

PROCESS FOR ESTABLISHING A MULTI-STAKEHOLDER FORUM FOR CLIMATE ACTION AND PROMOTING CIRCULAR FOOD SYSTEMS IN KISUMU, KENYA

Scaling up and Empowering
Movements for Climate Change
Advocacy (SEMCCA)



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BACKGROUND

The Scaling Up and Empowering Movements for Climate Change Advocacy (SEMCCA) project aims to support the development of enabling conditions for revitalized civic and social participation, through designing and implementing tailored approaches, within a multi-level governance and social justice framework, in order to deliver ambitious, well-supported, scalable and replicable climate solutions. In Kisumu County, the SEMCCA project was implemented from November 2021 to May 2022 by ICLEI Africa in partnership with Kisumu Local Interaction Platform (KLIP). KLIP is a non-profit organisation that brings together the academia, private sector, civil society and public sector in knowledge co-production, dissemination, and uptake for purposes of sustainable urban development. The SEMCCA project in Kisumu focused on the urban food system as an entry point to engage with civil society, local authorities, and private sector actors to promote a circular food system for climate action.

The food system is intricately linked to the biophysical and agroecological system of any city – from production, processing and distribution to retail and consumption. The food system of Kisumu County is characterised by inadequate local food production, inefficiencies in distribution, informality in food retail and energy inefficient methods of food preparation. Despite high levels of food poverty in the city, there are losses and wastages at different stages of the value chain. These inefficiencies mean more food has to be produced to satisfy the needs of the fast-growing urban population, contributing to environmental degradation, greenhouse gas emissions and climate change.

Kisumu City's food system presents an opportunity for civil society organisations (CSOs), private sector and local government to collaborate in building and strengthening a circular food system for climate action. It was envisaged that the SEMCCA project would empower CSOs and the private sector to proactively engage with the local government for a circular food system. While the local government is currently implementing several initiatives, including building infrastructure, marketing health and safety initiatives as well as implementing multi-level governance approaches, CSOs and the private sector have a role in transforming the city's food system for circularity.

Therefore, as part of the SEMCCA process in Kisumu, CSOs and local government stakeholders were engaged to learn together, co-create knowledge, and develop shared collaborative practices to solve identified problems and challenges in the food system. The goal was to enhance participatory social justice and inclusion in the urban food system, and contribute to local climate solutions. This was done through a series of learning labs. The first learning lab was held on 19 November 2021; the second one on 10 December 2021; and the final one on 21 January 2022.

During the discussions in the first SEMCCA learning lab, it was highlighted that there are several initiatives towards circular urban food systems that were being implemented by several stakeholders, but in an uncoordinated approach, and which were making little impact. One of the recommendations of the participants from learning lab one was to give an opportunity for some of the organisations to make presentations on some of the initiatives they were implementing. This was done in the second learning lab. The presentations elicited interest in creating a multi-stakeholder knowledge platform where information on the various initiatives could be shared. The idea got traction, and was the main agenda of the final learning lab in Kisumu.

From the deliberations in the three learning labs, participants emerged with a common goal to establish a multi-stakeholder food systems and climate action working group, modelled similar to KLIP. Participants reflected and agreed that such a working group would better work under KLIP, rather than to start a new structure. KLIP already has a board of trustees representing various sectors – Kisumu County Government, Kisumu City Management Board, civil society, local community, private sector and academia, and has a successful ten-year history as a multi-stakeholder forum.

The final learning lab noted that CSOs are more trusted by the citizens and act as pressure groups to lobby governments to identify development priorities so that policies and programmes are based on local needs, as well as available opportunities and capacities. CSOs were noted to be successful in improving public services such as primary healthcare and early childhood education through citizen participation and constructive engagement with government service providers. They can therefore, very effectively, drive the food systems and climate change agenda if capacitated. Whenever civil society is represented in the decision-making process, communities receive more effective public services that better correspond to local needs. Therefore, participants resolved to build a multi-stakeholder working group, using the KLIP model.



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01

THE PROPOSED KISUMU CIRCULAR FOOD SYSTEMS FOR CLIMATE ACTION WORKING GROUP





The proposed working group will be a multi-stakeholder forum, bringing together the local government, civil society, community-based organisations (CBOs), private sector enterprises and academia. The working group will be a social movement that will participate in dialogue, decision-making and/or implementation, to enhance citizen participation to promote circularity in the urban food system for climate action. It was noted that the relationship between CSOs and governments is often adversarial, and therefore hinders collaboration for social action. An intermediary working group, well equipped to mobilise resources, can win the confidence of both local communities and local government. The cooperation of local CBOs and local government is key for the success of social movements.

The working group will be able to deal with complex development questions that small CBOs may not be able to deal with, particularly in terms of sustainability. The working group will strengthen capacities of smaller CBOs and CSOs for engagement, effective participation, and joint implementation of priority development actions by different stakeholder groups.



the relationship between CSOs and governments is often adversarial, and therefore hinders collaboration for social action.

The working group will bring new information to decision-makers through research, via close contacts with grassroots populations, and through bringing opinions that are born neither in the state nor in the private sector. Political neutrality of the working group will be key in driving its agenda.

Collaboration between academia, civil society and government will enable well researched solutions to find their way into public policy. KLIP has been very active in this area. For example, through co-production and for the first time, food was included in urban planning in Kisumu, and research done under the auspices of KLIP was quoted as the resource that underpinned that decision. In collaborative research, rather than make policy recommendations, researchers flag “policy issues” requiring possible action, in the spirit of knowledge co-creation. This reduces tension between local government, academia and civil society.



Figure 1: Central Elements of a Successful Multi Stakeholder platform (Source: FAO, 2021)¹

¹ FAO. 2021. *FAO support of multi-stakeholder platforms on land tenure governance: Innovative practices from the field and building on experience. Second version.* Rome.

Goal and objectives of the working group

The main goal of the working group is to build a self-sustaining social movement for a circular food system and climate action in Kisumu City.

This will be achieved through:



Bringing together stakeholders in the area of circular food economy and climate change for knowledge co-creation, dissemination and uptake.



Creating collaborative platforms for implementation of ground projects on the circular food economy and initiation of pilot projects for learning and research.



Creating and providing channels for information dissemination and community awareness and capacity building on circular food systems and climate action.



Fostering collaboration with external partners, including national NGOs, international NGOs, governments and UN agencies for sustainable food systems and climate action.



Creation and provision of channels for information dissemination and community awareness and capacity building on circular food systems and climate action.



02

KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND THEIR ROLES



Joint action between local government and civil society has the potential to make a positive contribution to circular food systems, climate action and sustainable local development. It has the potential to strengthen local accountability and democratic governance, and reinforce wider processes of political and administrative decentralization. This will enable access to more public resources for food system and climate action interventions.

2.1 Civil society organisations

Kisumu has very vibrant CSOs that provide room for discussion of critical issues that are of concern to people, thereby linking them together, and creating shared values. The organisations include small CBOs and residents' associations, larger faith-based organisations (FBOs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). While the bigger FBOs and NGOs work independently, smaller CSOs have a local network – Kisumu CSOs Network – that brings many of them together. CSOs will bring their community mobilization and grassroot networks' capacities, in building circular urban food systems for climate action. They are strong in community empowerment, capacity building and training; awareness creation and campaigns; and promoting inclusivity, including gender and youth advocacy initiatives.

2.2 Private sector organisations

Private business enterprises can play a big role in promoting circularity in the urban food system. Private sector organisations will uptake researched and piloted successes for implementation for profit. This will promote sustainability of the initiatives. The private sector will also support research and innovation by providing funds for research in areas of business interest to them. Additionally, as part of their corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, they will contribute resources to promote circular food systems. The Kisumu Business Community is one such network of private sector players that are affiliated to KLIP, with potential to contribute more to the programmes of the multi-stakeholder working group as part of CSR. Private media will also play a vital role in publicity and awareness creation and promoting transparency in the work of the multi-stakeholder forum. This will ensure that the forum remains accountable to the citizens, and is not captured by the state, or large NGOs to drive their agenda.





The value of the academia in the multi-stakeholder working group is to influence policy through research and knowledge co-production.

2.3

Academia and research institutions

Maseno University and Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology (JOOUST) are key stakeholders who were deeply involved in the SEMMCA project in Kisumu and are affiliated to KLIP. Researchers from the two universities have a long history of collaborative work with the local government in Kisumu, through KLIP. The value of the academia in the multi-stakeholder working group is to influence policy through research and knowledge co-production. KLIP has been engaged in this for the last ten years. Knowledge co-production is a unique form of research where knowledge production moves beyond the academic register – it brings together different stakeholders, such as government officials, civil society and researchers from different disciplines and sectors, to collaboratively undertake research on real problems and jointly produce knowledge that is both useful for policy and practice and which makes a valuable contribution to academic knowledge. Other than the universities, other research institutions will also be brought on board to co-develop and disseminate simple technologies that promote circularity in the urban food system and contribute to climate action.



2.4 Local and national government agencies

Kisumu County is a member of KLIP, and is represented in the KLIP Board of Trustees. The city and County Government of Kisumu are major stakeholders in Kisumu's urban food system. They influence what food is produced and how, providing them with a unique opportunity to effect change towards circularity in the food system. They can set in motion the transition to a circular economy, where food waste is designed out, food by-products are used at their highest value and food production regenerates rather than degrades natural systems. Local governments are directly or indirectly connected to all stages of the food value chain. From food procurement and catering services in public facilities, to organic waste and land use management, local governments can influence food systems across the value chain. They can also act as testbeds for new policies and public services that can then be taken on at the national level.

As part of the multi-stakeholder working group, local government will facilitate formulation, implementation and enforcement of policy instruments to promote circularity, and set regulations and standards for technologies and solutions developed by various stakeholders. Government will also provide funding for research and development, including capital and seed funding for piloting any new initiatives.

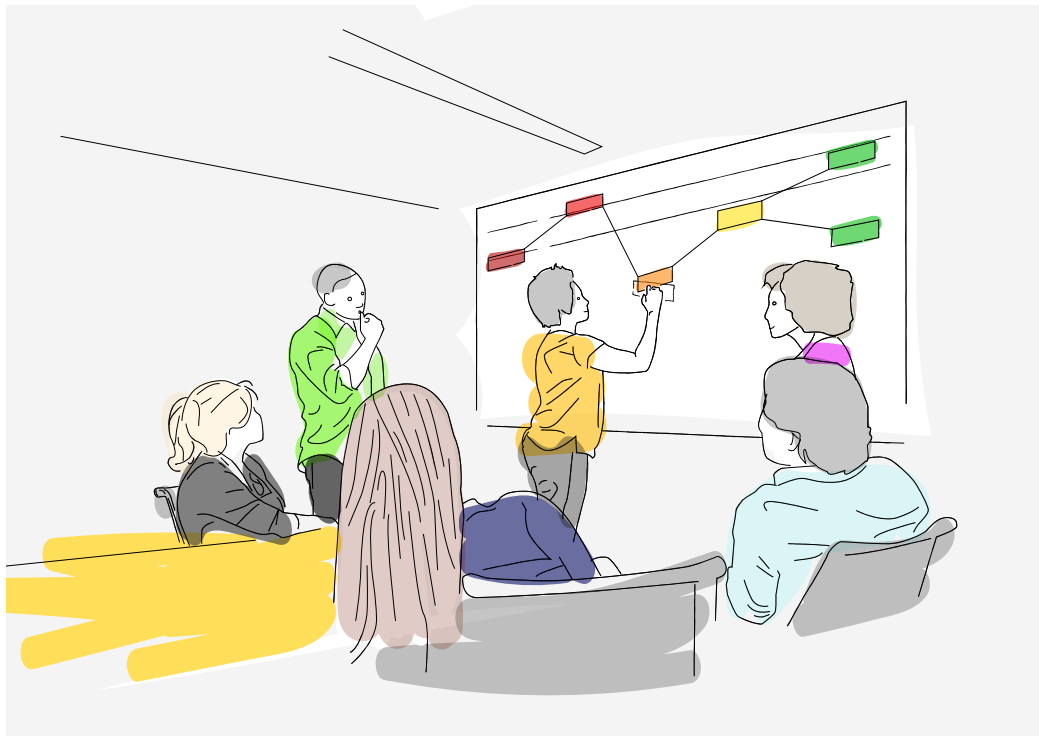
Representation of local government in the multi-stakeholder working group will make it easier to lobby other government agencies to establish fiscal and monetary policies to drive initiatives geared towards circular food economy and climate change. For example, the county assembly will more easily pass statutes and by-laws proposed by the county executive and city board as opposed to those proposals coming directly from CSOs. The working group will therefore make policy suggestions emanating from the co-production approach, that is usually more easily acceptable to the government as compared to policy recommendations coming from academia or civil society.



Local governments are directly or indirectly connected to all stages of the food value chain.

03

STRUCTURE AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE WORKING GROUP



The proposed working group will be composed of corporate membership. Member organisations will nominate relevant staff to sit in the working group. Membership will be drawn from:

- Local government (relevant departments within County Government of Kisumu)
- Relevant departments within City of Kisumu
- National government agencies
- Civil society groups – Residents Associations and CBOs
- Academia (researchers from institutions of higher learning)
- Government research institutions
- Private sector business enterprises – represented by Kisumu Business Community.

The working group, with its diverse expertise will collect, collate and synthesize information with regard to food systems in Kisumu, capacity build CBOs on reduction of food loss and waste; disseminate knowledge on circular food systems and climate change; and spearhead peer-to-peer learning among various stakeholders dealing with food systems and climate change. Consequently, they will contribute towards understanding of food systems and climate change, with the overall goal of feeding information and data to the relevant agencies for policy formulation and development, to realize sustainability across food systems.

The working group will act as an anchor for identification of challenges, opportunities and local priorities and defining measures to address them. The team would further create linkages, alliances and networks with bodies and institutions both regionally and globally for exchange and learning. Through such initiatives, ICLEI Africa will be incorporated to provide learning and exchange platforms to cascade success stories.

3.1 Administrative structure and sustainability

In order to leverage the experience and expertise already available, the participants during the working group session had two options for hosting the secretariat of the working group. The majority felt that the working group should be hosted at KLIP as opposed to the city/local authority offices. Participants unanimously agreed that KLIP houses the secretariat. Members further agreed that it was not necessary to create another board of management, as the KLIP board already has representation from all the sectors – local government, private sector, CSOs, community and academia. KLIP Board of Trustees will be responsible for overall policy direction, and will also be the custodian of the Working Group Assets.

The secretariat based at KLIP will be responsible for day-to-day coordination of the activities of the working group. The role of the secretariat will include, among other tasks:

- Convening regular meetings for all the stakeholders as a form of participatory leadership.
- Developing resource mobilisation strategies including fundraisers, lobbying for budgetary allocation by the local government, solicitation of funds through proposal writing and contribution in kind, of various expertise, to handle various tasks.
- Collection, analysis and collation of data on new initiatives, progress of existing ventures and uptake of innovations and technologies in the field of climate change and circular food economy.
- Training, capacity building and dissemination of knowledge and information to all the stakeholders including the local community.
- Creation of linkage networks within the stakeholder group, including the regional and global sector players in the relevant fields.

04

WORKING GROUP CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS BUILDING SUSTAINABLE AND CIRCULAR FOOD SYSTEMS



The working group will contribute towards building sustainable circular food systems by:

4.1 Creation of financial capital

The working group will create financial capital through the various fundraising initiatives including members' contributions, advocacy for budgetary allocation by the local government, fundraising from local and international sponsors, and writing project proposals for funding by other organisations. The initial resources to get started will come from KLIP and other institutional members' contributions.

4.2 Natural capital preservation

Through education and incubation of good agricultural and environmental practices – including waste handling and disposal – the working group will act as ambassadors for change from linear food systems to circular food systems.

4.3 Social capital development

Through the coordination and bringing together of all the relevant stakeholders, the working group will be able to assist in connecting players and building relationships along the food value chain from input acquisition, production, post-harvest handling, distribution, and consumption, to management and disposal, enabling transition from a linear to a circular food economy.

4.4 Creation of inspiration and interest

As an agent of change, the working group will inspire individuals, business enterprises and community groups to embrace a circular food economy.

THE WORKING GROUP
CONTRIBUTES TOWARDS
BUILDING SUSTAINABLE
CIRCULAR FOOD SYSTEMS BY



CREATION OF
FINANCIAL CAPITAL



NATURAL CAPITAL
PRESERVATION



SOCIAL CAPITAL
DEVELOPMENT



CREATION OF INSPIRATION
AND INTEREST

05

CLOSING REFLECTIONS: THE NEED FOR INTERMEDIARY ORGANISATIONS





KLIP and other such intermediary organisations are purposely built to bring together a range of stakeholders to participate in dialogue, decision-making and/or implementation, to address a common problem or achieve a common goal. Such a working group is well equipped to mobilise resources and win the confidence of local communities and local government. The cooperation of local CBOs and local government is key for the success of social movements.


Intermediary organisations like KLIP are able to deal with complex development questions that small CBOs may not be able to deal with, particularly in terms of sustainability. They are more suitable in strengthening capacities of CBOs for engagement, effective participation, and joint implementation of priority development actions by different stakeholder groups.

A key advantage of a multi-stakeholder forum modelled like KLIP is that it can bring new information to decision-makers through research, through close contacts with particular populations, or through bringing opinions that are born neither in the state nor in the private sector. Collaboration between academia, civil society and government enables well researched solutions to find their way into public policy. In collaborative research, rather than make policy recommendations, researchers flag “policy issues” requiring possible action, in the spirit of knowledge co-creation. This reduces tension between local government, academia and civil society.



Collaboration between academia, civil society and government enables well researched solutions to find their way into public policy.

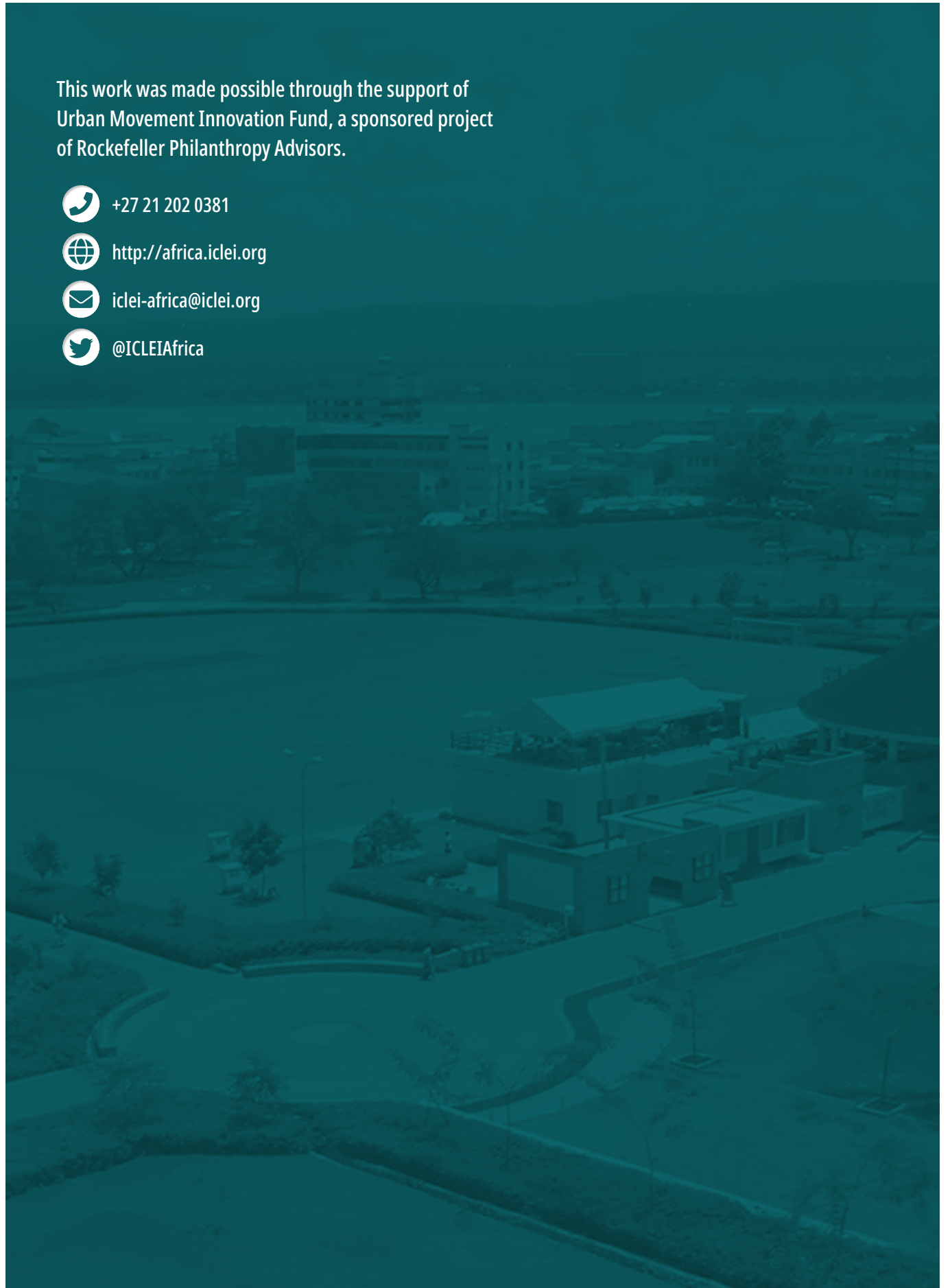
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