthen women-to-women support networks. We increasingly see change with women being more represented in power structures, politics and community decision-making platforms. To accelerate this empowerment, we need to be cognisant of building platforms and opportunities for women to actively engage and contribute.

This will be the first of a series of conversations that seek to identify opportunities to mainstream a human rights-based approach into subnational projects and processes.

Key points:
1. In some areas, women are affected the most. Yes, men are affected too, but women are affected the most.
2. We need to recognise that there are different gender roles and

watch session here

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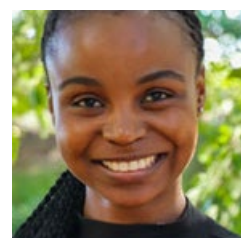
responsibilities. We can recognise these and address this through mainstreaming.

3. It is critical to bring everyone on board, both women and men, because climate change affects us all differently. When designing activities, everyone matters!

4. Women are sometimes left out of decision-making. There is a need to give women platforms to make decisions as that will allow them to address women and gender issues that they face. This is often seen in formal and informal governance structures. However, in many countries, we need to see more representation for women in government positions, from national down to subnational.

5. We need to see human rights as African and not as an imported Western concept but rather as innate and something that has always been here.

6. We need to ensure representation and meaningful participation needs to take place in our initiatives which are carefully planned out and take into consideration of local contexts. We need to see a shift in projects and engagements that monitor not only outputs but monitor shifts in mindset for impact.

7. We need to ensure that our projects, programmes and engagements emphasize gender equity over gender equality and take into account inclusivity from the outset; this could be the time of day that meetings happen, or whether people are able to attend with work and family commitments – to achieve balanced representation we need balanced voices.
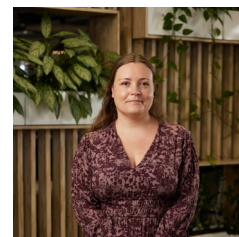
Where Business and Circularity Intersect: Meet the ACE Africa Entrepreneurs Pushing the Boundaries of Sustainability in African Cities

ICLEI Africa and Stellenbosch University LaunchLab, with the support of the Embassy of Finland in South Africa, hosted a session on the intersection between entrepreneurship and circularity, where entrepreneurs selected as part of the Accelerating Circular Economy in Africa (ACE Africa) project showcased their businesses. Daniel Adeniyi (Professional Officer, ICLEI Africa) facilitated the session inviting each business to provide a three-minute elevator pitch to the esteemed panel of judges and the session audience. Judges were Alexandra Fraser (Director of Viridian), Kelley Rowe (Board Member, Brownie Points) and Bonmwa Fwangkwal (Program Manager at the African Circular Economy Alliance). The session highlighted the importance of developing business models that fit into the circular economy and for entrepreneurs to understand whether the linkages to the circular economy apply to a part of their business or their entire value chain. As early-stage businesses, there is a huge opportunity for start-ups to properly frame their business model or pivot if necessary to ensure that they build viable businesses while fitting into the circular economy model.

The session included an audience jury vote and the judges scoring and selecting three winners. Meant to Bee came out on top with SolarCool and Sisonke Composting in second and third place, respectively. Judges at the showcase event drove home the importance of validating prototypes and making considerations for affordability, feasibility and scalability of ideas. Achieving sustainability at the systems level to support impact goals when scaling up a business is critical. Entrepreneurs must partner with other businesses on activities that do not directly align with their chosen business model. Very importantly, the session served as a reminder to entrepreneurs to balance passion with profitability. Businesses need to be set up to make profits and circular ideas, and businesses sometimes overlook this aspect driven by a passion for solving a pressing issue.

Key points:
1. Businesses should ask whether they are circular or not: Understanding what the circular economy is, how their business model fits into the circular economy and whether this is applicable to a part of their business or their entire value chain.
2. As early-stage businesses, there is a huge opportunity for start-ups to properly frame their business model or pivot if necessary to ensure that they build viable businesses while fitting into the circular economy model.
3. It is important to stick to the business model and partner with other businesses on activities that do not directly align with this chosen business model.
4. Getting someone to test (your solution or product) is a critical next step for businesses.

watch session here

Africa's leadership in nature-based solutions: Is language creating a barrier in showcasing the continent's best efforts?

Hosted by ICLEI Africa, as part of the UNA: Resilience programme, reported by Bongiwe Simka, Professional Officer at ICLEI Africa

The Urban Natural Assets: Resilience & Restoration for Life (UNA: Resilience) Programme recognises nature's significant role in safeguarding people and the environment. Rehabilitating ecosystems, building climate resilience and enhancing society's water and food security are among the most fundamental challenges. Through UNA, we leverage the power of fully functioning ecosystems to benefit society, the environment and the economy.

The concept of Nature-based Solutions was developed as an umbrella term to unify ecosystem-related approaches; however, we cannot deny the paradox of language. We need it to communicate and unify ideas, but it can also have the opposite effect and instead be misinterpreted, lost in translation, and ultimately exclusionary.

Nestled within the context of Agency, understanding the implications of language, how we communicate, how we navigate translating science into practice and how we profile Africa's efforts is key.

Africa is already utilising nature-based solutions and has been for decades but has not always iterated them as such. The informal and often small-scale nature of most of these interventions renders them poorly documented, if at all showcased, especially in published literature.

Nature based Solutions are defined by the IUCN as actions to protect, sustainably manage and restore natural and modified ecosystems in ways that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, to provide both human well-being and biodiversity benefits.

Undoubtedly, Africa has the capacity, but how can we improve how these are communicated and profiled? The effective cross-sectoral and multiscale mainstreaming and showcasing of nature-based solutions requires more than a cookie-cutter approach. It calls for more creative and innovative ways of packaging and translating these solutions. It calls for language that speaks to the people in order to promote engagement and ownership, not a mere imposition of foreign concepts.

Through knowledge co-production styles such as learning labs, visual
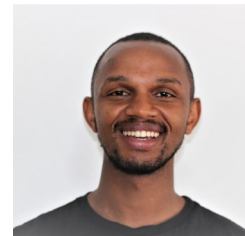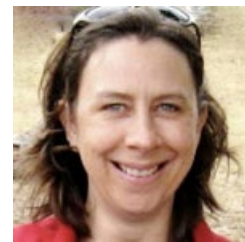
arts and on-the-ground learning, as was done through the urban tinkering exercise in Kisumu, we can successfully bridge the language divide and transform knowledge co-production within nature-based solutions.

To fully integrate nature-based solutions and magnify Africa's visibility within the global context, we must explore scalability as a significant factor in communicating these solutions. As a continent, we need to move towards mainstreaming these solutions at a larger scale, fully considerate of the complexities of scale, and scaling up for practice, theory and policy. More importantly, Africa needs to document its efforts across various channels by framing the benefits and nature's contribution to communities, demonstrating nature's ability to reduce risks and vulnerabilities and improve livelihoods. Through continuous monitoring, evaluation and quantification, we can make a case for enhanced scaling and move from what is currently deemed "noise" to multiple data-driven studies that can easily be scaled up. By capacitating cities in data collection on natural assets and their benefits to people, we can start cataloguing Africa's contribution to

URBAN NATURAL ASSETS FOR AFRICA
Resilience & restoration *for* life

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Scenarios for Africa's Circular Economy Future: A view from students and young professionals

This webinar, hosted by Colin Webster (Ellen MacArthur Foundation), explored the results of an interactive workshop on the circular economy in Africa in March 2022, where workshop participants imagined two possible futures for the circular economy.

The session, entitled Scenarios for Africa's Circular Economy Future: A view from students and young professionals, highlighted scenarios from three groups which were represented by Ridhwana Shaik (Green Start Ideas), Tom I'Geme (African Leadership University) and Esther Williams (Inscape Education Group). They each gave their perspectives on the value of the workshop as a vital networking opportunity that has created a community of circular economy enthusiasts in Africa. They highlighted the value of and need for a change in how we think and learn, emphasising the value of systems thinking and the importance of critically thinking about problems through a circular economy lens.

While this session highlighted the importance of creating opportunities for learning and sharing, it most importantly emphasised the need to take these ideas and approaches beyond the workshop and tertiary education, into unconventional learning and professional settings.

Key points:
1. Networking is an undervalued process. The workshop highlighted the value of making connections and building a community that can help fill in gaps
2. Systems thinking is important in the transition to circularity. It allows us to make sense of challenges and respond appropriately.
3. Our visions for the future need to expand beyond the 2050 mark. We need to be able to continue thinking and planning beyond the milestone years we are currently working towards.
4. Many planners contribute to the drafting of plans, but most plans do not create tangible opportunities for communities to contribute to implementation. This can be done through small-scale actions such as vertical and micro gardening.
5. Every group that contributed a vision to the workshop was able to make a connection with another group's vision. This is reflective of how the world works, but we lose this way of collaborative thinking once we reach the professional arena. There is a need to work collaboratively in order to make vital connections and implement projects.
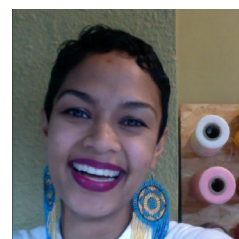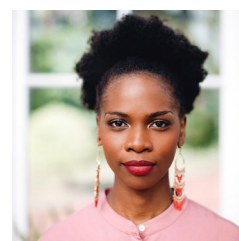
ELLEN MACARTHUR FOUNDATION

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Taste the change; re-imagining facilitation for hybrid meetings in cities

This session Taste the change; re-imagining facilitation for hybrid meetings in cities, hosted by Eddie Jjemba and Bettina Koelle from Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre, explored new approaches to facilitation for optimising the efficiency of hybrid engagements.

The hosts unpacked how we can bring the "amazingness" of face-to-face conversations and the convenience of hybridity together in a changing world. They initiated the session with brief introductions and an overview of the pros and cons of hybrid meetings and important values to bring to such meetings. They were interested in gaining inputs from the participants' past experiences with hybrid meetings through breakout rooms. There was a consensus that hybrid meetings have limitations: some voices get lost, there is a power imbalance between those joining in person and virtually, exclusionary to those who do not have access to technology and so on. One of the hosts, Bettina, explained that the biggest limitation to hybrid facilitation is our imagination, particularly as it is such a new means of engagement. The future of hybrid engagements is what we make it today. She proposes that we use our imagination to make this new form of engagement as inclusive and fruitful as possible by using and experimenting with different facilitation techniques. She suggests the following tips for improved facilitation of hybrid facilitation: address power dynamics between those joining in person and those joining virtually; always have contingency plans; introduce audio-visual technologies to include all participants; and use humour and visual communication creatively to make it fun and engaging from the get-go.

"There are so many different ways to facilitate hybrid events, but our biggest limitation is our imagination." – Bettina Koelle, Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre

Key points:
1. Hybrid platforms have opened space for people to engage and "play" in new and creative ways.
2. Effective hybrid engagement requires a combination of creativity, rigorous planning and using methods of facilitation and platforms that tap into the wisdom of the crowd.
3. Address power dynamics between those joining virtually and those joining personally to be more inclusive.
4. The potential of hybrid facilitation is in the hands of our own creativity and imagination.
5. Hybrid engagements have the potential to streamline continental and global cooperation while minimising wastefulness and carbon emissions related to in-person events.

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Climate Centre

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Sustainable development research that matters: Crafting new research approaches for uptake by local government and actors

One major critique of sustainable development research in Africa is its limit in translating scientific research into societal outcomes and policymaking. Funding programmes are designing research projects to bridge the disconnect between science, policy and society. Urban researchers have adopted different approaches and proposals to ensure research uptake becomes an integral part of the research process to address these challenges. Thus, a conceptual shift from doing science for society to doing science with society is needed, with implications for research methods that enhance knowledge production at every juncture of the research process.

The collaborative design process maps out stakeholders with power and influence to negotiate goals and actions that spot policy entry points to sustainable urban development reform. Uptake strategies include broad national, subnational and community stakeholders from the onset. These ensure institutional and societal buy-in to enhance research uptake and outcomes.

The panel reflected on the emergent approaches in research uptake, integration, and reform in African cities from a scientific, policy and community lens.

Session questions:
1. What are the challenges of integrating scientific research into policy and community practice?
2. What are the emerging approaches in urban research for integrating science into policy and practice?
3. What is the novelty of the African Cities Research Consortium (ACRC) programming approach to enhancing research uptake through science-policy-practice?
4. Case studies of this linkage between science-policy-practice.

Shwaib explained his experience and the knowledge gaps in practice. He explained the importance of taking the local communities' interests in research design by including values and norms that reflect their aspirations. It is counterproductive to project European standards and ideals on local communities – for example, the minimum required square meter area for European dwellers compared to an unregulated informal African dweller households and access to service provision considering urban versus informal settlements. He reiterated that the local innovations in informal dwellings should be considered as important as any innovation elsewhere.

Beth added that we need to connect with people. Neighbourhood connections foster the creation of new ideas to improve the living conditions of poor households. Communities cannot be developed without an adaptive capacity. Beth explained the difficulties of the
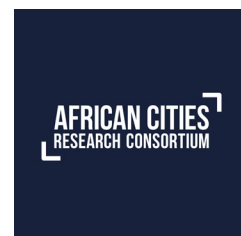
challenges with authorities, for example, how difficult it can be to ensure a shared understanding of the importance and accuracy of research.

Key points:
1. Norms are not the same for all. We must be mindful in conducting research activities as people have different norms.
2. Authorities need to accept the value of innovation.
3. We must look at how the city looks now and deal with it, not just imagine cities the way we want them to be.
4. Co-creation, co-conceptualisation, and co-production of knowledge with beneficiary communities are the bedrock of sustainable urban research.

Learn more here: www.african-cities.org

"A major challenge in urban research is the gross application of methods and solutions elsewhere without much consideration for local communities."

- Prof. Shuaib Lwasa

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Building Africa's Climate Action movements: Designing collaboration between civil society and local government: Lessons learnt from the SEMCCA project

The session, Building Africa's Climate Action movements: Designing collaboration between civil society and local government' was hosted by Vanessa Tshite and Solophina Nekesa from ICLEI Africa. The hosts facilitated discussions with a panel of speakers participating in ICLEI's Scaling up and Empowering Movements for Climate Change Advocacy (SEMCCA) programmes. The speakers were Olamide Udoma-Ejorh, Lagos Urban Development Initiative; Eddy Chikuta, coordinator of the Lusaka Water Security Initiative; and Paul Opiyo, a researcher at the Kisumu Local Interaction Platform. Key recommendations and methodologies from the project and critical lessons on multi-level governance processes required to build systems for meaningful collaboration between local governments and civil society organisations for collective change were discussed.

All speakers described how the SEMCCA programme has enabled them to foster improved and effective collaboration between civil society groups and their local governments. After the speakers shared their stories, the hosts opened the discussion to all event attendees to describe what entry points they have used to scale up climate action in their communities. Many attendees commented that climate mitigation action in their communities had been held up by the scarcity of environmental research in African cities. Subsequently, an open discussion about community participation with local government ensued. Participants emphasised the need for neutral and accessible

Project partners:

Project cities:

Project funders:

spaces for community engagement. Finally, a critical area under the project was ensuring the impact or change was adequately captured. As such, Vanessa closed the session by sharing one of the outputs that ICLEI's SEMCCA programme has produced, an infographic which profiles key recommendations from the project that can guide the sustainability of the different partnerships or projects that may want to follow the same approach.

Key points:

1. Data is a critical resource for effective decision-making. In the absence of quantitative data, we can use qualitative data (like photography and storytelling) while quantitative research processes are underway.
2. Communities must be active participants in development initiatives. Community participation facilitates empowerment and ensures that ownership of these projects is established from the outset.
3. It is crucial that we create a neutral space or forum for stakeholder engagement without hierarchy, where people can share their personal and professional experiences.
4. Data sharing platforms that local governments can access to inform their policymaking decisions should be established.
5. Road maps that local governments can follow to achieve sustainable development outcomes should be established.

The SEMCCA project has produced an array of valuable resources for reflecting on local government & civil society collaboration which can be found here: www.africa.iclei.org/semcca-resources

watch session here

Poetry meets food research

Louisa Nelle, Junior Research Associate, TMG Research gGmbH

"We need to humanise research." - Luleka Zepe

What happens when our research becomes emotionally detached from the realities it represents? How can we use creative processes to enhance the emotional agency of our work and, in so doing, come to a truer sense of urgency?

These were some of the questions Food Agency Cape Town (FACT) and TMG Research's Urban Food Futures programme explored together at this year's RISE Africa Action Festival.

Probing the interplay of creative forms of expressions and more traditional quantitative and qualitative research communication, FACT and TMG invited a group of poets and artists to interpret the findings of a collaborative research process on food insecurity and agency conducted in Cape Town in 2020.

A collection of deeply emotional poems emerged in the weeks leading up to the festival.

Pre-recorded on video, the artists recited their poems at the hybrid session partly through theatric presentations.

"From hand to mouth
Never enough for the whole house
The beauty and gifts of the earth are not ours…"

Thimna Matika's clear voice cut through the online space like a sabre, captivating the audience with every one of the presentations.
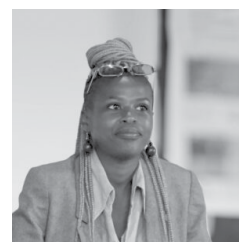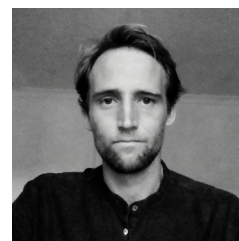
Below: Thimna Matika (left), Dylan McXabe (middle) and Ayabulela Zonke (right) reciting their poems.

In the subsequent round of reflections Sanelisiwe (Mimi) Nyaba from FACT shared her experience of the preparatory process: "When opening up these statistics of food insecurity and hunger, a lot of emotions come up; there is trauma". Visibly moved, she added, "How do you navigate this indignity and self-blame that you put on yourself, knowing it is not your fault?"

Mimi, Dylan, Luleka, Aviwe, Bonang, and Nomonde are part of a network of co-researchers who founded FACT following the 2020 research process led by Dr Nicole Paganini, who now is the lead of the Urban Food Futures programme at TMG.

The teams of FACT and TMG during the RISE Africa Festival session. As part of the research, the group developed visions of emancipating themselves from the shame and stigma around hunger prevalent in their communities.

"This session is a manifestation of our vision – communities need to talk more about their experiences of food insecurity to build agency and destigmatise hunger," Mimi observed as the discussion continued. What emerged from this conversation is the need to reconnect the numbers and data with the realities on the ground. The people experiencing food insecurity and hunger are not numbers; they are people. Extracting the data from a place and the people in it is a continuation of keeping invisible, those who are systematically oppressed and marginalised.

This work shows that poetry can be one means of reconnecting the statistics with the lived realities behind the numbers. FACT and the Urban Food Futures team do not advocate for one form over another but rather for the celebration of dualistic forms of representation.

As the session came to an end, Dylan McXabe concluded: "We want to talk about and reimagine Africa's future as if the past wasn't ours".

Rise Africa deliberately brings forward the voices of young, creative people in African cities to re-write their stories and shape sustainable, equitable and uniquely African cities in their individual contexts.

Proud and grateful to have been part of this unique space, the teams of FACT and Urban Food Futures are filled with inspiration to continue their work and put their visions into action.

The multilingual collection of poems "Fresh offerings – Poems on food, agency and urgency" and the video recording are now available online.

"We need to humanise research."

- Luleka Zepe

watch session here

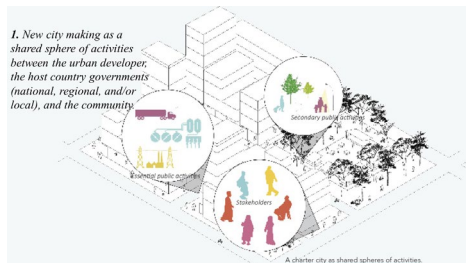# Guided Organic Growth: Rethinking New City Making in Africa

Heba Elhanafy, Urban Researcher, Charter Cities Institute

Planning is a discipline of shifting paradigms, from the functional modern city to the rational-comprehensive approach, to the current return of place. But how has (or will) the discipline shift in response to the rise in recent decades of new city building around the globe? With dozens of cities in conception or under construction in sub-Saharan Africa – the answer to this question will affect the lives of millions of individuals. As it stands, most new cities built recently or currently being developed are over-planned. Currently, urban plans often follow either the Chinese-grid planning paradigm or an American-suburban model. Those approaches leave little to no space for local adaptation, emergent market forces, and the agency of residents' to shape their cities over time. New cities can be an excellent opportunity to inject urban economic vibrancy, solving market failures, and unlocking innovation. However, they will continue to suffer from common challenges until a deliberate shift occurs in the planning paradigms of these new city developments. This session aimed to rethink new city-making in the Global South, focusing on sub-Saharan Africa and suggesting a definite need for a paradigm shift.
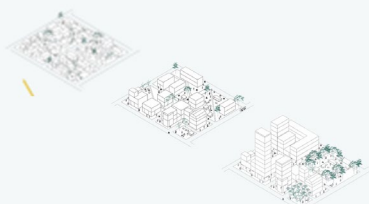
The session started with a look over colonial, pre-colonial and contemporary new city-making practices in sub-Saharan Africa and then moved into a workshop where the participants got a chance to work together on outlining the positives, negatives and opportunities of new city projects in Africa. The session then presented Guided Organic Growth as a paradigm shift towards a more collaborative and growth-oriented mode of new city making. The participants then got to experiment further with the principles of Guided Organic Growth and connect them to new city-making practices.

The session is based on Charter Cities Flagship report and the Planning Guidelines. These guidelines provide an overview of how new city planners and developers can effectively create a greenfield city that generates sustained and inclusive economic growth. It outlines how developers and planners should think about transportation, urban planning, and overall design for emerging new cities.

watch session here

City Tour: A new and reclaimed island in Lagos

The session presented a vision for how a new development on Gracefield Island can serve as a mixed use multipurpose community. Taking inspiration from Canary Wharf in London and Century City in Cape Town, the panellists described their vision for Gracefield Island as a safe and upmarket area. They note that the way that Lagos has developed has been chaotic, and that this project will represent orderly development.

> *"Our new world will thrive on ideas." - Olufemi Babalola, CEO, Gracefield Island*

The session grappled with the tension of how you create both new images and realities for the city. How do you create inspirational communities that benefit from novel design? It explicitly tangled with the challenges of participatory Citizen Engagement. On the one hand, they noted that it tends to result in time delays, and that it is difficult to accommodate so many different points of view, but on the other hand noting that proposed developments may overlook certain needs or expectations of residents if they don't emerge through participatory engagement. Gracefield Island was presented as an inspiring, bold vision that could guide future design in other parts of the city. It aims to continue Lagos' current journey in reclaiming unused land and parts of the ocean.

Key points;
1. When developing new projects in the city, it is important to make these areas inviting, so that people feel a connection to these spaces. In the past, new developments in Lagos have not been inviting.
2. It is important to take the surrounding areas into consideration before developing a space. Haphazard development has come to define Lagos.
3. Excellent placemaking requires an area to be accessible and well connected.
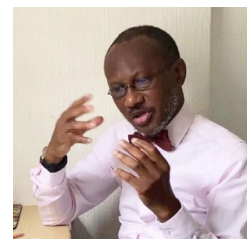
"It is important to transform public spaces so that people feel a connection to certain places…A great area is one that is accessible, attractive and that people want to return to over and over again."

- Stefanie Adisa Theuretzbacher, Architect / Director / Edge Expert, Elements Architecture

watch session here

Heat Action Day for Cities: A roadmap for urban heat mitigation

Heatwave monitoring on the continent is generally disjointed, and there are no early warning mechanisms in place. In addition, heatwaves and their impacts on health and economics are poorly recorded in Africa. To have better knowledge of future implications and trends, there is a need for more research to be conducted as this could increase an understanding of future impacts and trends. In addition, this would help identify the unique challenges of heatwaves in Africa. There is a need for multi-sectoral collaborations/efforts, with expectations from different fields. For example, conducting such research should be a collaboration between health experts, disaster researchers, meteorologists and other interested and affected parties. One must first understand the immediate effects on health and infrastructure to design solutions. Moreover, medical records are very good at determining the gaps regarding heat wave data.

The session concluded by reiterating that through creativity, resilience, participation and agency, we will not only be able to learn and imagine future possibilities but, more importantly, act to ensure sustainability in Africa.

Key ideas:
1. Vulnerability in African cities compounded because of the high informal sector and outdoor work.
2. Opening public buildings to provide cool rooms, distributing free drinking water, informing people about the dangers of heat and early warning.
3. Global warming will significantly impact Africa in the form of heat waves and flooding.
4. The disaster database shows no reported heatwave incidents in sub-Saharan Africa.

Climate Centre

"Improving coordination across different public sectors can help identify at-risk populations and improve emergency response." – Vincent Pagiwa, Public Health Researcher, University of Botswana

watch session here

Eko Vibes Podcast – Learn about Lagos' circularity transition!

The Circular Economy Innovation Partnership (CEIP) hosted the session, an organisation driving Lagos' circular economy transition. The host, Deborah Edward (CEIP), invited Natalie Beinisch, Executive Director of CEIP, into a dialogue on the Eko Circular Vibes podcast and how it is being used to disseminate circular economy knowledge in Lagos and drive the circularity transition in Nigeria.

The dialogue took the audience on the journey CEIP has taken in developing a tool to effectively disseminate ideas around circularity. These ideas are often discussed in high-level, official forums, with decisions that inadvertently affect those on the ground. The Eko Circular Vibe Podcast aims to make these ideas accessible, thereby encouraging all Nigerians and others listening to the podcast to understand what they can do to drive the circular economy transition. A golden thread through the session was accessibility – making information accessible through appropriate platforms and using appropriate language.

Although the podcast (link to the podcast: https://anchor.fm/circular-lagos) has been a useful tool for sharing the message of Circularity, CEIP has come to understand the needs of the audience they serve are constantly evolving. New ways of spreading the word should be considered in addition to the existing medium. With the audience's input, they considered the various other types of content that the podcast could be converted to, from info-graphs to cartoons and video formats. Everyone could agree on the need to essentially do more in advocating the need for change at all levels and that the said change would require a mindset shift.

How to win a losing war
With sweat, tears and water we forged ahead relentlessly,
But at each turn, there seemed to be no light in sight,
We brought a better way, we screamed,
But everyone seemed hard of hearing,
Deeply rooted in the traditions their fathers had handed over and their fathers before their fathers,
What do you mean? They wailed back.
Why should we bother? They probed further.
To struggle with them was futile; these ones had tasted a bad thing and deemed it good because they had been robbed of the chance to know how a good thing melted sweetly in the mouth.
Realizing that we were bound to fall into the same pit - groping in the dark,
Wisdom taught us to reach out to one who could see what we saw, instead of fighting all at once,
And the one brought the two, and the two, the three, and three brought seven and our numbers grew,

Each an evangelist to those who they could reach, but all on the same mission to create a better world,
We haven't won yet, but when we look at each turn now, we see little lights flickering, where there was once none.
- Deborah Edward (Selumhe).

The session engaged the audience through polls, live questions and debates and allowed all opinions to be shared and taken on board as part of the ongoing Eko Circular and CEIP journey. Eko Circular Vibe is about sharing the story of circularity in a way that is creative and drives urgency.

Key points:
1. Podcasts are great ways to disseminate important information to a broad audience.
2. Businesses in Nigeria/Lagos don't necessarily lack business model development skills but rather structural issues related to circular economy.
3. As a communication method, podcasts are reused more often than video content.
4. If there is no compulsion or clarity on why people should do something, people don't care.
5. There is a gap between industry, academia and government – BUT CE needs to be driven by a partnership. It needs to be driven by an interest in mutuality.

watch session here

CIRCULAR ECONOMY INNOVATION PARTNERSHIP

CIRCULAR LAGOS

Three protocols for facilitating Africa's creativity

In this session, we have seen that we need to light up the creativity in Africa as the population is young and full of creative ideas. The time has come to create a coherent narrative. There are mental barriers that need to be overcome. We need to explore creativity in urbanism and include art in certain sectors, such as the public sector. For that, the government needs to be supportive. There is a need to formalise the sector to ensure protection for artists. A lot of exploitation exists because of the informality of the sector. These indecent working conditions need to be changed to a formalised sector. Art and creativity can shape perception, and it is a good means for education and communication. It helps build the identity of communities. It is time to start a revolution of "made in Africa".

Key points:
1. Creativity is a sector for sustainable development, as Africa has the youngest population that oozes creativity.
2. There are mental barriers that need to be overcome. Africa is rising now, and it is up to us to believe that and start the "made in Africa" revolution.
3. Currently, the art sector is informal; it has to be formalised to ensure protection because there are indecent working conditions in this sector.
4. Creativity can shape perceptions; it is a good means for education and communication.
5. Creativity builds the identity of communities.
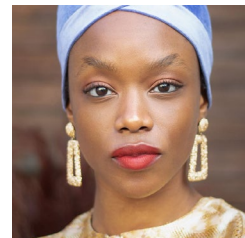
watch session here

REFLECTIONS FROM PARTICIPANTS

Has this session or RISE Africa inspired you?

This year's "Photographer lenses on African urban dynamic" session at RISE Africa 2022 affirmed for me just how special the conference is. Not only for the considerable space given to photography as a serious and dynamic means of inquiry into our cities but also for the way art and culture from Africans was foregrounded (like with the inclusion of poets in the conference videos). My impression of the conference remains that it uplifts not only the wealth of knowledge and ability of Africans, but their creativity, activism and dynamism.

Something I said while on the panel, I think, sums up why the RISE platform is so powerful, that it helps to record what Africans think about their cities, to put those insights into the gaze of powerful people and essentially to tell Africa's story on its own terms.
– Chris de Beer-Procter

Yes, to find innovative and creative ways to impart our knowledge by defining what creativity means to us as individuals without the fear of social imposition.
- Bongiwe

To be more innovative in the workplace and to foster networks to support innovation.
- Jokudu Guya

As a member of the UCT Futures Think Tank Team, we are committed to sharing more stories of African-centered innovation, education, wellness and creativity. Onward and Upward!
- Courtney Koopman

Understand more the space we live in.
- Nomusa

Allowing for differentiated approaches to the work we do - city specific and not blanket approaches.
- Liteboho Makhele

Think more about creating space/time for imagination and creativity in the workplace.
- Anonymous

Yes, it has challenged me to think glocally and seek relevance.
- Adewumi Kehinde Christopher

Continue with essential work on Infrastructure Anti-Corruption This includes a procurement by also inclusive integrity in project scoping & related transparency.
- Julien Rumbelow

Spend more time in design and try out more creative tools within hybrid meetings.
- Barbara Klugman

Expand my research and add all the new ideas to it.
- Heba Elhanafy

Focus down on something more specific for our business idea. Contact some of the entrepreneurs in the session today.
- Gisela Zipp

Yes, I'd like to continue to be a conscious consumer. The entrepreneur pitches made me think about who to support when it comes to buying things. I need to do research on the businesses before I buy anything, it is important for me when the value and aim of the business align with my values. After all, businesses follow supply and demand, consumers have a lot of power to influence the circular economy (good or bad).
- Anonymous

New ways of public consultation and how to build lasting relationships that are genuine with the intended beneficiaries which will lead to value added and human centered development or intervention projects and programmes.
-Nokulunga Mbonda

It's a privilege being on the Rise Africa 2022 Action Festival platform and hosting the session "Ẹkọ Podcast: Learn about Lagos' circularity transition".

The session was very important as it helped us develop better ways of communicating and educating Lagosians on more structural issues related to circular economy.

- Dr Natalie Beinisch, Executive Director, CEIP

The session helped me think more creatively about running hybrid online engagements for an up coming workshop.
- Kieron Crawley

Yes, to explore more nature based projects and content and hopefully pursue a masters degree in this field.
- Murigu

I am inspired to make time for my photography - and to ensure that it is seen as a legitimate way of knowing and navigating our work and society
- Annonymous

To be more outspoken for those with no voice.
- Anonymous

Advocate for innovative awareness creation for circular economy.
- Patricia Akinyi K'Omudho

Learning from entrepreneurs and feedback from the judges.
- Germaine Akeza Nkunzurwanda

Continued engagement with the ICLEI team (of course) and follow up with some of the local partners to learn more.
- Robin Oakley

To be more proactive in making better planning decisions.
- Yahaya Abdullahi Abbas

The session has inspired me to think more deeply and exploratorily on engaging women in communities in order to obtain their important contribution.
- Erin

Working on sustainability strategy with FAO and the County Government of Kisumu on Urban Food Systems with respect to climate change resilience.
- Samba Nixon Otieno

It was a great session. Anything worth doing, is worth doing well.
- Michael Mbegbu

I see an opportunity to measure heat related neonatal deaths in Botswana, through empirical evidence to determine if the deaths can be linked to extreme heat.
- Barnabas Morake

Yeah, I've been more inspire to keep creating relatable images and document things happening around me with the hopes of correcting misconceptions and errors.
- Anonymous

Yeah! The session has made me rethink everyday practice in urban planning and importing ideas, theories and training in urban planning that was based on western contexts.
- Kevin Mutia

Using creative tools for advocacy.
- Sandra

JOIN THE
MOVEMENT

/ Join us

RISE Africa brings together thinkers, doers and enablers from across the continent and the world to **inspire action for sustainable cities**. The platform curates monthly engagements, photographic competitions, thought pieces and networking events, taking a whole-of-society approach to imagining African urban futures.

At the heart of RISE Africa is an annual event convened around **Africa Day** and focused on critically and enthusiastically demonstrating how to make our urban imaginaries real – and how to forge ideas into action.

Collaborative art and creative expression are central threads that hold our deliberations together. Expressing and celebrating multiple perspectives, cultures, visions and actions is vital for making inclusive and vibrant cities, that resonate as African.

If you are interested in joining the platform, please subscribe here and follow us on Instagram @futureafricancities

If you would like to partner on events or join ours, please email riseafrica@iclei.org

If you would like to sponsor our activities, please reach out to riseafrica@iclei.org

We look forward to shaping sustainable future African cities together!

Photograph by @moustafa.abd_elwadoud

RISE
AFRICA
Inspiring Action for Sustainable Cities